

STRICTLY PERSONAL



✓ file

Government Chief Whip

12 Downing Street, London SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

9 December 1993

Dear Alex,

I enclose a record of the Chief Whip's meeting with Mr Molyneux last evening.

yours ever,

Murdo

MURDO MACLEAN

Alex Allan Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

STRICTLY PERSONAL

STRICTLY PERSONAL

GENERAL

Mr Molyneux called on the Chief Whip at 6 pm yesterday. He said that he had held three meetings over the last few days with representative groups of supporters in Northern Ireland. There was a considerable amount of unease, largely about activities south of the border and they had required a lot of reassurance about the aims of the Government. Articles in London newspapers extolling his virtues did nothing to help matters but he had done his best to maintain the line. He was left with the message "we trust you but do not let us down". Mr Paisley continues to rampage but Mr Molyneux reckons that he can hold the line. He said that relations with Northern Ireland Office Ministers were very good and he was flattering about Mr Ancram. He hoped to pass a document to Mr Ancram, which contained an annex from businessmen, which he had been given and anticipated might serve as a counter to Dublin's self determination claims. On the problems of the Anglo-Irish agreement, he re-iterated his concerns about these matters being left to senior officials to deal with and mentioned a particular incident whereby a letter from Sir Robin Butler to his opposite number in Dublin was shown to Archbishop Eames by Mr Reynolds. The letter, it is alleged, made rather unfriendly remarks about both Mr Molyneux and Archbishop Eames. Mr Molyneux went on to say that he did not expect much to be said at the European Council on these matters. The next important occasion would be the Semi Summit meeting which he understands Dublin would like to take place before Christmas. We must not fall into the trap whereby Mr Adams promises a ceasefire for Christmas and undertakes to prolong that by imposing conditions - and he thought in this regard the Prime Minister had been extremely helpful over the Hume/Adams proposals.

SELECT COMMITTEE

Mr Molyneux would be quite content to see a Select Committee established after Christmas with the proportions which have already been discussed. He would not object to an additional seat going to the Labour Party and the Conservative Party if that helped the negotiations. The Chief Whip said that he was proposing to embark on discussions with the other parties next week about the principle and composition and we would have to wait and see what attitude the Labour Party and SDLP adopted. On the terms of reference, Mr Molyneux thought that the proposals put forward to the Procedure Committee three years ago would still be applicable today. These are contained in the Procedure Committee's report of that time.

The Chief Whip stressed the difficulties of forcing through the establishment of the Select Committee against the wishes of the official Opposition. But he went on to say it would be done if necessary.

STRICTLY PERSONAL

LEGISLATION

The Chief Whip indicated that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was sympathetic to effecting some change and was considering the options for this year's legislative programme. Mr Molyneux said that part of the problem lay with the Northern Ireland office in that they take the view that nothing should be done to disturb the integrity of the Stormont Statute Book. Nothing had, in fact, been incorporated into the Stormont Statute Book since 1972 and, indeed, its genesis was something of a nonsense. Mr Molyneux pointed out that he did not think any change with regard to UK Legislation would be an additional burden on the House; it would simply allow Northern Ireland Members a better opportunity of getting called in Second Reading Debates and obviate the need for subsequent debates on affirmative Northern Ireland Orders late at night when very few of their spokesmen get called in any event. The Chief Whip said that the Secretary of State was continuing to examine the scope for change in relation to this year's programme.

WORKING PEERS

Mr Molyneux asked whether, in the course of time, consideration could be given to the appointment of a Working Peer. Lord Cooke of Islandreagh actually takes the Conservative Whip and supports the Government over most issues, including Maastricht. Mr Molyneux said the sort of person he had in mind would be someone like Mr Brian McConnell, Minister for Home Affairs in the Stormont Parliament, or Mr John Gorman who had been a Chairman of the CBI. The Chief Whip said he would certainly arrange to discuss this matter at a time when Working Peers were being considered.

A copy of John Gorman's Who's Who extract is enclosed, but Mr McConnell does not appear in Who's Who.

cc This page & attachment only
 To Dick Roscoe
 [please include in life peer
 recommendations (as VUP
 Working peers)]

Alex 9/12/