

SUBJECT
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14/2.

Filed on:

PRIME MINISTER'S CONVERSATION WITH PADDY MAYHEW**10.45pm on 13 February**

Mayhew said he had just met Trimble and JDTaylor.
The atmospherics had been good.

Grand Committee

Mayhew had told Trimble the Government had agreed the five measures and also that Lords Ministers should appear before the Grand Committee.

He had also told Trimble that the Government accepted that the number of non-NI members should be reduced, though Trimble had not seemed too concerned about this point.

Trimble wants the Grand Committee to be able to debate and vote on amendments to Orders in Council and on Bills referred to it. He claimed this replicated what was done in the Scottish Grand Committee

Mayhew had agreed to consider this. He said to PM that if the Scottish Grand Committee had these powers, the Government ought to be able to manage this for the NIGC—but he wasn't sure what the Scottish position was.

Trimble had been pleased with the assurances that the Government was getting a move on.

Mayhew had told him he was working on an announcement within 2/3 weeks, and had said he had discussed the issues with the Prime Minister and Chief Whip.

Trimble was reassured.

Talks

Mayhew had told Trimble the UUP paper had not been taken off the table; the Government's had been, but purely as a good housekeeping measure

Trimble said the UUP's was not intended to undermine the basis of talks.

Mayhew said to the Prime Minister that no new problems had emerged. He thought Trimble's letter to the Prime Minister had been written in the heat of the moment. Mayhew and Trimble had agreed that the next step was to see how Mallon responded (?to the UUP paper).

BSE

Trimble said he needed to know whether the certified herd scheme would provide from the beginning for a regional application. He wanted Northern Ireland specified separately so the ban could be lifted there completely.

Mayhew had told him that what was being put forward was a UK scheme but one designed in such a way that it would help Northern Ireland first.

Trimble said this was not good enough.

Mayhew had told him that was all that was on offer

Trimble then asked to see copy of scheme.

Mayhew said he'd consider this.

Interconnector

Mayhew had told Trimble of the Prime Minister's strong sympathy. But there were real political difficulties in Scotland that could not be brushed aside.

Trimble knows that the Government understands the importance of the interconnector to Northern Ireland industry. But he was looking for reassurance on Monday.

Mayhew told the Prime Minister he had not mentioned some of the other problems to Trimble, such as the risk of judicial review.

North Report

Trimble was reassured that Jim Molyneaux was being considered for membership of new the Commission.

Molyneaux would probably have to give up his role as grand panjandrum of the Black Praeceptorate, and was dubious about taking on job on the Commission.

Other points

Mayhew said he had had a brief discussion of security issues with Trimble (no details given).

He had also discussed rate relief. Mayhew said to the Prime Minister that he wondered why we did not give rate relief to small village shops in Northern Ireland, as in the new proposals for GB. He had not spotted this before, and would investigate the possibility.

PM's reaction

The Prime Minister mostly listened: this was Mayhew at his most staccato, reeling off the list of points (which may explain any errors or misunderstandings in this record!). The Prime Minister did express some concern about Trimble's references to needing reassurance on various points on Monday. Was this a threat? Mayhew didn't know: he said they hadn't discussed Monday's vote at all.