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UUP-SDLP Meeting with the Prime Minister.

18 May 1995

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1. Sean Farren made the following points this morning concerning yesterday's meeting in London between a joint UUP-SDLP delegation and the Prime Minister. *Far*
- Present on the British side were the Prime Minister; Sir Patrick Mayhew and David Fell. The UUP group included Molyneaux; Reg Empey; Roy Beggs and Jim Nicholson. The SDLP group consisted of Hume; Seamus Mallon; Joe Hendron and Farren.
 - Prime Minister Major opened by welcoming the group in warm terms and said the attendance of a joint delegation from the two largest parties in the North was a constructive and positive development.
 - Hume and Molyneaux gave separate short introductions and outlined broad concerns on the range of economic and social issues to be discussed.
 - An item by item discussion took place on specific agreed topics. These included Energy prices; Next step agencies, educational and health structures; library boards; water privatisation; general economic situation.
 - Reg Empey and Roy Beggs made a strong demand for greater local Government powers in the North. The SDLP lightly made the point that this is a highly contentious political issue.
 - Towards the end of the meeting, the Prime Minister wondered what might be done to help build on the meeting. He said the Government is committed to establishment of agreed institutions in Northern Ireland and that the best scenario would be for

local politicians to have the power to reverse, if they so wished, British Government policy decisions in the economic and social areas.

- Hume and Molyneaux responded to this in general terms and said the two parties will continue to engage in dialogue.
- Farren said that there was no definite outcome to the meeting (which lasted about an hour) but that, in general terms the British side agreed to examine the problem of high energy prices in the North; accepted that that is considerable criticism of health and education reforms; agreed to consider criticisms made of Next step agencies and said that water privatisation in the North will not be introduced during the present Parliament.
- Following the meeting, Hume approached Mayhew about the Washington Conference and was informed that the British Government would be confirming a meeting between Mayhew and Adams in Washington.

2. Farren today said the British confirmation of the Mayhew-Adams meeting needlessly overshadowed in media terms the meeting with the Prime Minister. Farren added that it also left the UUP group "in a somewhat sour mood" in informal discussions afterwards.

No date has yet been arranged for the next UUP-SDLP meeting.

Hume was also extremely annoyed at what he felt was a deliberate "upstaging" of the meeting by the British

See 21/5



G. Corr

19 May, 1995

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