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*with the
compliments of*

Sir John Biggs-Davison M.P.

~~Prime Minister~~

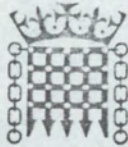
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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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A.S.C. 6/11

From: Sir John Biggs-Davison M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

24th December 1981

I am deeply concerned as are a number of colleagues experienced and keenly interested in Northern Ireland, that in you House on the 17th December you should have rejected out of hand what is called 'integration'.

on previous part ✓ I have spoken and corresponded with Jim Prior and the Prime Minister in protest at the closing of this option and am sending them a copy of this letter. It seems to me as unwise as when Henry Colyton (then Hopkinson) described one 'political solution' for Cyprus as 'never' to be granted.

He wrote in Ray last year

I enclose a copy of my letter which appeared in the Daily Telegraph on the 23rd December.

The Earl of Gowrie.

DT 23-x11-81

Dispersing pessimism on Northern Ireland

From Sir JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON, M P
(Con.)

SIR—Congratulations on your bumper Ulster editorial page!

May you succeed in dispersing the fog of wishful thinking punctuated by pessimism that clouds counsel in Whitehall. Wishful thinking goes to the extent of courting rebuff after rebuff as Convention succeeds Assembly and "economic forum" takes the place of political talks.

The pessimism appears in what you describe as the "highly questionable view" that Roman Catholic "natives" will outbreed Protestant "planters." Demographic forecasts are notoriously uncertain.

What is certain is the preference you mention of a substantial Roman Catholic minority for the Union over the Republic. The poll published in the SUNDAY TIMES on June 28 gave, despite its defeatist misinterpretation of the result, 39 per cent. of Northern Ireland Roman Catholics as finding permanent integration with Great Britain as acceptable while 62 per cent. wanted an "assembly with guarantees for Catholics."

They are ignored, not encouraged, by the media and most politicians. These unionists, with a small "u," may have little love for any Unionist party. Many would support a Conservative-Unionist alliance seen to be non-sectarian and not tied to the Orange Order.

It is not enough for our leaders to repeat the grudging incantation to the effect that the Union will persist while the majority insist.

This frigid attitude encourages terrorism. Unionist fears and IRA hopes feed on an uncertainty bred by fruitless political initiatives about fancy constitutions which would put Northern Ireland at arm's length from Great Britain. One parliament in the United Kingdom is enough.

Given just representation in both Houses, the concern sometimes expressed that Ulster politicians must have scope is surely met. Northern Ireland is a province the size of Yorkshire; Westminster protects minorities better than Stormont did.

So you are right to advocate a "modest restoration" of local government. In some district councils Social Democratic and Labour party work well with Unionists. The Secretary of State has the sticks and carrots to allay minority fears and cure abuses.

You also do well to defend "Anglo-Irish" co-operation and to assert the prime common interest of the two sovereign States within these islands in the defeat of movements vowed to destroy them both.

Put the Union beyond doubt and develop "unique relationship." The secession of the South from the United Kingdom inevitably followed by Northern secession from the South rules out a United Ireland. United Islands are possible.

JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON
House of Commons.