

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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Miss Kavanagh
PA 43

Mr. Swift

Mr. & Mrs. Digney Mr. Burke
This exercise is new, I think,
dead but the subject is really
more for your side than for mine
HS 5/11

1. I have examined as requested, together with Mr. Manley whose paper is attached, the possibility of an SDLP candidate receiving election to the European Parliament on the basis of the electoral procedures proposed by the House of Commons Select Committee, i.e. three single seat constituencies each electing a member on the first past the post system. The Committee also recommended that the number of electors per constituency should be approximately equal. In the case of Northern Ireland this would mean 344,413 electors per constituency.

2. An examination of traditional voting patterns indicates that the core of any constituency likely to elect an SDLP member will encompass the following four existing Westminster/Assembly constituencies: Armagh, Derry, Fermanagh/South Tyrone and Mid-Ulster. The likely outcome of an election in such a constituency is calculated below on the basis of the results of the Convention Election (May 1975) and is set out in Table 1. It is reasonable to assume that active campaigning for election to the European Parliament will in Northern Ireland be confined to the SDLP, UUUC and Alliance Parties. The Republican parties are either indifferent or actively hostile (e.g. Official Sinn Féin) to participation in the institutions of the European Communities. Other parties such as UPNI and NILP are of very minor electoral importance in the area under consideration. In Table 1 therefore the votes received by UPNI and the Republican Clubs have been added to the SDLP, UUUC and Alliance totals on a basis roughly approximating to the pattern of transfers observed in the Convention Election (see the Division's report on that election) and appear as Total "B"

i.e. UPNI - 50% (42.48)* UUUC
- 50% (38.94)* Alliance

Republican Clubs - 50% (39.37)* SDLP

[50% non-transferable]

* actual percentages from Report in brackets.

The figures in Table 1 show that such a constituency, while almost meeting the criterion of number of electors, could be expected to return a UUUC candidate by a large overall majority, approx. 19,000.

3. The next stage of the survey was to redefine the boundaries of the constituency to exclude the Unionist strongholds of Coleraine and Craigavon districts and to include that part of Newry and Mourne district not already part of the Armagh Westminster constituency. The outcome of an election within these revised boundaries was then examined on the basis of the returns in the 1973 Local Government elections. In the case of Newry and Mourne district a coefficient (60%) which is roughly equal to the proportion of the total population of the district which was outside the Armagh constituency was applied to the complete returns for the district. Table 2 sets out the results of this exercise.

4. The conclusion to be drawn from these figures must be that it is not possible even with the most drastic redrawing of constituency

Mr. Burke

boundaries to carve out a single seat constituency that could be relied on with any degree of certainty to elect an SDLP candidate. The figures in Tables 1 and 2 establish this fairly conclusively for the case of elections held under the first past the post system. They also, however, give little hope of effecting any change in this situation even if PR in the form of the STV method of voting were to be introduced. This leads to a further conclusion that if, as the Taoiseach said in the Dáil on 14 July "this [3rd seat for Northern Ireland] makes it possible to make arrangements for the Northern minority to be represented in the European Parliament" it will have to be in the context of a single Northern Ireland constituency electing three members by the PR system of voting.

Electo

SDLP

UUP

Other

Total "B" = Total "A" + votes given to other parties distributed as described in text.

P. Hennessy

6 September 1976

	Total "A"	Coleraine	Craigavon	Total "B"	Total "C"	Total "D"
SDLP	333,413	30,272	46,988	370,693	29,307	399,999
UUP	86,325	1,813	3,032	89,170	7,127	96,297
Other	122,432	13,572	20,871	146,875	2,254	149,129
Total	542,170	45,657	70,891	613,958	38,688	652,646

Total "A" = Coleraine + Craigavon; "B" = "A" + Newry + Mourne (space)

Report prepared in the Division on Local Government Elections, 1976

TABLE 1

	<u>Armagh</u>	<u>Derry</u>	<u>Fermanagh/ S. Tyrone</u>	<u>Mid- Ulster</u>	<u>Total "A"</u>	<u>Total "B"</u>
Electorate	90,640	92,003	70,344	80,806	333,613	
SDLP	17,012	23,202	21,272	19,776	81,262	86,325
UUUC	32,800	30,175	27,573	27,457	118,005	122,422
Alliance	3,049	4,778	1,464	3,368	12,659	17,076

Total "B" = Total "A" + votes given to other parties distributed as described in text.

Source: Report prepared in the Division on Convention Election, May 1975.

TABLE 2

	<u>Total "B"</u>	<u>Coleraine</u>	<u>Craigavon</u>	<u>Total "C"</u>	<u>Newry & Mourne (part)</u>	<u>Total "D"</u>
Electorate	333,613	30,272	46,980	256,361	29,257	285,618
SDLP	86,325	1,813	3,032	81,480	7,123	88,603
UUUC	122,422	13,572	20,871	87,979	2,254	90,233
Alliance	17,076	2,869	4,944	9,263	2,363	11,626

Total "C" = "B" - (Coleraine & Craigavon); "D" = "C" + Newry & Mourne (part)

Source: Report prepared in the Division on Local Government Elections, May 1973.