



The Rt. Hon. James Molyneux, JP., MP.

LEADER — THE ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY.

House of Commons,
London, SW1A 0AA.

24 May, 1984.

Dear Michael

In my talk with the Prime Minister on Tuesday I was not sure that there might not have been some misunderstanding of what I was trying to say on this subject of the annual renewal of 'direct rule' under the 1974 Act.

I accept that until the apparatus of the 1973 Act can eventually be disposed of - and that is still some way off - annual renewal of the 1974 Act is necessary; nor would I see any advantage at present in seeking to lengthen the interval between renewals.

I was trying to make the point, however, that there is a world of difference between mere renewal for a further twelve months as hitherto and renewal accompanied by Ministerial indication that during those twelve months the Government hoped (1) to see a certain, if limited, transfer to local authorities of some suitable powers (on the exercise of which they are already consulted as a matter of course) and (2) to include Northern Ireland directly in more UK legislation while retaining, as still convenient, if not indispensable, for some purposes, the power to legislate by Order in Council.

The significance of renewal being accompanied by some such indication would not be overlooked. It would be seen in all quarters as practical evidence of a change in emphasis and of the Government's intention to make steady political progress in Northern Ireland in a way which would raise no doubts about the future of the Union.

I thought you might wish to put this note along with your record of the meeting, for future reference.

Yours ever
Jim

The Rt. Hon. Michael Alison, MP.