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Meeting with Quaker Peace and Service, Belfast, 15 June 1983

I met at my request with the representatives of the Quaker Peace and Service, William and Jean Simpton, at Quaker House in Belfast on 15 June. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss with them the possibility of a submission to the New Ireland Forum.

They stressed difficulties which could arise for any person not of the minority tradition in Northern Ireland who made a contribution to the Forum. One of the difficulties here is that many people in the North think the purpose of the Forum is to lead persons down the road towards a united Ireland.

They will nonetheless try to get a group together to present the Quaker case to the Forum. They thought the main point in any such case would be the Quaker concern for peace. They did not think that it would be possible for them to produce a submission before September.

They mentioned that they had been in contact with the Department of the Taoiseach about the possibility of a meeting with the Taoiseach or with one of his representatives. I had a long conversation with them about Government policy and they felt that in the light of that their request might not be seen as having been responded to.

They are of the view that it would be best if the SDLP could find a way to enter the Assembly. They did not see the DUP as being likely to change and thought that McCusker had become very hard. They remained convinced that the relative lack of terrorist activity on the part of the UDA indicates that they are determined to continue their move towards legitimate politics.

Doc
D. Ó Ceallaigh

22 June 1983