

F R.

CONFIDENTIAL

POL 114/12
CC PS/PUS (B & L)
Mr Gilliland
Mr Blatherwick
Miss McGlashan

HCS/11/63

Mr Wyatt



OFFICIAL UNIONIST PARTY

I have just seen Mr Blatherwick's minute of 24 November suggesting that the Secretary of State should 'interfere' in the affairs of the Official Unionist Party in an effort to bring about a change of leadership.

I think that it would be a serious mistake to do this. To begin with it would become known and be criticised on the grounds that the Secretary of State was stepping outside his field of responsibility. At a time when we are having to underline where the authority of the Secretary of State applies that would be particularly unwise.

Second, I do not think that the OUP needs to be told that it lacks leadership and is losing ground to more extreme Unionist groups. Moves are afoot to unseat Mr Molyneaux and would by now have had results were an obvious successor in the wings. Recent events will have gone a long way to bringing about the necessary change. When it takes place is the time for the Secretary of State to move - definitely not before.

W E Bell

W E BELL

25 November 1981

*Mr Bell 7/12.
Is quite accurate!*

[Signature] 7/12

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