

4. For information, the BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND has recommended that a more equitable distribution of the present 85 seats would be to allocate REPRESENTATION TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY constituencies and six seats to the East Londonderry, Foyle, Fermanagh Valley and South Down constituencies.

One of the tasks of the Commission during their forthcoming review will be to submit a supplementary report recommending the number of members which should be returned to the Northern Ireland Assembly by each of the proposed Parliamentary constituencies.

2. The number of members of the first Assembly (dissolved in 1975) was fixed at 78 by the Northern Ireland Assembly Act 1973. The Commission have the power to recommend that the number of members should be altered but that power is subject to the limitation that the Commission are not to make a recommendation whose effect would be substantially to alter that number of members. In their last report, the Commission recommended (and the Government accepted) that there should be an Assembly of 85 members and that each of the 17 Parliamentary constituencies should return 5 members elected by the single transferable method of voting.

3. The attached table (annex A) shows that with the changes there have been in the size of Parliamentary constituency electorates the present distribution of 5 members for each constituency may no longer be tenable. Hitherto the Boundary Commissions have worked to tolerances of plus or minus 10% whereas the present divergence (based on latest electorate figures) ranges from more than 21% below to more than 15% above the average number of electors per Assembly member.



# IN CONFIDENCE

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY - CONSTITUENCIES, ELECTORATES, AND REPRESENTATION

Table 1: Constituencies, Electorates, and Representation

4. For information, Members may wish to note (Annex B) that a more equitable distribution of the present 85 seats would be to allocate only four seats to each of the four Belfast constituencies and six seats to the East Londonderry, Foyle, Lagan Valley and South Down constituencies.

|                               | Electorate | Divergence | Electors per<br>Assembly Member | Total of<br>Electors | Divergence | Electors per<br>Assembly Member |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| Belfast                       | 59,207     | -3.3%      | 11,841                          | 53,573               | -49.8%     | 10,675                          |
| Belfast North                 | 68,727     | +7.4%      | 13,745                          | 29,587               | -47.2%     | 11,117                          |
| Belfast South                 | 57,938     | -5.2%      | 11,588                          | 52,556               | -21.7%     | 10,511                          |
| Belfast West                  | 61,179     | -4.1%      | 12,236                          | 55,280               | -17.7%     | 11,256                          |
| East Antrim                   | 56,985     | -3.5%      | 11,397                          | 61,739               | + 5.7%     | 12,348                          |
| East Londonderry              | 57,525     | +3.7%      | 12,578                          | 76,912               | +14.5%     | 15,388                          |
| Fermanagh and<br>South Tyrone | 59,129     | +6.8%      | 13,225                          | 71,472               | + 5.4%     | 14,294                          |
| Foyle                         | 63,486     | +3.7%      | 12,697                          | 95,978               | +13.1%     | 19,194                          |
| Lagan Valley                  | 56,888     | -2.7%      | 11,373                          | 73,688               | + 9.7%     | 14,733                          |
| Mid Ulster                    | 52,525     | +2.3%      | 12,525                          | 78,470               | + 4.3%     | 14,000                          |
| Monaghan and<br>Armagh        | 51,483     | +0.4%      | 12,203                          | 68,718               | + 2.3%     | 13,743                          |
| North Antrim                  | 62,555     | +2.1%      | 12,511                          | 76,217               | + 4.8%     | 14,043                          |
| North Down                    | 59,363     | -2.7%      | 11,873                          | 59,694               | + 3.7%     | 11,939                          |
| Strangford                    | 58,388     | -3.5%      | 11,678                          | 58,855               | + 4.0%     | 11,769                          |
| South Antrim                  | 57,277     | -5.4%      | 11,455                          | 68,292               | + 1.7%     | 13,658                          |
| South Down                    | 64,785     | +5.1%      | 12,957                          | 77,371               | +15.2%     | 15,474                          |
| Upper Fermanagh               | 58,212     | -2.8%      | 11,642                          | 68,472               | + 3.2%     | 13,694                          |
| TOTAL                         | 1,049,586  |            | 18,241                          | 1,385,495            |            | 22,408                          |
|                               |            |            | (average)                       |                      |            | (average)                       |

Q&A/1925

SJV/ESL2/2857



NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY – CONSTITUENCIES, ELECTORATES, AND REPRESENTATIONS  
(at 5 Assembly members per constituency)

|                               | 1979                  |            |                                 | 1992                  |            |                                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|---------------------------------|
|                               | 1                     | 2          | 3                               | 4                     | 5          | 6                               |
|                               | Size of<br>Electorate | Divergence | Electors per<br>Assembly Member | Size of<br>Electorate | Divergence | Electors per<br>Assembly Member |
| Belfast East                  | 59,207                | -3.3%      | 11,841                          | 53,375                | -20.5%     | 10,675                          |
| Belfast North                 | 65,723                | +7.4%      | 13,145                          | 55,587                | -17.2%     | 11,117                          |
| Belfast South                 | 57,938                | -5.3%      | 11,588                          | 52,556                | -21.7%     | 10,511                          |
| Belfast West                  | 61,179                | -0.1%      | 12,236                          | 55,280                | -17.7%     | 11,056                          |
| East Antrim                   | 58,985                | -3.6%      | 11,797                          | 63,739                | - 5.1%     | 12,748                          |
| East Londonderry              | 64,596                | +5.5%      | 12,919                          | 76,912                | +14.5%     | 15,382                          |
| Fermanagh and<br>South Tyrone | 66,129                | +8.0%      | 13,226                          | 71,472                | + 6.4%     | 14,294                          |
| Foyle                         | 63,486                | +3.7%      | 12,697                          | 75,970                | +13.1%     | 15,194                          |
| Lagan Valley                  | 56,869                | -7.1%      | 11,373                          | 73,688                | + 9.7%     | 14,738                          |
| Mid Ulster                    | 62,628                | +2.3%      | 12,526                          | 70,410                | + 4.9%     | 14,082                          |
| Newry & Armagh                | 61,463                | +0.4%      | 12,293                          | 68,716                | + 2.3%     | 13,743                          |
| North Antrim                  | 62,505                | +2.1%      | 12,501                          | 70,217                | + 4.6%     | 14,043                          |
| North Down                    | 59,563                | -2.7%      | 11,913                          | 69,604                | + 3.7%     | 13,921                          |
| Strangford                    | 58,996                | -3.6%      | 11,799                          | 69,855                | + 4.0%     | 13,971                          |
| South Antrim                  | 57,277                | -6.4%      | 11,455                          | 68,292                | + 1.7%     | 13,658                          |
| South Down                    | 64,349                | +5.1%      | 12,870                          | 77,371                | +15.2%     | 15,474                          |
| Upper Bann                    | 59,613                | -2.6%      | 11,833                          | 68,422                | + 1.9%     | 13,684                          |
| TOTAL                         | 1,040,506             |            | 12,241<br>(average)             | 1,141,466             |            | 13,429<br>(average)             |

CAM/TYP/1925



## REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

|                               | 1                  | 2           | 3                   | 4                            |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
|                               | size of electorate | no of seats | electors per seat   | divergence of<br>3 from mean |
| Belfast East                  | 53,375             | 4           | 13,344              | -0.9%                        |
| Belfast North                 | 55,587             | 4           | 13,897              | +3.2%                        |
| Belfast South                 | 52,556             | 4           | 13,139              | -2.5%                        |
| Belfast West                  | 55,280             | 4           | 13,820              | +2.6%                        |
| East Antrim                   | 63,739             | 5           | 12,748              | -5.3%                        |
| East Londonderry              | 76,912             | 6           | 12,819              | -4.8%                        |
| Fermanagh and<br>South Tyrone | 71,472             | 5           | 14,294              | +6.1%                        |
| Foyle                         | 75,970             | 6           | 12,662              | -6.0%                        |
| Lagan Valley                  | 73,688             | 6           | 12,281              | -8.8%                        |
| Mid Ulster                    | 70,410             | 5           | 14,082              | +4.5%                        |
| Newry & Armagh                | 68,716             | 5           | 13,743              | +2.0%                        |
| North Antrim                  | 70,217             | 5           | 14,043              | +4.2%                        |
| North Down                    | 69,604             | 5           | 13,921              | +3.3%                        |
| Strangford                    | 69,855             | 5           | 13,971              | +3.7%                        |
| South Antrim                  | 68,292             | 5           | 13,658              | +1.4%                        |
| South Down                    | 77,371             | 6           | 12,895              | -4.3%                        |
| Upper Bann                    | 68,422             | 5           | 13,684              | +1.6%                        |
| TOTAL                         | 1,141,466          | 85          | 13,471<br>(average) |                              |



# REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY - OPTION 2

| 1                             | 2           | 3                 | 4                            |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| size of electorate            | no of seats | electors per seat | divergence of<br>3 from mean |
| Belfast East                  | 53,375      | 4                 | 13,344                       |
| Belfast North                 | 55,587      | 4                 | 13,897                       |
| Belfast South                 | 52,556      | 4                 | 13,139                       |
| Belfast West                  | 55,280      | 4                 | 13,820                       |
| East Antrim                   | 63,739      | 5                 | 12,748                       |
| East Londonderry              | 76,912      | 5                 | 15,382                       |
| Fermanagh and<br>South Tyrone | 71,472      | 5                 | 14,294                       |
| Foyle                         | 75,970      | 5                 | 15,194                       |
| Lagan Valley                  | 73,688      | 5                 | 14,738                       |
| Mid Ulster                    | 70,410      | 5                 | 14,082                       |
| Newry & Armagh                | 68,716      | 5                 | 13,743                       |
| North Antrim                  | 70,217      | 5                 | 14,043                       |
| North Down                    | 69,604      | 5                 | 13,921                       |
| Strangford                    | 69,855      | 5                 | 13,971                       |
| South Antrim                  | 68,292      | 5                 | 13,658                       |
| South Down                    | 77,371      | 5                 | 15,474                       |
| Upper Bann                    | 68,422      | 5                 | 13,684                       |
| TOTAL                         | 1,141,466   | 81                | 14,067                       |
|                               |             | (average)         |                              |

11. In July the new Secretary of State, Mr Prior, had proposed to establish a NI Council by administrative act which would be composed of Westminster, European, and local council representatives. All the Parties gave a cool response, and in August the SDLP declined to take part because of the lack of an "Irish dimension". In November the Prime Minister met the Taoiseach, and agreed to set up an Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council.

12. In April 1982 a White Paper (Cmd 8541) was published, giving an Assembly which would scrutinise the operation of direct rule and consider proposals for full or partial devolution. The White Paper was given effect by the Northern Ireland Act 1982.

CPLN/22/RD/12071

B/TYP/2103