

28 November 1995

TO: 1. PS/Baroness Denton (DED) cc Secretary
2. PS/Michael Ancram (DENI B&L) Mr McDonnell
Mr Gibson
FROM: Ashley Ray (DED) Mr Woods (NIIS)
Mr Robinson (IDB)
Mr McConnell (IRTU)
Mr Jordan (T&EA)
Mr Neville (LEDU)
Ms Elliott (NITB)
Mr Briant
Mr Gamble
Mr McAleer (NIIS)
Mrs Heron
Mr McCune
MC
File

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA RECEPTION: 28 NOVEMBER 1995

Purpose

1. The purpose of this note is to forward a short draft speech, together with background bull points, for Michael Ancram's attendance at the above event.

Background

2. Michael Ancram has kindly agreed, at short notice, to stand in for Baroness Denton, who is indisposed.

3. The reception is for members of the international press. The aim is for a very informal gathering with opportunities for the Minister and the accompanying officials and representatives of the NI business community to mingle with members of the press. *For this reason it is recommended that the Minister seeks to answer questions in as an informal a setting as possible; a formal panel arrangement is not advised.*
4. The size and coverage of the likely audience is not yet known, but some 1,200 media representatives have been accredited for the President Clinton visit; they cover US, GB, European and local media.

Officials in Attendance

4. The following will be in attendance in support of the Minister and to network with the audience:

David Gibson and) from the Department of Economic Development

Roy Gamble)

Bruce Robinson (Chief Executive) from the Industrial Development Board

Greg McConnell (Chief Executive) from the Industrial Research and Technology Unit

Alan Neville (Corporate Services Director) from the Local Enterprise Development Unit

Victor Jordan (Director) from the Training and Employment Agency

Sandra Elliott (Sales Director) from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board

NI Business Representatives

5. In addition a large number (up to 40) of representatives of local business are likely to attend. Reference to their presence is contained in the attached draft speech.

Draft Speech

6. The attached speech seeks to:
 - a. welcome the audience;
 - b. set the scene in the context of President Clinton's visit;
 - c. highlight "good news" messages; and
 - d. encourage the press to raise questions and to take the opportunity of the reception to talk to the representatives of the local business community who are also attending.
7. Michael Ancram will be best placed to cover the Peace Process and the present situation. However, the speech briefly addresses this point.

Additional Background Material/Bull Points

7. Attached is additional information, in bull point form covering:
 - a. the Government's overall political aims and the talks process;
 - b. economic performance;
 - c. the business message - Northern Ireland as an investment location (this includes people/workforce; education and training; infrastructure/transportation; lifestyle; investment);
 - d. Local Enterprise Development Unit;
 - e. technological innovation;

f. training;

g. tourism;

h. fair employment.

Ashley Ray

ASHLEY RAY

DRAFT SPEECH

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA RECEPTION: TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER

Ladies and gentlemen I am delighted to welcome all of you here this evening. I am only sorry that because of a rather virulent flu virus my colleague, Jean Denton, the Minister for the Economy and Agriculture can't be here with you tonight. I know that Jean is very disappointed at missing this opportunity to meet the international press and to talk about subjects dear to our hearts, Northern Ireland and it's people.

The world sees Northern Ireland through your eyes. With so many of you here to record the President's historic visit, the world can only be better informed.

This reception is an opportunity for you to ask the questions you want. However, I hope that in a few opening remarks I can set the scene, by sketching out our view of the present situation and the importance of President Clinton's visit.

President Clinton is bringing the international spotlight to the Northern Ireland stage. I am delighted that he is doing so. I know that his visit will highlight all the hard work that is going on throughout Northern Ireland, and elsewhere, to secure a lasting peace for the benefit of everyone in Northern Ireland.

Peace Process

Her Majesty's Government and the Government in the Republic of Ireland are fully committed to building on the Peace Process. What does this mean? It means that we are seeking to establish the conditions which will create an environment in which all political parties can get together to talk about a settlement for the future.

Progress

When you think back some 15 months you realize that good progress has been made in a very short time. I am sure that many of you will have noticed a marked change to the Northern Ireland you may have visited less than 2 years ago.

- . Belfast is booming with welcome visitors and shoppers and not least from the Republic of Ireland;
- . road blocks have gone, border roads have been opened;
- . shoppers are no longer searched before entering shops;
- . Tourism is soaring. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board is inundated with enquiries. During the period from January to October this year

the Tourist Board has had a 69% increase in enquiries over the same period last year - from just over 256,900 in 1994 to over 435,000 this year. Perhaps the most significant indicator of rising confidence is the fact that the Tourist Board has recently estimated that it expects to deal with over 280 full applications for development projects this year. This is four times as many as it handled in 1994;

. more people are now in jobs in Northern Ireland than ever before in its history. A total of 566,500 people are working more than 23,000, additional jobs since 1991;

. unemployment (at 86,500 at October 1995), though still too high, is at its lowest level (11.5%) for 14 years;

. business confidence is strong and getting stronger. Independent surveys such as those carried out by First Trust Bank and PA Consulting are quite clear in this message;

. US is our largest single foreign investor. Corporate America has, in the past 5 years invested about \$900m in Northern Ireland. In a region of 1.6m people we have 46 US companies employing around 11,000 people. Seagate Technology, Ford, Dupont, Fruit of the Loom are household names and with them jobs. Every new job helps underpin the peace;

. investment in business is rising. Nearly 3,000 new jobs representing over £200m investment in new and existing Northern Ireland companies

has been announced in the past 2 weeks. This includes the first 4 greenfield inward investments since the ceasefires and they are spread across Northern Ireland. These include a 500 new job project from Stream International, a US leader in computer support services - to establish a UK call centre, and Sysdeco, a US-Norwegian graphic design company which produces ordnance survey maps worldwide, is opening a 400 job plant.

President Clinton has said that supporting economic growth offers the best chance for stability and prosperity. He is right. Northern Ireland has a clean green environment where healthy profitable businesses can grow. Northern Ireland has the people - and they are the real strength - to make things happen. Northern Ireland people are creative, motivated, well-educated and highly trained and most importantly want to work. They are anxious to build a secure economic future for themselves and their families and in doing so they offer a very high rate of return for those who have the wisdom to invest in them. I am sure this is a message which President Clinton will be taking back with him.

As I said earlier I am glad that I have the opportunity to be with you here this evening and I now look forward to the opportunity of hearing what you have got to say.

In closing let me say that I am happy to take any questions you may have. With me tonight are:-

David Gibson and) from the Department of Economic Development

Roy Gamble)

Bruce Robinson (Chief Executive) from the Industrial Development Board

Greg McConnell (Chief Executive) from the Industrial Research and
Technology Unit

Alan Neville (Corporate Services Director) from the Local Enterprise
Development Unit

Victor Jordan (Director) from the Training and Employment Agency

Sandra Elliott (Sales Director) from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board

and they can field any specific questions related to their areas of
activity.

Finally, we have a large number of representatives from local business
with us this evening. I heartily encourage you to take tonight's
opportunity to speak to them and take their views. I know, from personal
experience, - not always comfortable I can assure you - that these people
tell it as it is!

Thank you

BACKGROUND BRIEFING

INDEX

- . The Government's overall political aims and the talks process.
- . Other bull point briefing:
 - Economic Performance.
 - The Business Message/Northern Ireland as an Investment Location.
 - People/Workforce.
 - Education and Training.
 - Infrastructure/Transportation.
 - Lifestyle.
 - Investment (including investment from USA).
 - Local Enterprise Development Unit.
 - Technological Innovation/Industrial Research and Technology (IRTU).
 - Training the Workforce/Training and Employment Agency (T&EA).
 - Tourism [also includes White House Conference - Tourism Communique].
 - Fair Employment.

THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL POLITICAL AIMS AND THE TALKS PROCESS

Bull Points

- (i) The Government's aims and objectives in Northern Ireland are to secure a lasting peace in Northern Ireland and to help the people of Northern Ireland reach a just, comprehensive political settlement, founded on consent right across the community.
- (ii) We are convinced that the way to ensure that such a settlement is truly founded on consent is to ensure that there are all-party talks in order to negotiate such a settlement, and then that that settlement is put to the people of Northern Ireland.
- (iii) An overall settlement must address three key sets of relationships:
 - those within Northern Ireland;
 - those between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland;
 - and those between the Republic of Ireland and UK Government.
- (iv) Any new arrangements must take account of the views of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland, who want Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom and the sizeable minority who want to see a united Ireland.
- (v) Any political settlement must be founded on the fundamental principles of democracy and consent, and can only be reached by agreement between parties who have a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods.

- (vi) Sinn Fein and the two small loyalist parties have democratic mandates within Northern Ireland (- around 10% for Sinn Fein and slightly under 1% for the loyalist parties). We question whether it is right for political parties who still have close associations with paramilitary organisations who are still in control of considerable arsenals of weapons, to engage at this stage in full negotiations about the constitutional future of Northern Ireland.
- (vii) We believe that in order to instil the confidence and trust needed to bring all parties around the table there should be the beginning of a credible and verifiable process of decommissioning of weapons by paramilitary organisations on both side of the community. This process must be one in which all parties can have trust and confidence.
- (viii) We have been considering a twin-track approach. With on the one hand the establishment of an independent body or commission to examine the issue of decommissioning and to advise the two governments, and on the other, inclusive talks aimed at laying the groundwork for the substantive talks later on. We have said that we would look at the recommendations of an international body on decommissioning carefully and give them due weight on their merits.
- (ix) We have recently provided the political parties in Northern Ireland, the Irish Government and the US Administration with a paper which sets out what we believe are the essential elements of a twin-track approach covering both the role of an international body in relation to decommissioning and preparatory talks to discuss the ground rules for all-party negotiations. The paper is intended to enable discussion of the concepts underlying the twin-tracks approach. We have not in any sense sought to provide a draft text.

BULL POINTS

Economic Performance

- (i) Despite the troubles of recent years the Northern Ireland economy is well placed to take full advantage of the growth in the world economy:
- (ii) Manufacturing output has grown by 5.6% in the last year (to second quarter 1995) and is 16% higher than it was five years ago
- (iii) Unemployment (86,500 at October, 11.5% of the workforce) is the lowest since August 1981.
- (iv) The numbers in employment at end June were 566,550, the highest June figure on record
- (v) Business confidence is strong and getting stronger independent surveys such as that by First Trust Bank and PA Consulting are clear on this message.
- (vi) Northern Ireland has a GDP of around £12.4 million (1993).
(Please note the 1994 figure will not be released until December 1995). The forecasted real GDP growth (by First Trust Bank, October 1995) is expected to be 3.0% in 1995 and 3.25 % in 1996.

- (vii) Change in VAT registered businesses, an indicator of the net creation of firms, rose by 1,000 in Northern Ireland in 1994. This was equivalent to a growth rate of 1.8% - the highest among the UK standard regions. The next highest was the South East with 1.1% and the UK average was 0.3%.

The Business Message - Northern Ireland as an Investment Location

General

- (i) Population of approximately 1.6 million.
- (ii) NI is an integral part of the UK and enjoys full membership of and access to the EU. The Single European Market has a vast potential of 370 million customers.
- (iii) NI benefits from UK financial policies introduced to sharpen competitiveness of industry, particularly low rates of Corporation Tax and easy repatriation of profits.
- (iv) NI is recognised by the EU as a special area of need, and thus benefits from major financial investment for particular projects.
- (v) Fullest support provided by IDB, which is testified by overseas companies already here eg Seagate, Fruit of the Loom, Montupet, Ryobi, Daewoo, Dae Ryung, Texmaco and Daehwa Metal.

- (vi) IDB provides one of the most flexible packages of financial incentives in Europe.

People/Workforce

- (i) Just over 45% of the NI population are within the statutory age range for working. Of these an average of 11.5% are unemployed (October 1995). Average unemployment in other countries - UK 8.3%; EU 11%; USA 5.7%; Japan 3.2%; ROI 14.5%.
- (ii) Demographic trends are more favourable than in other parts of Europe and the United Kingdom.
- (iii) A high quality, adaptable, highly motivated and young labour force.
- (iv) The best industrial relations record in the UK. (eg Du Pont has been in NI for 36 years and have only had the equivalent of ¼ day stoppage)
- (v) Labour costs are 10% lower than the UK average. Also 60% below the German average, 40% below the USA average and 50% below Japanese rates.
- (vi) Labour turnover is about 3%. This compares with UK figures of anything up to 30%.
- (vii) Excellent work ethic - people care about their jobs and are willing and keen to learn new skills.
- (viii) A tradition of industrial excellence and innovation in fields as diverse as textiles, electronics, computer software and aerospace.

Education and Training

- (i) High standard of examination results in schools. In 1994/5 there was a 63.4% pass rate in 3 or more subjects at grade A-C GCSE level compared with 52.8% in England and Wales and 87.7% at 'A' level compared with 83% in England and Wales.
- (ii) Approximately 36.4% of young people under 21 were in higher education in 1993/1994 compared with 29.7% in England and Wales.
- (iii) The current graduating force from NI's 2 universities stands at 8,300.
- (iv) Particularly strong links between Universities and Industry
- (v) Excellent research facilities at both universities. (eg Bio-engineering Centre at University of Ulster and Automotive research at QUB)

Infrastructure/Transportation

- (i) Excellent road network. (155 miles of motorway and dual carriageway.)
- (ii) No place in NI is more than 2 hours travel by road.
- (iii) Three Airports. Belfast International Airport is the second largest regional freight airport in the UK and carries over 3 million passengers

annually. Repeat expansions have taken place at Eglinton Airport in the North West and Belfast City Airport

- (iv) 640 flights per week to GB destinations and 70 to European destinations. Belfast-London is now the second busiest air route in Europe. In the first five months of 1995 three quarters of a million people passed through Belfast International, an increase of 15% on the year.
- (v) 5 major seaports. 58% of all sea freight leaving the island of Ireland passes through NI ports. Belfast port is the busiest in Ireland. Larne is the busiest RO/RO Ferry port in Ireland.
- (vi) As evidence of NI's good infrastructure/transportation facilities AVX based their European Distribution Centre in NI in 1991.
- (vii) An infrastructure which includes uncongested highways, modern shipping facilities, world-wide direct communications and a shuttle air service giving direct access to world travel.
- (viii) NI benefits from the telecommunications system STAR. This system was funded by the European Community and has provided NI with the most advanced digital/fibre optic telecommunications network within the EU.
- (ix) The Star initiative has also enabled the provision of an ISDN capability (Integrated

Services Digital Network) allowing simultaneous transmission of voice text, graphics and video.

Lifestyle

- (i) NI has the lowest crime rate in the UK, and indeed is lower than many other European countries.
- (ii) NI has quality housing and excellent leisure and recreational facilities.
- (iii) NI has quality shopping facilities; most high street names in GB can be found in Belfast and other provincial towns.
- (iv) NI has excellent scenery and many tourist attractions, including a wealth of cultural heritage and history. (87 Golf Courses)

Investment

- (i) Although the population of NI is only 2.8% of the total UK population it has attracted some 9% of all new investments into the UK as a whole for 1993/94 year.
- (ii) In 1994/95 IDB successfully negotiated 10 new inward investment projects for Northern Ireland which bring the promise of 1,969 jobs.
- (iii) The US is the most important single source of internationally mobile investment for the UK and in particular for NI. Almost 50% of all inward investment to the UK originates in the US, while in NI US companies represent a substantial proportion of our manufacturing and public and network services.

(iv) 195 overseas companies employing 44,500 people.

Overseas investment in Northern Ireland 1986-1995.

	Overseas Investment	Jobs from new overseas projects	Jobs from overseas expansions	Total overseas jobs
1986/87	£132m	415 (7)	2,440 (26)	2,855 (33)
1987/88	£121m	867 (12)	1,634 (26)	2,501 (38)
1988/89	£262m	1,856 (7)	2,161 (34)	4,017 (41)
1989/90	£289m	1,977 (14)	1,358 (28)	3,335 (42)
1990/91	£109m	1,294 (13)	1,118 (20)	2,412 (33)
1991/92	£90m	430 (7)	854 (18)	1,284 (25)
1992/93	£257m	1,945 (10)	1,285 (17)	3,230 (27)
1993/94	£288m	2,309 (13)	937 (12)	3,246 (25)
1994/95	£130m	1,969 (10)	1,233 (21)	3,202 (31)

Note: Figures in brackets show number of associated projects

(v) NI's attractiveness to investors demonstrated by decisions by:-

(a) Daewoo (Korea): £18m (\$29m) investment, 500 jobs to make VCRs for European market;

- (b) Montupet (France): £80m investment, 914 jobs to make aluminium cylinder heads and wheeltrims for European car industry. This was followed by £142m investment for an expansion project creating 1360 jobs;
- (c) Ryobi (Japan): £15m (\$25m) investment 100 jobs to make aluminium die castings for European car industry.
- (d) Polysindo Texmaco (Indonesia) £95m investment, first project Norfill to produce man made yarn second project, Pan European Textiles to weave and process yarn.
- (e) MKF Folien (Germany): £10m investment, 100 jobs by 1996 in Newry area making material for packaging industry.
- (f) Daesung Circuits (Korea): £5m investment, 120 jobs over 5 years making printed circuit boards in Ballymena.
- (g) Dae Ryung Industries: £18m electronics plant in Craigavon producing satellite video receivers. Expected to employ 509 people by end of 1997.
- (h) Benelux Manufacturing (Hong Kong): £36.6m investment creating 300 jobs making containers for compact discs at Limavady.

- (i) Daehwa Metal (Korea): £7m investment, 240 jobs by 1997 at Antrim making pressed metal components.
 - (j) Daewoo Electro-Components (Korea): £11m investment creating 255 jobs by 1997 in Carrickfergus making electronic tuners for TV sets and video cassette recorders (VCR's).
- (vi) The following US companies have also found NI a good investment:-
- (a) Ford: £78m investment to make components for its new generation 'Zeta' engine;
 - (b) Fruit of the Loom: £60m (\$98m) investment 909 jobs in cotton spinning operation in North West;
 - (c) Seagate: £43m (\$65m) investment, initially 250 jobs rising to approximately 500 producing thin-film recording heads. A further £15m investment for research and development into the thin film technology creating 46 jobs in Londonderry. This was followed by a £60m expansion project to create an additional 300 jobs raising the total related investment to £124m and employment commitment to 852.

- (d) Teleflex Inc: £2.7m investment by NI subsidiary, Rusch Manufacturing (UK), creating 113 jobs in Lurgan by end of 1998 to develop new products for the global healthcare market.
 - (e) Stream International: £6m investment by a US leader in computer support services to establish its UK flagship Call Centre. 500 new jobs;
 - (f) Plastofilm Inc: announced the establishment of a plant to produce thermoformed plastic packaging and other products in Enniskillen which will create 68 new jobs; and
 - (g) Sysdeco: a US-Norwegian graphic design company which produces ordnance survey maps worldwide, is opening a 400-job plant.
- (vii) In the past 9 years industrial investment has totalled more than £1,678 million in Northern Ireland.
- 46 companies from the USA employing around 11,000 people.
- 11 companies from Asia Pacific established in NI currently employing around 2,800 people.
- (viii) IDB is a one-stop-shop for overseas investors.

- (ix) IDB provide a very unique aftercare service to each of its clients.
- (x) Assistance given to overseas nationals in obtaining accommodation, suitable schools for family and to help them settle into the local community.

Local Enterprise Development Unit (LEDU)

- (i) Since the launch on the 10 October of LEDU's Northern Ireland voluntary emigrant business programme "Make it Back Home", almost 1,100 enquiries have been received from potential returnees to Northern Ireland.
- (ii) In pursuance of the programme's objectives, LEDU is currently on a mission to Hong Kong. The target audience of this mission is the large numbers of ex-pat contract employees working in the Colony - these individuals may be assessing the employment prospects following the Chinese take-over in 1997.
- (iii) During 1994/95 LEDU assisted over 1,000 businesses to overcome barriers to growth surpassing last year's target by almost 300 contracts - 38% increase.
- (iv) LEDU client companies recorded a 11% increase in their overall growth rates (discounted for inflation)

Technological Innovation - IRTU

- (i) In Northern Ireland we have an Industrial Research and Technology Unit - an agency dedicated to industrial innovation and R&D. The Unit's programmes offer financial assistance to companies (often working with our 2 universities) for both near-market and pre-competitive research work.
- (ii) Particularly important is the Unit's access to European Union funding for R&D programmes. The European Union recognises the need to promote technological innovation as, a key to improved competitiveness. Through the Unit Northern Ireland companies have the opportunity to obtain European funding for their R&D programmes.
- (iii) Northern Ireland's universities are important contributors to the continual development of Northern Ireland's technological base and are active in leading edge R&D programmes eg supercomputing in collaboration with Cray (US manufacturer of highly sophisticated computers).
- (iv) A recent notable development was the signing of a Joint Agreement on Science and Technology with the US Department of Commerce.

Training the Workforce - T&EA

- (i) The Training and Employment Agency (T&EA) works in partnership with business to ensure that it has access to the flexible, innovative skills necessary for success in competitive markets.

Companies operating in NI can rely on high quality advice and assistance in recruiting and training their workforce.

- (ii) The T&EA works closely with the IDB to help inward investors and provides assistance aimed at supporting training and development through the start-up, growth and consolidation phases of inward investment through the Company Development Programme.
- (iii) While training employees in NI, a company may receive assistance in the form of a grant towards the wages/salaries and other expenses of those training off-the-job, to cover the cost of training production operatives and to pay for skilled instruction. Company Development Programme grants to inward investors are available for the training of key employees overseas in relation to costs incurred in respect of wages/salaries, flights and subsistence.
- (iv) In the field of management, T&EA has developed several programmes to include greater international exposure, particularly for young graduates who wish to pursue a management career. The Business Education Initiative commenced in 1994 offering a small number of graduates the opportunity to undertake business training at one of eleven colleges and universities in the US. The Initiative has proved so successful that in 1995 some 120 graduates and 60 colleges and universities are participating.

Tourism

- (i) Total visits to Northern Ireland during 1994 rose by 3% on 1993 levels to a record 1.294 million and holiday visitors increased by 10% to 276,000 (the highest figure since 1967). Tourism revenue from visitors also rose by 3% in real terms to £183m.
- (ii) Enquiry levels at Northern Ireland Tourist Board offices for 1994 showed an increase of 32% on 1993, handling a total of 301,594 enquiries. (93,000 between September and December, an 86% increase).
- (iii) This positive trend has continued, with enquiries to all NITB offices during the period January to October 1995 showing a 69% increase on the same period last year, from 256,906 in 1994 to 435,400 this year.
- (iv) At 75% the average room occupancy for September 1995 increased by 15 percentage points above the September 1994 level. This is the highest level for any month since records began.

During September visitor content averaged 72%, an increase of 9 percentage points over the same period last year.

- (v) 1995 visitor figures look set to break all records. Estimated figures for the first eight months of the year suggest the 1,044,000 out of state visitors came to Northern Ireland, an 18% increase over the same period last year. Holiday visitors increased to 309,000 - up 68% on the first eight months of 1994.
- (vi) Since last year NITB has agreed or is in the process of negotiating assistance to the hotel industry of £14 million. This investment represents total expenditure of over £67 million on new and improved hotels.
- (vii) At the White House Conference in May a Tourism Communique was signed between the USA, UK and ROI. Its purpose was to give an undertaking to continue to work on co-operation in tourism including 5 points namely, stimulation of private sector investment, improvement in direct air links, dissemination of information on tourism opportunities in Northern Ireland and border counties within the US travel trade, co-operation in education training of people in tourism, and increased corporation in the area of standards and definitions in measuring tourism flows.
- (viii) There have been difficulties in taking forward this Communique because of uncertainties in the structure of the US Department of Commerce and

in particular the likely abolition of the US Travel and Trade Administration. However, recently meetings have been held between the US Embassy in Dublin, the US Consulate in Belfast, Department of Tourism and Trade in Dublin and DED. A work programme is now being drawn up.

(ix) Positive remarks can be made about the Tourism Communique and the Conference:-

- (a) the White House Conference helped put Northern Ireland on the destination map for tourists coming from the USA by raising the profile;
- (b) the US authorities and the 2 relevant Departments in Belfast and Dublin have been co-operating closely on the Communique and a work programme is being drawn up;
- (c) the first tangible benefit from the Communique will be co-operation in training with middle managers and supervisors from the Northern Ireland tourism industry being placed in hotels and tourism attractions in the US for well targeted training, which will be of very real benefit to the industry back in Northern Ireland when they return; this will under the AMBIT Programme (American Management and Business Internship Training Programme) with 10 places allocated as a pilot.

Fair Employment

- (i) Northern Ireland has had legislation outlawing discrimination in employment since 1976. This was considerably strengthened in 1989 so that it is now the strongest anti discrimination legislation in Europe.
- (ii) Employers are required to monitor the religious composition of their workforce. They must introduce an affirmative action programme if there is an imbalance in either community. There is unlimited compensation available through Tribunals for victims of unlawful discrimination.
- (iii) An independent and wide ranging review of the legislation is currently underway to identify ways in which it could be made even more effective. Government is totally committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in employment.
- (iv) The legislation having an impact. At the end of 1994, 37.3% of the Northern Ireland workforce was made up of Roman Catholics. This falls short of the Roman Catholic share of the economically active population by just 1.7 percentage points.
- (v) Key need is for our fair employment legislation to be linked with new, job-creating investment, to create new opportunities for all in Northern Ireland, in particular for those areas worst affected by Troubles.