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5th October, 1977.

Dear Ó Cofaigh,

The Agreed Communiqué issued following the talks in London on 28th September between the Taoiseach and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the British Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Minister for State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office contained the following paragraph:

"It was agreed by the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister that it would be of mutual advantage to improve practical co-operation between the Republic and the United Kingdom on economic matters. Officials of the two Governments, would, therefore, meet in the near future to review the arrangements and opportunities for economic co-operation with particular reference to Northern Ireland. They would review current and proposed cross-border studies and identify subjects and areas for further examination, with EEC assistance where appropriate".

It was agreed at the meeting of the Government held yesterday that, in order to give effect to this agreement, two Interdepartmental Committees should be established immediately at Assistant Secretary level as far as possible.

The first Committee is to consider the approach of the Irish side in the discussions and, in particular, to identify individual projects and opportunities. Where applicable, this consideration should include any EEC dimension of possible areas of co-operation, whether in the form of financial or otherwise. The Committee will be chaired by this Department and is to comprise, in addition, officials of the Departments of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Industry, Commerce and Energy, Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment and of the Office of the Minister for Economic Planning and Development. The first meeting of the Committee will be arranged soon. I would request you in the meantime to nominate your Department's representative as a matter of urgency and to have consideration given to the purposes of the Committee, so far as your Department's area of responsibility is concerned.

The second Committee will comprise the officials who will conduct the discussions with British officials. Since the Committee will be concerned largely with discussions with officials of an external Government, it will be chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs: the other Departments represented will be this Department, the Department of Finance and the Office of the Minister for Economic Planning and Development. It is envisaged that the first meeting with British officials will take place in Dublin, with London or Belfast as possible alternatives in the near future. The Government agreed that arrangements should be made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to convey

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to the British authorities later this week that we have settled the composition of our team for the discussions.

I assume that your representative on the first Committee would also represent you on the second one.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. T. Ó Cofaigh,  
Secretary,  
Department of Finance.