

NORTHERN IRELAND FORUM FOR POLITICAL DIALOGUE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

MONDAY 6 JANUARY 1997 AT 10.00 AM

IN FORUM COMMITTEE ROOM 2, INTERPOINT

Present: Mr J Gorman - Chairman
Mr R Coulter
Mr K Maginnis MP
Mr P Robinson MP
Mr M Morrow
Mr S Neeson
Mr G McMichael
Mr D Ervine
Ms P Sagar

In attendance: Mr N Carson
Mrs S McMillan

1. **FORUM GUIDELINES (RESEARCH & TRAVEL BUDGETS) - APPEAL PROCEDURE**

The Chairman confirmed that a useful role for the Business Committee can be written into the guidelines but not as the final arbiter. This must rest with the Secretariat on behalf of NIO.

2. **TOPICS OUTSIDE STANDING COMMITTEE REMITS**

Mr Carson confirmed that a briefing paper was not required as the matter was adequately covered in the last motion on this subject taken on 1 November 1996.

3. **AGENDA FOR 10 JANUARY 1997**

After discussion the following Agenda was agreed for 10 January 1997:

- Debate on Motion on Cold Weather Payments to the Elderly to be conducted under Rule 10(5). Wording of motion to be supplied by Mr G McMichael.
- Debate on Motion on Invitations to Address the Forum. Motion submitted by the NI Women's Coalition.
- Debate on Motion on Funding for Ulster Scots Groups and Communities submitted by the DUP.

4. **PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR 17 JANUARY 1997**

The following motion was agreed as an Agenda item for 17 January 1997:

- Debate on Motion on the Justice System and Terrorist Crime submitted by the UUP.

A further motion to be discussed and agreed at the meeting of the Business Committee on Thursday 9 January 1997.

5. **PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR 24 JANUARY 1997**

It was suggested that the debate on drugs could be discussed. This was agreed but would be subject to the Select Committee Report being available. Mr Maginnis/ Mr Robinson to confirm date report will be available.

6. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TERRORIST INCIDENTS BY THE FORUM**

Mr Robinson raised the possibility that a member might wish to refer to the terrorist attack on Mr Dodds in the Children's Hospital before Christmas. After discussion it was agreed that while the Forum did not wish to have its Agenda driven by the IRA, terrorist incidents could not be ignored. It was agreed that on this occasion an opening statement by the Chairman might be appropriate and that in future matters of this

nature would be raised at the Business Committee on the day prior to the Forum and necessary action/ comment by the Forum decided.

7. **LIAISON COMMITTEE**

Mr Maginnis again raised the matter of forming a liaison committee to look at political/ constitutional issues which affect the general public. After discussion, it was agreed that Mr Maginnis should submit to the Business Committee draft terms of reference for further discussion.

8. **CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE FORUM**

Mr Maginnis again asked that the Business Committee should address the matter of the Chairmanship of the Forum being formalised.

9. **FUNCTION OF 13 DECEMBER - THANKS TO THE CATERERS**

The Chairman confirmed that he would be writing to Mount Charles to express his thanks for their hard work in providing the refreshments at the function on the 13 December.

10. **INVITATION TO VISIT MAGHABERRY PRISON**

The Chairman confirmed that he had received an invitation from the Governor of Maghaberry Prison for the Business Committee to visit the prison and see the work being carried out there. After discussion it was agreed that the invitation should be accepted, but consideration should also be given to visiting the other Northern Ireland prisons.


NIGEL CARSON
Forum Secretary