

PROPOSALS FOR POSSIBLE CHANGES TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND GRAND COMMITTEE

- i) Northern Ireland Office Ministers might make a PES statement to the Grand Committee in place of the present briefing arrangements;
- ii) Northern Ireland Ministers might make statements and take questions in Committee on a regular basis;
- iii) other members of Cabinet and other Departmental Ministers whose responsibilities extend to Northern Ireland might make statements and take questions before the Committee;
- iv) some Grand Committee meetings might be held in a Northern Ireland venue; and
- v) greater use might be made of the existing power to hold both general debates and those intended to consider Proposals for draft Orders in Council.

For the moment such changes would only involve those Ministers in the House of Commons (as they do for the Scottish and Welsh Offices).

If any of these changes are adopted (especially iv), there will be consequences for House business, particularly in arranging the attendance of the 25 "other" members of the Committee from GB constituencies.

CPL1/AJH/24291