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No. 2805 P. 3/3

**CONFIDENTIAL****UKUP LETTER OF 4/11/96 ON  
THE ROLE AND REMIT OF THE NIGC****Points Raised****Commentary**

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| 1) Content with HMG's 5 proposals. (p2, sub paragraph 2)   | 1) Grateful for endorsement of the 5 proposals.  |
| 2) Background and reasoning for having so many (25) "other" members of the Committee. (p2, sub paragraph 1)  | 2) The membership of the Committee is intended to reflect the interest in NI throughout the whole House.   |
| 3) Problem of meeting in NI lessened by reducing the number of "others". (p2, sub paragraph 1)   | 3) It seems unlikely that the House would countenance a reduction in the number of "others" at a time when Northern Ireland affairs are of intense interest to <u>all</u> parties. In addition, it is only proposed that there would be two meetings in NI per Session, the logistical difficulties involved should not therefore be insurmountable. |
| 4) Practical difficulties in relation to NI legislation brought into focus by the Government's proposals. EDM 641. Greater use of UK-wide legislation. (p3, sub paragraph 1-3) | 4) Ministers are always ready to consider with an open mind whether the provisions of a Bill should extend to NI.  |

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Where it is feasible and appropriate to extend Bills to NI we do so, but each case has to be taken on its merits to ensure that the provisions do not conflict with the local circumstances in NI.

5) Reduce present "democratic deficit" caused by apparent unamendiability of Orders in Council by empowering NIGC:

(i) to take evidence; and

(ii) table amendments.

(p3, sub paragraphs 4 and 5)

5) There is no reason why the NIGC should not seek to have more debates to discuss Proposals for Draft Orders in Council. Those meetings that do take place, such as that on the Proposal for a Draft Children Order give additional time in which Ministers can defend and expound policy in debate with other MPs. In addition, Ministers normally write to MPs after such debates to clear up any points that could not be settled during the debate and explain why suggested amendments were, or were not accepted.

The Government would very much like to see the NIGC taking greater interest in Proposals for Draft Orders in Council and taking up the option to debate them so that any amendments which NI MPs in particular want to suggest can be considered by the

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Government before the final version of the Order is brought forward for approval. The Government would be happy to see this become standard, but not compulsory, practice whilst legislating by Order in Council continues.

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