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UUP PAPER OF 14/11/96 ON
THE ROLE AND REMIT OF THE NIGC

Points RaisedCommentary

1) NIGC should as far as possible be based on Scottish equivalent (pl, sub paragraphs 1,3 and 4)

1) No problem in principle. Indeed, this point was emphasised in SofS's letter of 23 October.

2) Most of the Standing Orders setting out functions of the Scottish Grand Committee could be adapted for the NIGC without any substantive change:-

2) Broadly speaking such amendments present no difficulties. But there are a number of points to which further consideration will need to be given (for example, if these are intended to be temporary measures pending the re-establishment of legislative devolutions in NI, there is a case for incorporating them in temporary Standing Orders).

(pl, sub paragraph 4)

- Questions for oral answer - SO 94B
- Short debates - SO 94C
- Ministerial statements - SO 94D
- Substantive motions SO 94G

Note: These 4 proposed changes (following existing Scottish provision) would allow inter alia Baroness Denton to take part in Grand Committee Question Time, any Minister - not just an NIO Minister - to make a

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statement, give "Whitehall" Ministers the right to attend and speak and allow for the attendance of law officers and Ministers in Standing Committee.

- Sittings - SO 94H

- No problem in principle in holding a limited number of NIGC meetings at a NI venue, subject to a suitable venue being available. The House authorities would be consulted about the facilities which would be needed. The House would also need to ensure that meetings did not clash with visits to NI by the Select Committee etc.

3) Provision for legislation in line with Scottish Grand Committee? (pl, sub paragraph 1) (Note: The Scottish Grand Committee can debate the second and third readings of certain Bills which apply to Scotland only).

Northern Ireland has very few of its own Bills (less than Scotland) and those which do appear on the programme (eg EPA and Fair Employment) might not be considered suitable to be taken by the NIGC, rather than on floor of the House.

4) Draft Orders in Council should be considered as if they were Bills, with

- These ideas would have far reaching consequences for the House. Most significantly

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amendments being moved and
then the Draft Order as
amended being reported.

the UUP proposals would
appear entirely to pre-empt
legislative devolution.
Adoption of their proposals
would therefore be
inconsistent with a central
plank of the Government's
political development
strategy.

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