

*Now see letters to the NI party  
leaders saying not possible after the  
election announcement.*

*Not really.  
Pl. refer*

From: John Holmes  
Date: 6 March 1997

*John  
1997*

PRIME MINISTER

NORTHERN IRELAND: EDUCATION

Trimble has been on to me a couple of times in the last day or two to ask whether the Northern Ireland party leaders can call on you to lobby about cuts in the education budget in Northern Ireland. I have talked to Michael Ancram about this. It has become a big issue in the Province following the PES settlement and he would be happy for you to see them. He hopes to find a little more money somewhere in the system to ease the problems but this may take a bit more time.

Trimble hopes that the meeting could take place before he leaves for Washington e.g. half an hour in the House on Thursday next week after Questions. Otherwise he said it could be left until after the Northern Ireland politicians are back from Washington, but this would be much less good.

This will be mainly a listening exercise and is obviously rather tiresome, particularly since they have already raised it with you briefly at the memorably short meeting on the reform of the education boards. But it is still just worth doing for wider reasons.

**Content** to see them for half an hour after Questions on Thursday?

*John*

JOHN HOLMES