



GERRY ADAMS MP  
SINN FÉIN  
PRESIDENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

4 July 1997

Rt Hon Betty Boothroyd MP  
Speaker  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Madam Speaker a chara

As you are aware, Martin McGuinness and I stood in the May 1st General Election as members of Sinn Féin and succeeded in winning the Mid Ulster and West Belfast seats.

On 14th May, in a statement to the House of Commons, you announced that *"from the date of the end of the debate on the Queen's Speech, the services that are available to all other Members from the six departments of the House and beyond will not be open for use by Members who have not taken their seats by swearing or by affirmation."*

This is a radical departure from the situation which obtained during the election campaign, and previously. Our electorate were aware at the time of the election that we would not be speaking or voting in the House but expected us to properly represent them in every other respect. It is therefore of deep concern to Mr McGuinness and to myself that the additional restrictions announced by you only after our election, impinge directly on our capacity to represent and work for our constituents.

In your Statement you accept that there may be 'good reasons' why a Member might not take his seat. Without engaging in a treatise on the history of Britain and Ireland, I would invite you to accept that as an Irish republican I have very good reasons for refusing to take an oath of allegiance to a British monarch. It is a founding principle of our party that the Irish people have the right to determine their own affairs and the taking of such an oath would be entirely repugnant to our constitution.

The refusal to take the oath formed part of our election campaign, as did our intention, if elected, to avail of the normal facilities afforded to all Members of the House of Commons. I believe therefore that the effect of your Statement discriminates against my constituents on the basis of their political beliefs and that you should immediately reconsider the whole content of your Statement.



FROM SPEAKER'S OFFICE

07.09.1

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P. 3

At no time have you given any reasons why you implemented these discriminatory and far reaching changes. Mr McGuinness and myself, on behalf of our constituents are clearly entitled to be given the full reasons behind your Statement. We would welcome an early opportunity to meet you in order to discuss the matters raised in this letter and in the meantime would be obliged to receive by return a full explanation of the reasons for implementing the aforementioned changes.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Rt Hon Anne Taylor MP, Leader of the House.

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GERRY ADAMS

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