

16/4

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

*? cf PPS*

Edward Oakden Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1A 2AA

*15* April 1996*CL - (7) m.**LC 2374**Dear Edward***BELFAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE: 1-3 MAY**

Thank you for your letter of 15 March 1996 seeking advice on the suggestion by Belfast City Councillor Reg Empey that the Prime Minister might participate in the above conference.

This invitation issued in a letter dated 9 January 1996 to Dr Brian Mawhinney, and the Conference programme is now substantially finalised. The NIO Minister Mr Malcolm Moss MP, who has responsibility for the Department of the Environment, one of the main sponsors of the event, will be providing a Keynote Address at the opening Plenary Session. We suggest, therefore, that in this instance the Prime Minister's best wishes for a successful Conference would be a sufficient response to Councillor Empey.

I attach a draft Private Secretary letter of reply to Councillor Empey.

*Yours sincerely*  
*David Kyle*  
C D KYLE

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY PS/PRIME MINISTER

Councillor Reginald N M Empey OBE BSc (Econ)  
 Knockvale House  
 205 Sandown Road  
 BELFAST  
 BT5 6GX

April 1996

**BELFAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE: 1-3 MAY**

*You wrote to Dr Mawhinney in January about the possibility of the Prime Minister*  
~~Thank you for your letter of 9 January 1996 to the~~  
~~in the Chancellor of the Exchequer participating in~~  
~~Rt Hon Dr Brian Mawhinney MP about the Economic Development~~  
~~Conference, which you are organising in Belfast next month.~~  
~~Dr Mawhinney has passed your letter to this to us~~  
~~office for reply.~~

*I am sorry that you have not had a formal reply before now.*  
 The Prime Minister was grateful for your invitation to  
 participate in the major International Conference on  
 Economic Development, to take place in Belfast from 1-3 May  
 1996, but regrettably is unable to attend. *Although he will not be himself, he is glad that*  
 He is aware, however, that there will be a Northern Ireland Office  
 Minister *will be giving* providing a keynote address at the opening plenary  
 session.

*is delighted*  
 The Prime Minister understands that a full range of  
 international speakers has been lined up for this event and  
~~hopes that it will be a huge success, building on the~~  
~~positive elements of the Investment Conference which he~~  
~~helped promote in Belfast in December 1994 and its~~  
~~Washington counterpart in May 1995.~~

~~The Prime Minister passes on his very best wishes for the~~  
~~event.~~

SOFS/31070

23  
 10/4