



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2018/28/2200
<b>Creation Dates:</b>	14 June 1988
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	2 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

PA  
West Belfast

Telex 15 June 1988

Received  
21/6/88  
L. M. M. M. M.

To: H. Q.  
For: A/Sec. Gallagher

From: Belfast  
From: O Huiginn

West Belfast

1. I met yesterday with Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, to discuss in particular the treatment of West Belfast at the forthcoming Conference. He filled me in on the budgetary aspects of their proposals, the outlines which have already been reported to you. They propose to find 10 million extra money this year for 'areas of Belfast characterised by exceptionally high unemployment and poor rates of economic activity'. In practice most of this would be spent in nationalist West Belfast, although they would also include the Shankill area of West Belfast in the definition. The 10 million is to be found from among existing budget headings. He said this was in many ways more difficult than putting a new line in a future budget and was an earnest of their concern to do something quickly for this area. In reply to my queries about future years he said they were clear that the problem was going to be with them for years to come and gave me to understand that there would be probably somewhat higher allocations in future years. There were already some discussion of this in the context of contacts with the treasury on next year's allocation for Northern Ireland.
2. Of the 10 million in the current financial year something over 3 million would be allocated to employment generating projects, 2 million approximately each to expenditure on health issues (in particular the hospitals), and on education issues (the merger and consolidation of the Boys Secondary Schools in West Belfast), the remainder would go on environmental related projects (including Collin Glen) and on the expansion of the BATS teams. This was, he emphasised, additional expenditure in the current financial year but the high-level committee which he chaired would also help to monitor and co-ordinate the use of existing funds. Specific projects which they had in mind included enhanced 'outreach' projects (i. e. analysing future job prospects and selecting suitable candidates in the area to be trained specifically to qualify for these openings), the allocation of

the American Monitor Factory (near Finaghy) to the WBEB and, possibly the relocation of the 'Quest' Computer Training Program, which they regard as very successful 'Sunrise' Industry Training and is at present based in the city centre, to a number of sites, including one in West Belfast.

3. He asked us to keep these details confidential for the present. Mr. King would be making a detailed announcement, probably towards the end of the month. In the meantime they would be happy to brief the Conference in detail on the above and had no objection to a 'two stage' process whereby the general intention and commitment to take action was announced at the Conference, the details being however reserved for Mr. King's later announcement.
4. I expressed my appreciation to Sir Kenneth both for their willingness to make a start on the problems of West Belfast and for agreeing to what I feel is a helpful way of linking this to the Conference. We had some general discussions about a possible International Fund link up. He considered that one of the obstacles was the rigid insistence by the American donors (he mentioned Mr. Fine in particular) on viable business projects. In fact there was no shortage of capital in Government or banking circles for such projects. The problem in West Belfast related to the reluctance of the private sector to be involved, not least because of violence. He considered this aspect could be usefully pursued at the discussion of the Fund envisaged for the July Conference.
5. I will be in touch with my opposite number to draft some agreed language to cover the West Belfast item in the Communique.