



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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WEST BELFAST

I had a discussion in Kilkeel on 2 August 1988 with Mr. Nigel Hamilton, the head of the new unit responsible for the disadvantaged areas of Belfast. He gave me a rundown on the projected programme based on the Secretary of State's announcement of 19 July. He pointed out that the £10 million would be additional expenditure obtained by pooling surpluses from various other items in the Northern Ireland budget (currently amounting to £5 billion annually). No commitment could be made for 1989 until budget estimates were drawn up in the coming October/November but he could assure me that it was intended to maintain the level of expenditure and if possible increase it significantly.

He stressed that the work of the five or six enterprise centres in the area would be given the highest priority and would have the full resources of LEDU and other bodies committed to them; he could assure me that such centres would not fail due to any lack of money being made available to them.

It was intended that the £10 million allocated for the current year would be spent as follows:

Training and Job Creation - £3.3 million  
Education - £1.9 million  
Health - £1.8 million  
Environmental works - £2 million  
Belfast Action Teams (BATS) - £1 million

He said there was no doubt that education and health standards were very low in West Belfast and that an improvement in that regard and in relation to roads and other environmental works could be of great importance in stimulating a sense of confidence in the area.

I raised the question of the Phoenix Trust and pointed out the importance of assisting SDLP interests and activities in West



Belfast to counteract the influence of Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein in general. He expressed complete readiness to assist Phoenix in every way possible but said that he had not yet received any viable propositions from Alistair McDonnell and his group. He felt they were too caught up at the moment in the proposed study of disadvantaged areas in other parts of the world and had not turned their attention sufficiently to creating real projects on the ground. I also raised the question of the Westway Hotel development in Andersontown Road and pointed out its potential value for the area in terms of the provision of amenities and other facilities. He agreed that it appeared to be a worthwhile proposition but felt that the International Fund might be the best source of financial assistance given the nature of the project.

In conclusion, Mr. Hamilton made a request that we should use our contacts to ensure that all legitimate groups in West Belfast were encouraged to join in the new initiative. He was most anxious that they should offer their practical ideas to the programme and not feel shut off in a way that would allow them to come under the influence of Sinn Fein-inspired elements.

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Anglo-Irish Division  
4 August 1988

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