



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2017/11/487
Creation Dates:	February 1987
Extent and medium:	3 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

7. NORTHERN IRELAND

The Anglo-Irish Agreement of November 15th 1985 represents a major breakthrough in respect of both the rights of the minority in Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish relations. The declaration in this Agreement that in the event of a majority in Northern Ireland consenting to Irish unity, the British Government will introduce and support legislation towards this end in the British Parliament, has effectively removed the British question from Irish politics, leaving decisions on Ireland's future to Irish people in Ireland.

At the same time the assurance contained in this Agreement, that the status of Northern Ireland would not be changed without the clear consent of a majority in Northern Ireland, has removed all possible grounds for unionist fears of unification being imposed on them.

The signatories to the Agreement recognised that it would take time before the Agreement came to be accepted by different groups in Northern Ireland, and they provided for a three-year review in respect of the working of the Inter-Governmental Conference established by the Agreement.

Progress is being made in securing full recognition of the rights of the minority in Northern Ireland and in moving towards a situation in which the minority can identify with the structures of Government in the North, and find acceptable the administration of justice and the security system.

Progress made to date includes:

In the area of administration of justice:

- Virtually all prisoners sentenced on super grass evidence have been released

- More terrorist-type cases are to be dealt with by jury trials.
- The onus of proof in bail applications is being shifted from the defence to the prosecution.
- **Reasonable** grounds of suspicion are in future to be required for arrest
- People detained in custody are to have the right to have someone informed of their arrest, and the right of access to a solicitor within 48 hours.
- The use or threat of violence is to be a ground for declaring a statement inadmissible in law.

In the area of relations with the security forces:

- Control by the Secretary of State and police over parades and marches is being substantially strengthened.
- The performance of the RUC during the 1986 marching season demonstrated a real concern to protect the rights of the minority.
- There has been a substantial increase in accompaniment of British Army and UDR patrols by the RUC, and a sharp reduction in the number of complaints of harassment .
- Proposals for a stronger law against incitement to hatred are in preparation.
- A new police complaints procedure is being introduced.

Identity Issues:

- The repeal of the Flags and Emblems Act is underway.
- Steps are being taken to remove the ban on Irish street name signs.
- A bilingual map of Northern Ireland is under preparation by the Ordnance Survey.
- The Northern Ireland Assembly franchise has been extended to include people from the Republic hitherto excluded, and steps are being taken to extend the franchise in a similar way for local elections.

The Irish and British Governments remain totally committed to the Agreement, which has the support of all parties in the British Parliament, and Fine Gael will work to create conditions favourable for devolution of a wide range of governmental powers to form of government in Northern Ireland representative of those people in both communities who repudiate violence.

In the immediate future, Fine Gael looks forward to the allocation of the International Fund by its Trustees in a manner that will stimulate economic activity in Northern Ireland and in border areas of our State. The amount available from the first annual tranches of the Fund for use in our Border areas will approach £10m.

Fine Gael in Government will also pursue actively the question of European contributions to the Fund.

8. FOREIGN POLICY AND OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT AID

Fine Gael in government will pursue Irish ideals and interests in the foreign policy area.

Fine Gael is committed to the restoration and preservation of human rights. In conjunction with its partners in the EEC, as well as in its own right, it will pursue this objective.

Fine Gael's policies include opposition to apartheid in South Africa, including support for sanctions, which in Ireland's case, though not in the case of most of our EEC partners, extends to sanctions against South African fruit and vegetables; supports the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in conjunction with adequate and effective guarantees for Israel's security; and support for the settlement of the political conflict in Central America by peaceful means and without external intervention.