



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Fair  
Fair Employment  
Agency

S 20705

Mr. M. Conboy  
26.5.88  
27/5

WHITE PAPER ON FAIR EMPLOYMENT

GUIDELINES FOR THE PRESS

- There have been very detailed discussions on fair employment issues at the Intergovernmental Conference and in meetings at official level.
- Many of our concerns have been taken on board by the other side. As was made clear in the Tánaiste's statement of 2 March, the Government welcome
  - the imposition of a statutory duty on all employers to practise fair employment
  - the prohibition of indirect discrimination
  - the requirement to monitor the religious composition of the workforce for all firms with more than 10 employees (for an initial two-year period only firms with more than 25 employees will have this obligation)
  - the exclusion from government grants and business of firms which continue to maintain discriminatory practices.
- There remain some areas where an entirely clear picture has not yet emerged, or where we feel the proposals could be made somewhat more forceful. Among these areas are
  - the precise type of affirmative action which will be permitted in the new legislation - in particular the use of goals and timetables (which the Government would wish to see given as much weight as possible) and outreach measures

- the content of the code of practice (which has yet to be drawn up by the Department of Economic Development in N.I.)
  - the precise manner in which assistance will be given to individual complainants
  - the lack of an overall goal which the legislation should achieve, in terms of the ratio of Catholic to Protestant unemployed (at present 24:1).
- As we have said "there is much that is positive" in the White Paper, which we welcome. However, our approach overall has to be one of prudence and commonsense. We think a considerable distance has been covered already. But we are not all the way down the road yet. We will reserve our final comment until we see the final package, and in the meantime the extensive discussions of recent months in the Conference and the Secretariat will be continued.

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