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CC: Mr Hodges  
Dr Harbison (or)  
Mr Hanna (or)  
Mr McWhirter

PS/Dr Boyson (B+L)

SPEAKING NOTE FOR EO PRESS CONFERENCE

I attach a revised version of the above, incorporating no substantive change but a few amendments by way of clarification.

*Jan Water*  
PP W G H QUIGLEY

10 July 1986

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## SPEAKING NOTE

1. The occasion for this Press Conference is the publication of an extremely important document. Equal access to jobs and fair treatment in employment are the marks of a just and free society. They also make good sense in hardnosed commercial terms, since they mean making the best use of the best people for the job, regardless of religion, sex or any other extraneous factor.
2. As with so many things, wishful thinking will not bring it about. The employer has to have a clear policy. He must promulgate it and nail his colours to the mast as an Equal Opportunity employer. He must review his recruitment and promotion policies to ensure that they are fair and that they are implemented with scrupulous fairness. He must monitor results. If something odd seems to be happening he must ask himself 'why?'. Why am I not attracting applicants for jobs from both sections of the community? Or why, despite attracting applicants from both sections, do I seem to be recruiting predominantly from one section? Or why do so few women make it to the top levels of my organisation?
3. The good employer will want to satisfy himself that there is nothing untoward in his arrangements or in the way they are applied which is frustrating his objective of equality of opportunity. If there is, he will do everything he can to remedy any deficiencies in those arrangements.
4. But the one thing he must not do - and I underline this - is to bend the rules to contrive some predetermined result. That would be to undermine the policy. The only way to remain loyal to the policy is to be guided solely and in all circumstances by the merit principle. The employer must decide what sort of person is needed to do the job and appoint the person who, in fair competition, best measures up to the job specification.
5. In the case of the NI Civil Service the Government is the employer. It seeks to act in precisely the way I have described to you. The Report published today sets out the policy and the steps being taken to implement it. It has been prepared by the Unit charged with oversight and monitoring of the policy and its effectiveness.
6. It is a First Report, which is largely concerned with providing a snapshot of the Civil Service at 1 January 1985 and comparing it with 1980, the year to which the Fair Employment Agency's investigation of the Civil Service related.

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But there is a great deal of work also under way by the Unit on the monitoring of recruitment competitions by the Civil Service Commission, on the monitoring of promotion boards held within the Civil Service, and on the pattern of employment across the Service in terms of sex, religion and disability. This work is not yet ready for publication but will be covered in future Reports.

7. What does this First Report show?
8. So far as religion is concerned there are 3 key points. First, the Report shows that since the 1970s, the Civil Service has been very successfully tapping the entire labour market - Protestant and Catholic. Second, the Report shows that increased recruitment of Catholics is beginning to be reflected in the distribution of Catholics and Protestants in the various levels of grade seniority within the Civil Service. Third, the Report shows how quickly these developments are changing the composition of the Civil Service.
9. Let me give you some key figures on all three of these points. I have drawn them from section 6 of the Report in order to facilitate comparison between 1980 and 1985. You can see how the whole labour market is being tapped if you look at the Protestant/Catholic balance in each 5-year age band within the Civil Service. In the 16 to 19 age band Catholics account for some 41% of staff; in the 20 to 24 band for 49%; in the 25 to 29 band for 47%; and in the 30 to 34 band for 37%. In the older age bands from 35 upwards the Catholic percentages range from 23% to 30%. Overall the Protestant/Catholic split for the Civil Service is 63.6% Protestant and 36.4% Catholic. Catholics are therefore very well represented, but particularly in the younger Civil Service.
10. The Report also analyses the composition of the Civil Service by Grade level. This shows that the proportion of Catholics at the top management level of Senior Principal and above is 15.1%. Moving down the remaining 7 levels, the proportions are: 18.5%, 20.5%, 26.7%, 32.1%, 35.8%, 46.5% and 40.5%. As you know, the Civil Service is a hierarchical structure. The bulk of each Grade level higher up the ladder normally comes from the level beneath. One would therefore expect the proportion of Catholics at the higher levels to increase progressively as the large proportions of Catholics in the younger age bands are also reflected in the older age groups. The level at which officers enter the Service initially is also important. For example, more highly qualified and, generally, older officers who

enter at the third level as Executive Officers clearly gain a start on those who enter lower as Clerks or Clerical Assistants. 26.4% of the Protestants in the Civil Service came in at Executive Officer level or above, whereas only 15.7% of Catholics did so.

11. The rapidity with which change is in fact occurring is shown by a comparison of the 1980 and 1985 positions. I mentioned the Protestant/Catholic split in 1985 of 63.6% Protestant and 36.4% Catholic. In 1980 it was 69.3% Protestant and 30.7% Catholic. The Catholic proportion has increased by almost 6 percentage points. Or take the composition of the Grades which I gave you a moment ago. These reflect increases in the Catholic proportions, between 1980 and 1985, of between 2.2 and 10.1 percentage points.
12. The Report has also important things to say about the sex dimension of equality of opportunity. The Service overall is almost equally split male/female. But whereas the proportion of women is over 65% up to the age of 24, it falls to as low as 33% in the age band 35 to 39 and then rises again. The drop obviously reflects the departure of women from the Service because of family responsibilities.
13. The Report also shows a major difference in the route by of which men and women enter the Service. 45% of men enter the Service at the level of Executive Officer or above but less than 4% of women do so.
14. The proportion of women in the middle and senior ranks of the Service is small but a comparison of the 1980 and 1985 positions shows that it is growing. In 1985 the proportions of women at the 8 Grade levels, starting from the top level were: 8%, 6%, 9%, 16%, 23%, 42%, 75% and 83%. But, in all except the lowest Grade where there was a decrease, these represented increases ranging from 1.3 to 7 percentage points over the 1980 position.
15. Most organisations need to find better ways of cultivating and using the potential of women. The paper which the Civil Service issued a few weeks ago indicating steps which might be taken is included in the Report published today as Appendix 3.
16. The Report also deals with Disablement within the Civil Service. There are 1.2% of staff who are or were registered as disabled but not all who are disabled necessarily register as such. The Civil Service aims to play its full part in offering

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opportunities to disabled people and the existing Code of Practice in relation to this group will be reviewed.

17. This Report published today - and all the work which is already reflected in it and will be increasingly reflected in future Reports - is an indication of the seriousness with which Government intends to pursue its own responsibility as an employer for equality of opportunity. A similar responsibility rests on all employers. We must make absolutely certain that it is individual worth, not some extraneous group characteristic, which determines job and career prospects. That means, as with every aspect of management, establishing and analysing the relevant data and taking corrective action, consistent with the policy, where necessary.