

Office of the First Minister
and Deputy First Minister

LD/68

Mania

140/99

file

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Circulation

~~Mr Millen~~
~~Mr Rea~~
Mrs Hetherington

FROM: ROSALIE FLANAGAN
DATE: 4 January 2000
TO: PS/First Minister
PS/Deputy First Minister

Miss O'Boyle

cc PS/Mr Semple
Mr McCusker
Mrs Brown
~~Mrs Devlin~~
Mrs Cassells

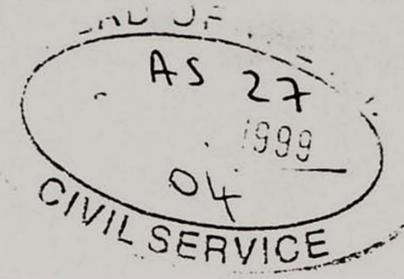
LD 51

MINISTERIAL CODE

1. Attached is a copy of the comments on the Ministerial Code received from Peter Robinson.
2. Sir Reg Empey's office have notified a nil return from him.
3. When all responses have been received we will prepare a revised draft for discussion before it goes to the Executive Committee.

Rosalie Flanagan

ROSALIE FLANAGAN
☎ 28420



MEMO

From: Peter Robinson

Your Ref:

Tel:

520105

Our Ref:

cc: PS/Mr Dodds
Mr Spence
Mrs Brown
Mr Sweeney

Date: 21 December 1999

To: Mr Semple
Secretary to the Executive
Committee

cc Mr M'Gushan
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Nigel and I promised some further comment on the draft Ministerial Code of Conduct but, unfortunately as I was ill on Friday, it has been delayed for a couple of days. The Northern Ireland Act - and indeed for that matter the Belfast Agreement - sets out a Ministerial code which forms part of the pledge of office taken by the Ministers at the time of their appointment. That Ministerial Code of Conduct sets out the mind of Parliament when it considered this issue and it strikes me as strange that the Executive Committee would want to extend that Ministerial Code of Conduct in a way that has more to do with gaining control by the centre and in particular the First and Deputy First Ministers over Ministerial colleagues.

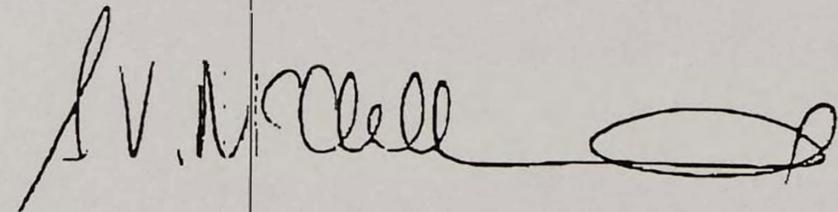
The draft Code of Conduct could be interpreted as an attempt by the First and Deputy First Ministers and their parties to take control, and have authority over, many of the functions that are the responsibility of Ministers from other parties. This has a striking resonance with some of the appointments made by the First and Deputy First Ministers which show an unhealthy addiction to empire building and to authoritarianism.

While some of the terms contained in the draft Code of Conduct are simply common sense and many of them would occur through a natural working relationship, others are quite unnecessary and I am at loss to understand where this draft was conceived and by whom.



I would question the authority of any Ministerial code which goes beyond the intention of Parliament even if it were to be endorsed by the Assembly, no doubt with the support of the First and Deputy First Ministers' parties.

It seems to me that the draft Code of Conduct is an attempt to introduce control of a Westminster style democracy into a structure that was set up (deliberately) without it.



PP PETER ROBINSON

