



**BRITISH-IRISH
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY**

**COMHLACHT IDIR-PHARLAIMINTEACH
NA BREATAINE AGUS NA hÉIREANN**

TWENTIETH PLENARY SESSION

14 and 15 February 2000

Grand Committee Room, Westminster Hall, London

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

(Produced by FRANK CRANMER & J OHN ROYCROFT, Clerks to the Body)

1. MONDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2000

The sitting was opened in public at 9.45 am in the Grand Committee Room, Westminster Hall, London, with Mr David Winnick in the Chair.

The Chairman announced that, pursuant to Rule 2(a), **Ms Jean Corston MP, Ms Helen Jackson MP and Mr John McFall MP**, being Associate Members, had accepted the invitation of the Steering Committee to assume the powers and responsibilities of Members for all of the Session.

1. ADOPTION OF PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

Ordered, That the proposed Programme of Business for the current Session, as amended, be approved.-(**The Chairman.**)

2. MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

The Chairman read a message from the Prime Minister on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary Plenary of the Body, as follows:

I am sorry I cannot be with you today to share in your 10th Anniversary Plenary Conference. I am sure it will be an interesting event and I know you will enjoy the address of my colleague Peter Mandelson.

Since your inaugural Conference in London in 1990 there have been enormous political changes in Northern Ireland. There have been periods of progress and periods of frustration. But there is no doubt of the benefits which peace has brought to Northern Ireland.

Throughout this time of change the BIIPB has been there supporting, and quite rightly investigating, areas of common interest and concern, and asking probing questions. On behalf of the British Government, I would like to wish you a very happy 10th Anniversary. I hope the Body continues its good work in the years ahead.

Tony Blair

The sitting was suspended at 9.55 am.

The sitting was resumed at 10.15 am with Mr David Winnick in the Chair.

3. STATEMENT BY THE RT HON PETER MANDELSON PC MP, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

A Statement was made by the Rt hon Peter Mandelson PC MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

4. QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt hon Peter Mandelson PC MP, replied to Questions for oral answer put by Members of the Body.

The sitting was suspended at 11.20 am.

The sitting was resumed in public in Church House, Westminster, at 2.30 pm, with Mr Michael O'Kennedy in the Chair.

5. FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Fourth Annual Report of the Body [Doc. No. 69].-(**The Chairman.**)

6. SABHAL MÒR OSTAIG AND THE COLUMBA INITIATIVE, AND THE WARRINGTON PROJECT

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Report of the Committee on Culture, Education and the Environment [Doc. No. 72] on Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the Columba Initiative, and the Warrington Project, and agrees with the conclusions and recommendations of the Report, which should be forwarded to both Governments for their observations.-(**Ms Marian McGennis.**)

Mr David Winnick took the Chair as Chairman.

7. EDUCATION AND INTER-COMMUNITY RELATIONS - A STUDY OF DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1995

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the further Responses of both Governments and of the Northern Ireland Executive to the Report of the Committee on Culture, Education and the Environment on matters relating to Education and Inter-Community Relations within Northern Ireland [Doc. No. 73].-(**Ms Marian McGennis.**)

8. BUSINESS REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE D

Mr Kevin McNamara, Chairman of Committee D, made a statement about the work of the Committee.

9. THE RURAL ECONOMY

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Report of the Committee on Economic and Social Affairs [Doc. No. 70] on the Future for Small Farms in the Rural Economy, and agrees with the conclusions and recommendations of the Report, which should be forwarded to both Governments for their observations.-(**Mr Séamus Kirk.**)

10. CAP REFORM

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Body takes note of the Responses of both Governments to the Report of the Committee on European and International

Affairs on matters relating to Common Agricultural Policy Reform [Doc. No. 71]-**(Mr Michael Colvin)**;

The Question was amended, by leaving out the words "takes" in line 1 and inserting the words "having taken", and adding at the end the words "requests detailed comments on its recommendations from the British Government".

And the Question, as amended, being put;

Resolved, That the Body, having taken note of the Responses of both Governments to the Report of the Committee on European and International Affairs on matters relating to Common Agricultural Policy Reform [Doc. No. 71], requests detailed comments on its recommendations from the British Government.

11. BUSINESS REPORTS FROM CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES A AND B

Mr Charles Flanagan, Chairman of Committee A, made a statement about the work of the Committee.

Mr Michael Colvin, Chairman of Committee B, made a statement about the work of the Committee.

The sitting was adjourned at 4.40 pm till tomorrow.

2. TUESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2000

The sitting was opened in public at 9.30 am in the Church House, Westminster, with Mr David Winnick in the Chair.

1. BUSINESS REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE C

Mr Séamus Kirk, Chairman of Committee C, made a statement about the work of the Committee.

2. COMMITTEE A - ORAL REPORT BY CHAIRMAN ON ACTIVITIES

Mr Charles Flanagan, Chairman of Committee A, made an oral report on the work of the Committee during the past six months.

3. RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Body, on the occasion of its tenth anniversary, renews its commitment to work towards peace and understanding between all our peoples and to the continued working cooperation between the two sovereign Parliaments; welcomes the very substantial progress that had been made since its last Plenary in the implementation of the Belfast Agreement; however, notes with the utmost concern the serious difficulties now being encountered; calls on all parties to do everything in their power to secure the earliest re-establishment

of the democratic institutions in accordance with the overwhelmingly expressed decision in referenda in the island of Ireland, North and South, and the full implementation of ***all aspects of the Agreement***.-**(Mr Charles Flanagan)**;

Amendment proposed, at the end, to add the words ", including decommissioning of all illegally-held arms by all paramilitary groups"-**(Lord Glentoran)**;

Sub-amendment proposed to the Amendment, to leave out the words "by all paramilitary groups"-**(Lord Blease)**;

Mr Michael O'Kennedy took the Chair as Chairman.

Mr David Winnick resumed the Chair.

The Amendment was, with the leave of the Body, withdrawn.

And the Main Question being put;

Resolved, That the Body, on the occasion of its tenth anniversary, renews its commitment to work towards peace and understanding between all our peoples and to the continued working cooperation between the two sovereign Parliaments; welcomes the very substantial progress that had been made since its last Plenary in the implementation of the Belfast Agreement; however, notes with the utmost concern the serious difficulties now being encountered; calls on all parties to do everything in their power to secure the earliest re-establishment of the democratic institutions in accordance with the overwhelmingly expressed decision in referenda in the island of Ireland, North and South, and the full implementation of ***all aspects of the Agreement***.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, That the Body do now adjourn.-**(Mr Kevin McNamara.)**

The Session concluded at 12.35 pm.