



**BRITISH-IRISH
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY**

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

THIRTIETH PLENARY SESSION

7 and 8 March 2005

Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

(Produced by ALDA BARRY & JOHN HAMILTON, Clerks to the Body)

1. Monday 7 March 2005

The sitting was opened in public at 9.30 am in the Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran, with Mr Pat Carey, TD, in the Chair

1. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

The Chairman announced that, since the last plenary session in Chepstow there had been a number of changes in membership.

For Ireland, he himself had replaced Mr Brendan Smith, TD, Mr John Carty, TD, had replaced Mr Tony Killeen, TD, Senator Diarmuid Wilson had replaced Mr Conor Lenihan, TD, becoming a full Member of the Body, Senator Michael Kit had replaced Senator Wilson as an Associate Member and Mr Trevor Sargent, TD, had replaced Mr Paddy McHugh, TD, as an Associate Member.

For the Isle of Man, the Hon Tony Brown, MHK, and Mr Eddie Lowey, MLC, had replaced Mr Donald Gelling, MLC, and Mr Edgar Quine as full Member and Associate Member respectively. The Body would be glad to learn that Mr Gelling had once again become Chief Minister of the Isle of Man.

The Chairman announced that, pursuant to Rule 2(a), from Ireland Senator Paul Coghlan and Senator Geraldine Feeney, for the United Kingdom Mr Kevin Brennan, from Scotland Michael McMahon, MSP, and Robin Harper MSP, had accepted the invitation of the Steering Committee to assume the powers and responsibilities of Members for all of the session.

2. ADOPTION OF PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

Ordered, That the proposed Programme of Business for the current Session, as amended, be approved. **(Mr Pat Carey.)**

3. RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Motion made and Question proposed, That this Body reaffirms its support for the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and for the ongoing efforts of the two Governments to protect and develop its achievements; regrets that in spite of substantial progress it was not possible to reach agreement last December on the two key issues of decommissioning and ending all forms of paramilitary and criminal activity; abhors the brutal murder of Robert McCartney; is greatly disappointed by the damage caused to the peace process by recent attacks and ongoing criminality, including the Northern Bank raid; re-emphasises that all parties to the Agreement undertook to pursue their political objectives by exclusively peaceful and democratic means; recognises that sustainable, inclusive government in Northern Ireland requires a complete cessation of paramilitarism, including all forms of criminal activity; and, in the belief that informal dialogue can play an important part in

promoting these objectives, looks forward to the possibility of inviting representatives of the parties elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly as guests to future meetings of the Body—**(Mr Seymour Crawford)**;

The sitting was suspended at 11.02 am.

The sitting was resumed at 11.27 am.

And the main Question being put;

Resolved, That this Body reaffirms its support for the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and for the ongoing efforts of the two Governments to protect and develop its achievements; regrets that in spite of substantial progress it was not possible to reach agreement last December on the two key issues of decommissioning and ending all forms of paramilitary and criminal activity; abhors the brutal murder of Robert McCartney; is greatly disappointed by the damage caused to the peace process by recent attacks and ongoing criminality, including the Northern Bank raid; re-emphasises that all parties to the Agreement undertook to pursue their political objectives by exclusively peaceful and democratic means; recognises that sustainable, inclusive government in Northern Ireland requires a complete cessation of paramilitarism, including all forms of criminal activity; and, in the belief that informal dialogue can play an important part in promoting these objectives, looks forward to the possibility of inviting representatives of the parties elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly as guests to future meetings of the Body.

4. EUROPEAN FUNDING PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING ACROSS BORDERS

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Report of Committee B (European) on European Funding Programmes and Developing Understanding across Borders [Doc No 102] and the conclusions and recommendations of the report which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.—

(Mr Mike German.)

The sitting was suspended at 1.22 pm.

The sitting was resumed at 2.40 pm with Mr Pat Carey in the Chair

5. PROMOTION OF IRELAND, THE UK, THE DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS, THE CROWN DEPENDENCIES ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Body notes the activities of Ireland, the UK, the Crown Dependencies and Ireland in promoting themselves on the international stage--- **(Mr Murray Tosh)**;

Mr John Swinney, MSP, addressed the Body.

Resolved, That the Body notes the activities of Ireland, the UK, the devolved assemblies and the crown dependencies in promoting themselves on the international stage.

The sitting was suspended at 3.32 pm.

The sitting was resumed at 4.06 pm with Mr David Winnick, MP, in the Chair.

6. STATEMENT BY MS MARY COUGHLAN, TD, MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

A statement was made by the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Ms Mary Coughlan, TD.

7. QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER

The Minister for Agriculture and Food, Ms Mary Coughlan, TD, replied to Questions for oral answer put by Members of the Body.

The sitting was adjourned at 5.30 pm until tomorrow.

2. Tuesday 8 March 2005

The sitting was opened in public at 10.01 am in the Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran, with Mr Pat Carey, TD, in the Chair

1. BUSINESS REPORTS FROM CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Senator Paschal Mooney, Shadow Chairman of Committee B, made a statement about the work of the Committee.

Senator Martin Mansergh, Shadow Chairman of Committee A, made a statement about the work of the Committee.

Mr Harry Barnes, MP, made a statement about the work of Committee C.

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

2 RETIRING MEMBERS

The Body paid tribute to the CO-Chair, Mr David Winnick, MP, who had announced that he would not be seeking to become Co-Chair after the next UK general election,

as well as to those Members of the Body, Mr Harry Barnes, MP, Mr John Hume, MP, Mr Kevin McNamara, MP, and Mr Bill O'Brien, who would not be seeking re-election.

3. TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Report from Committee D (Environment and Social) on Truth and Reconciliation [Doc No 103] and of the conclusions and recommendations of the Report, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations--- **(Mr Kevin McNamara.)**

4. NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Ninth Annual Report of the Body [Doc No 104]—**(Mr David Winnick, Co-Chair.)**

5. RULES: STEERING COMMITTEE

Resolved, that the Amendment to Rule 8 (Steering Committee) contained in Document No 105 be made with immediate effect--- **(Mr Pat Carey, Co-Chair.)**

6. SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AUTISM.

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Report of Committee D (Environment and Social) on Special Needs Educational Provision in Britain and Ireland, with Special Reference to Autism [Doc No 106] and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations--- **(Mr Kevin McNamara.)**

7. ADJOURNMENT

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