

263/93

ASST *OB 1404/2*
SEC 28 FEB 1996
CENT SEC

C

FROM: ANGELA DULLAGHAN
PS/MICHAEL ANCRAM
27 FEBRUARY 1996

- cc: PS/Michael Ancram (L,B&DENI) - B/T
- PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - B
- PS/Mr Moss (L,DHSS&DOE) - B/T
- PS/Baroness Denton (L,DANI&DED) *29/2* - B/T
- PS/PUS (L&B) - B
- PS/Sir David Fell *Mr McAuley* - B
- NI Perm Secs *Mr Denton* - T
- Mr Gibson *29/2* - T
- Mr Haire - T
- Mrs McCloy *Ms Super 28/2* - T

HEAD OF THE N.I.
3088
27 FEB 1996
CIVIL SERVICE

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B) - B

FAIR PLAY FOR WOMEN IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Minister was grateful to see a copy of Baroness Denton's note to the Secretary of State of 22 January. The Minister has asked me to say that he wishes this important initiative every success and will bear it in mind departmentally.

SIGNED

ANGELA DULLAGHAN
PS/Michael Ancram
OAB Ext 6488
27 February 1996

ANCRAM/TAT/1199

263/93

ASST 08/303/2
SEC 26 FEB 1996
CENT SEC

HEAD OF THE N.I.
2573
22 FEB 1996
CIVIL SERVICE

- cc Mr Michael Ancram (B&L)
- Sir John Wheeler (B&L)
- Mr Moss (B&L)
- PUS (B&L)
- Sir David Fell**
- Permanent Secretaries
- Mr Gibson
- Mr Haire
- Mrs McCloy

*Mrs McCloy
1/3
22912*

C

*Mrs [unclear]
for file
22.1.96. 22/2*

TO: Secretary of State (B&L)

FROM: Baroness Denton of Wakefield

FAIR PLAY FOR WOMEN IN NORTHERN IRELAND

This minute is to advise you of the "Fair Play for Women" initiative which I launched on Wednesday, 21 February 1996.

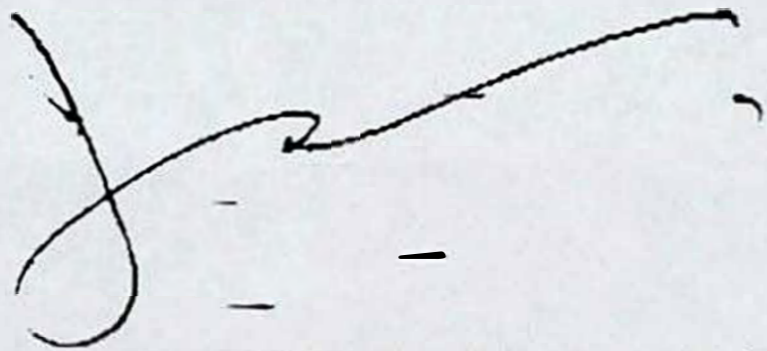
As you may be aware, a similar initiative was started in Wales in 1992, and subsequently David Hunt brought it to England, launching it jointly with the Equal Opportunities Commission in April 1994. The overall approach has been to establish regional consortia, involving central Government Departments, the EOC, Opportunity 2000, local Government and other organisations, seeking to agree action plans on how they can jointly tackle barriers to women's participation in the economic life (in the Welsh example) or more widely in economic and public life (as in England). All of this has been funded by limited Central Government resources, essentially for organisations of meetings and conferences.

In Northern Ireland, our circumstances are different to most English regions. We have a separate Equal Opportunities Commission. We also have many active women's groups, a local organisation of Opportunities 2000, and have seen a considerable number of initiatives for example on the question of women's participation in political life. I myself have undertaken a series of meetings last year to hear women's views on these types of issues, and with the NIO we have sponsored a number of the political conferences.

I have now launched a similar initiative in Northern Ireland, which will be led by a steering group chaired by Mrs May Blood, MBE, a community worker from West Belfast, who is also currently a member of the Labour Relations Agency. I have asked her and the broadly based steering group which she will lead to draw together an action plan, setting a number of priorities for joint action in Northern Ireland. I hope that this may lead to better co-operation between Departments and the many organisations active in this field. This will be combined with the initiatives already undertaken in DED, and with new developments on childcare and access to training for women, both of which will be funded by European monies. Together with the series of Festival Days being supported by Lady Mayhew this should provide a basis for continuing activity in this area, which is important for us to encourage at this time.

It is possible that this initiative may touch on the work of other Departments and we may need to seek support. While appreciating

that this can only come from existing resources, and that colleagues face many other priorities, I do hope that it may be possible for practical action to emerge from this initiative.



BARONESS DENTON OF WAKEFIELD

Minister for the Economy and Agriculture