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# ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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## European Assembly Elections Bill

Mr. Nally,

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This Bill, a copy of which, received from the Department of Foreign Affairs is attached, was debated in the House of Commons on 6 and 7 July. It provides for the method of electing United Kingdom representatives to the European Parliament and lays down the total number of representatives together with the number to be elected in each part of the United Kingdom including Northern Ireland.

The principle provisions of the Bill which relate to Northern Ireland are as follows:-

- (i) Northern Ireland will return 3 representatives;
- (ii) The 3 representatives will be returned from one constituency which will comprise the whole six county area;
- (iii) As the Northern Ireland constituency will be a multi member one it is proposed to use the single transferable vote system (S.T.V.);
- (iv) Persons entitled to vote will be those entitled to vote already in parliamentary elections.

This Bill was debated in the Commons on 6th and 7th July. It passed its second stage by a large majority Vote on 7th instant and has now to be considered in Committee. As the Commons will be adjourning for the summer recess on Friday, 29 July it seems unlikely that the Bill will be reached again in this session having regard to the volume of business to be disposed of by the Leader of the House, Mr. M. Foot on 14th July.

*as indicated*

As a general comment the provisions of the Bill is sofar as Northern Ireland are concerned are satisfactory from our point of view. The fact that the North will be treated as one three member constituency and that with the use of the single transferable vote it should result in two Unionist and one non Unionist members being returned. John Hume's recent appointment can hardly be irrelevant in this context.

*D. Hume*

22nd July, 1977

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