

E.R.

Box

MR SONNENBERG - MUFAX

cc Mr Brennan
Mr Chesterton
Mr Gilliland - M
Mr McConnell - M
Mr Spence - M

THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY: PRESS CONFERENCE

1. Thank you for your minute of earlier today. Mr Brennan's submission of 15 May and my minute of 21 May covering a draft letter to the Prime Minister about the future of the Assembly cover most of the ground with which the Secretary of State will need to be familiar for this conference.

... However, I attach a note about Assembly members salaries and allowances. The Secretary of State may be questioned about the breakdown of the overall cost (£2.8m. in 1985/86) referred to in the draft letter to No. 10.

2. The Assembly Official Report for the debates on 21 May have not yet reached London. I assume that Central Secretariat will draw any material which may be relevant to your attention.

Miss D.F.E. Elliott

MISS D F E ELLIOTT
CPL

27 May 1986

PBD

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

1. The current cost of the Northern Ireland Assembly is about £2.8m. per year.

2. This is based on the costs of an Assembly with 60 members drawing their pay and allowances. The formal estimates in 1985/86 made provision for £3.2 m, to include all 78 members who had been elected and who could still have signed the roll: the corresponding figure for 1986/87 is £3.45 million, assuming elections in October to an 85 seat Assembly, with all members taking up their seats.

3. The current figure of £2.8m. is made up as follows:-

Members' salaries, allowances and pension provision - £1.3m.
Staffing, administration and maintenance - £1.5m.

4. Members receive salaries of £10,139 p.a. (unchanged since 1 January 1985), and may claim secretarial allowances of up to £7,527 (unchanged since 1 April 1985). Motor and travel allowances are based on the Northern Ireland Civil Service rates, and also date from 1 April 1985.

5. Besides the basic salaries of Assembly members, the following may also receive additional salaries:

Presiding officer	£10,907 pa.
Chairmen of Departmental Committees (6)	£3,380 pa.
Deputy Chairmen of Departmental Committees (6)	£1,690 pa.

The Committee officers forfeited this right when they suspended the work of the Departmental Committees; they are not being paid the extra cash.