



HCS/809/97

**FROM: IAN MAYE
PS/MR SEMPLE
21 OCTOBER**

cc Miss Taylor o/r

**MR KENNEDY
MR WADDELL** →

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

1. The Secretary of State and Ministers have now agreed that the annual NICS/HCS Service of Remembrance should be reinstated.
2. I should be grateful if you would take forward the arrangements for the Service as quickly as possible, consulting Mr Semple and others as necessary.

**IAN MAYE
☎ 28146**



HCS/772/97



**FROM: JOHN SEMPLÉ
9 OCTOBER 1997**

**cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L)
PS/Mr Ingram (DED,B&L)
PS/Mr Worthington (DENI,DHSS&L)
PS/Lord Dubs (DOE,DANI&L)
PS/PUS (B&L)
NI Perm Secs
Mr Steele
Mr Thomas
Mr Bell
Mr Stephens
Mr Watkins
Mr Woods
Mr Canavan
Mr Kennedy
Mr Maccabe
Mrs Brown
Miss Taylor (o/r)
Mr Waddell ✓**

PS/MR MURPHY (B&L)

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

1. Up until November 1994 an annual event in Parliament Buildings was the joint NICS/HCS Service of Remembrance in the Central Hall on 11 November each year at 11.00 am. It has not taken place since then because of the fire in Parliament Buildings and subsequent refurbishment of the building. Now that the building is again operational Ministers need to consider whether the service should be reinstated, what form it should take, including who might be invited to conduct it, where and when in Parliament Buildings it might take place and who would be considered eligible to attend.
2. The Annual Service of Remembrance in Parliament Buildings was an opportunity for members of the NICS and the HCS to come together to remember those who died in the two world wars and other conflicts. It

was attended primarily, but not exclusively by civil servants working in or close to the Stormont estate. The service was held in the Central Hall and was conducted by invited members of the four main churches (including the Roman Catholic Church). PUS and the Head of the NICS laid wreaths on behalf of their respective services. As this was an act of remembrance by the civil service, Ministers did not normally attend.

Discussion

3. The world has moved on in a number of respects since the Remembrance Service was last held in Parliament Buildings and it is for consideration whether the service should be reinstated. Now that Parliament Buildings has re-opened there will be an expectation within the NICS and HCS in Belfast that the Remembrance Service will take place. Already some have asked about the arrangements. Should we decide not to reinstate the service there is likely to be an adverse reaction from the unionist community broadly, which would be unhelpful as we move forward with substantive negotiations. Having said that, there was no pressure in recent years to hold the service elsewhere in the Government estate. On the other hand if the service were to proceed there is unlikely to be any adverse reaction from the nationalist community, or any of the nationalist parties. Sinn Fein are unlikely to be overly concerned. Indeed, given the Irish Government's decision last year to attend the Remembrance Service in Dublin, there is no reason to suggest that there would be objections from any quarter to reinstating the service, providing we can again ensure representation from the four main churches and, most particularly, the Roman Catholic church.
4. Providing Ministers are content to reinstate the Remembrance Service, I recommend that:



- (i) representatives of the four main churches be invited to conduct the service;
- (ii) that the service might take broadly the form adopted in previous years (although we may simplify the service somewhat);
- (iii) that it should take place in the Central Hall in Parliament Buildings at 11.00 am on 11 November;
- (iv) that all members of the NICS and HCS (NIO) should be invited to attend.

5. We are somewhat short of time to make the necessary preparations for the service and I should, therefore, be grateful for an early indication that Ministers are content for the service to be reinstated.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Semple". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

JOHN SEMPLE