

BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING: 4 MAY 1992

Government Team

Mr Hanley
Mr Bell
Mr Hill

Alliance Party

Mr Close
Mr Morrow

UDUP

Mr Robinson
Mr Vitty

Talks Secretariat

Mr May

SDLP

Mr Durkan
Mr Farren

UUP

Mr Cunningham
Mr Empey

Also Present

Mr Smyth

The meeting began at 11.38 and concluded at 12.55.

2. The SDLP delegation asked whether Mr Haughey might sit in as an additional member of their team, as he was normally one of the nominated representatives of the Party, but had been in hospital last week and wished to keep in touch with the work of the Committee. After discussion, it was agreed that to accommodate the request would be a bad precedent.

3. The Government Team explained that the Secretary of State had an unavoidable commitment on the afternoon of 7 May and asked whether Mr Hanley might act as substitute when the Secretary of State was unavailable rather than slow up the process. The delegations agreed to this.

4 The Government Team sought the views of the Parties on which members of delegations should receive the Talks allowance for days on which there was no plenary meeting. The Government Team explained that 4 May would be treated as a full Talks day, and suggested that in future, when only Business and/or Sub-Committees were to meet, allowances be paid only to members of the Committee in question, and two others per delegation who might be required for consultation purposes.

5. The DUP delegation said that when the Business Committee was only intending to discuss procedural issues there would be no call

to pay allowances to anyone except Committee members. However, they pointed out that when matters of substance were to be discussed, there could be a need to consult widely within Party delegations and asked that consideration be given to the payment of allowances on days when non-plenary meetings could be expected to take decisions requiring endorsement. The SDLP delegation pointed out that a ruling such as the one proposed by the Government Team might result in delays. The UUP delegation suggested that the question of whether the Talks allowance should be made payable to all members of delegations on particular days might be considered by the Business Committee on a weekly basis looking to the business to be conducted in the week ahead. The Government Team agreed to consider the matter further.

6. The minutes of the Business Committee meeting of 29 April were agreed without amendment. The Government Team explained that as a result of that previous meeting, it had separated the draft statement of the common themes to have emerged from the previous talks from its view of the fundamental political realities. It asked whether the Common Themes paper was now in suitable form for presentation to the Plenary Session, and for views from the delegations on how the paper might be handled at the Plenary Session. The Government Team suggested the paper might be noted by the Plenary Session rather than discussed at length. The delegations indicated they had a number of points to raise on the paper, although it constituted a considerable improvement over that presented to them at the previous Business Committee meeting. A revised paper is attached, incorporating agreed amendments, at Annex A. The UDUP delegation asked it be recorded that they agreed paragraph 4 of the paper on the basis of the interpretation offered by the Government Team at the previous Business Committee meeting (ref BC/1 paragraph 6 first indent).

5. It was agreed that a further meeting of the Business Committee would commence at 14.30 that day.