



**BRITISH-IRISH
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY**

**COMHLACHT IDIR-PHARLAIMINTEACH
NA BREATAINE AGUS NA hÉIREANN**

TWENTY-SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION

20 and 21 October 2003

Poles Hall, Hanbury Manor Hotel and Country Club

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

(Produced by ALDA BARRY & JOHN HAMILTON, Clerks to the Body)

1. Monday 20 October 2003

The sitting was opened in public at 9.30 am in the Poles Hall, Hanbury Manor Hotel and Country Club, Ware, with Mr David Winnick, MP, in the Chair.

The Chairman announced new Members of the Body:

UK Parliament: as an Associate Member: Baroness Harris of Richmond

Scottish Parliament: as full Members Mr Murray Tosh, MSP, Mrs Margaret Ewing, MSP, Mr David McLetchie, MSP, Mr Alasdair Morrison, MSP, and Mr Iain Smith, MSP; and as Associate Members Mr Bruce Crawford, MSP, Ms Helen Eadie, MSP, Mr Robin Harpur, MSP and Mr Michael McMahon, MSP

National Assembly for Wales: Mr Michael German, AM, Mr John Griffiths, AM, Dr Dai Lloyd, AM, Dr John Marek, AM and Mr David Melding, AM; and as Associate Members Mr Glynn Davis, AM, Ms Eleanor Burnham, AM and Mr Brian Gibbons, AM.

The Chairman announced that, pursuant to Rule 2(a), from the UK **Mr Paul Flynn, MP. Mr Dominic Grieve, MP, Baroness Harris of Richmond**, and from Ireland **Senator Paul Coghlan, Senator Ann Ormonde and Mr Ned O'Keefe**, being Associate Members, had accepted the invitation of the Steering Committee to assume the powers and responsibilities of Members for all of the Session.

1. ADOPTION OF PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

Ordered, That the proposed Programme of Business for the current Session, as amended, be approved. **(Mr David Winnick.)**

2. ILL-HEALTH OF THE UNITED KINGDOM PRIME MINISTER

Resolved, That this Body is very sorry to hear of Tony Blair's ill-health; recognizes the immense contribution which the Prime Minister of the UK has made to try and bring about a lasting peaceful solution in Northern Ireland as well as establishing a close working relationship between our two countries and wishes him a full recovery.--- **(Mr Michael Mates.)**

3 RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Motion made and Question proposed, That the Body remains fully supportive of the Good Friday Agreement as the only way forward for the people of Northern Ireland; recognizes the political progress brought about by the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement, benefiting all the people of these islands; acknowledges the collective responsibility of all concerned, including the two governments and the pro-Agreement parties, to make the Agreement work; calls upon all parties involved to redouble their efforts to achieve the restoration of the devolved institutions; trusts that the elections to the Assembly, postponed from May 2003, will be held

before the end of the year; and looks forward to welcoming a full delegation of Assembly Members to its spring plenary in 2004--- (**Mr Michael Mates**);

Amendment proposed, in line 6, to leave out from the word "institutions" to the end and insert the words " and calls on Sinn Fein/IRA to deliver that which Prime Minister Blair stated was necessary before a new Executive could be formed"--- (**Lord Glentoran**)

The sitting was suspended at 10.40 am.

The sitting was resumed at 11.15 am.

The Amendment was, with the leave of the Body, withdrawn.

And the main Question being put;

Resolved, That the Body remains fully supportive of the Good Friday Agreement as the only way forward for the people of Northern Ireland; recognizes the political progress brought about by the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement, benefiting all the people of these islands; acknowledges the collective responsibility of all concerned, including the two governments and the pro-Agreement parties, to make the Agreement work; calls upon all parties involved to redouble their efforts to achieve the restoration of the devolved institutions; trusts that the elections to the Assembly, postponed from May 2003, will be held before the end of the year; and looks forward to welcoming a full delegation of Assembly Members to its spring plenary in 2004.

The sitting was suspended at 12.35 pm.

The sitting was resumed at 2.55 pm with Mr Brendan Smith, TD, in the Chair

4 THE PROPOSED EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the proposed constitution for Europe.--- (**Mr Seamus Kirk.**)

The sitting was suspended at 3.30 pm.

The sitting was resumed at 3.55 pm with Mr David Winnick in the Chair.

5 STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR MINISTER OF STATE, NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

A statement was made by the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office, Mr John Spellar, MP.

6 QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office, Mr John Spellar, MP, replied to Questions for oral answer put by Members of the Body.

The sitting was adjourned at 5.15 pm until tomorrow.

2. Tuesday 21 October 2003

The sitting was opened in public at 10.05 am in the Poles Hall, Hanbury Manor Hotel and Country Club, with Mr David Winnick, MP, in the Chair

1. ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR PAUL BEW

Professor Paul Bew, Professor of Irish Politics, Queen's University, Belfast, addressed the Body on the subject 'Developments in Northern Ireland: Some Thoughts on the Current Situation', and answered oral questions.

The sitting was suspended at 10.40 am.

The sitting was resumed at 11.05 pm.

2 DEATH OF MRS JOHN SPELLAR

The Chairman announced that Mrs John Spellar, wife of the Minister of State for Northern Ireland, had died suddenly and that he would convey the Body's sympathy to Mr Spellar.

3 BUSINESS REPORTS FROM CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Mr Andrew Mackay, MP, Chairman of Committee B, made a statement about the work of the Committee.

Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD, Chairman of Committee A, made a statement about the work of the Committee.

Mr Harry Barnes, MP, Shadow Chairman of Committee C, made a statement about the work of the Committee.

Mr Kevin McNamara, MP, Chairman of Committee D, made a statement about the work of the Committee.

4. SELLAFIELD

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the report of Committee D on Environmental and Social Affairs on Sellafield: the latest developments [Doc 93] and the conclusions and recommendations of the Report, which should be forwarded to both Governments and the other Administrations represented on the Body for their observations, and to the British-Irish Council secretariat for transmission to the members of the environmental sectoral group .**(Mr Jeff Ennis.)**

4 PENALTY POINTS

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the report of the Committee on Sovereign Affairs on Mutual Recognition of Penalty Points [Doc 94] and agrees that the report should be forwarded to the British and Irish Governments and the devolved Administrations represented on the Body for their observations.--- (**Lord Dubs.**)

5 RETIRING STAFF

The Body noted that Mr Jim Mulkerrins, Irish Joint Clerk, and Brigadier John Osborne, British Consultant, were leaving the Body, thanked them for all their work and wished them well.

6 ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, That the Body do now adjourn. (**Mr Kevin McNamara.**)

The session concluded at 12 noon.