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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Cllr Dr John Alderdice
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
88 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1HE

17 April 1996

Dear John,

In preparing for the elections on 30 May you may find it helpful to have an indication of our current thinking on the timing/frequency of meetings of the Forum and of the negotiations and on the level of remuneration which delegates can expect to receive.

Timing/Frequency of Meetings

Negotiations will begin on 10 June 1996. Those who are participating in the negotiations can expect to be involved for up to 3 days per week.

Forum

It is proposed that the Forum should meet on "specified days", (as envisaged in the 21 March Statement) when the negotiations are not in session. This points to meetings on at least one day a week, which I suggest should be the same day each week for delegates' convenience.

Negotiating Teams

While there will be no limit to the overall size of each negotiating team, it is proposed that the party negotiating teams at any one meeting will generally be limited to a maximum of 3, plus 3 in support. These supporters may include researchers and others who are not elected.

Remuneration

Our current thinking is that elected members of the Forum should be paid a loss of earnings allowance at a daily rate of £100, and £50 for less than 4 hours, reflecting the payments made in 1991 and 1992. This could be claimed, in arrears, on the basis of relevant attendance at the Forum or for the purposes of the negotiations.

Subsistence/travel expenses

We propose to use the standard Civil Service rates and make available, as a facility, arrangements whereby delegations will be able to claim travel expenses and subsistence allowances (including for party support staff).

Research Grants

As in 1991/92, "research" grants will also be payable. I should be grateful for suggestions as to what might be an appropriate level to set and what types of expenditure should be covered.

I trust this is helpful, but if any of the above points raise any questions for you, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me or my Office.

✓ Yes →
Riches

THE RT HON MICHAEL ANCRAM QC DL MP
Minister of State for Political Development