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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

BULL POINT BRIEFING

Belfast/Dublin Railway Link

- Work is underway on both sides of the Border to upgrade the Belfast-Dublin railway link. Total cost (North and South) will be in excess of £80m (at 1992 prices), of which £32.5m falls to Northern Ireland.
- Project is attracting 75% EC grant. The ROI is also hoping that the later stages of the project will receive Cohesion Funding.
- A joint Ministerial function will be held in early 1994 to mark the official opening of the function.

Cross-Border Trade

- The two Governments are currently involved in organising a major cross-border trade conference entitled "Building Business Links in Ireland"; this will take place on 15 December 1993.
- The objective of the conference is to build on the work undertaken to date by Government and industry to promote and increase cross-border trade.

Shannon-Erne Waterway

- The Shannon-Erne Waterway will be officially opened on 26 May 1994.
- The Waterway will link the Erne and the Shannon, and will provide tourists with the most extensive leisure canal in Europe - more than 800km.

Employment Equality Review

- A review is underway of the effectiveness of the Fair Employment (NI) Act 1989 and progress towards equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment. The Review will be completed in 1995 and the findings published.

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- All Government Departments have been asked to undertake a review of their data collection and monitoring systems to ensure that reliable and objective information is available to determine what differentials exist between the two sides of the community and how policy is affecting them. Work on this initiative is on-going.
- Work is already underway to tackle disadvantage. Some £85m will be devoted to projects which will address TSN objectives in the 1993/94 financial year, but all Northern Ireland expenditure programmes (totalling over £7 billion) have elements which address TSN objectives eg housing, education, health, industrial development, training.

Making Belfast Work (MBW)

- The MBW initiative, which has been allocated £124m since introduction, is at the heart of the Government's commitment to targeting social need in disadvantaged areas of Belfast.
- The Government has agreed to continue the MBW initiative until April 1997 and to undertake a further review at that stage.

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