



## An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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PRESS RELEASEOpening Session of Unique British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body  
London, 26-28 February, 1990

The opening session of a unique body which brings together British and Irish parliamentarians for discussions on a wide range of issues will take place in London from 26-28 February, 1990.

Co-chaired by Mr. Peter Temple-Morris MP and by the Deputy Speaker of the Irish Parliament, Mr. Jim Tunney TD, and operating under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the new British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body will have a total membership of fifty, twenty-five from each side. Each delegation will comprise representatives of both Government and opposition parties. The British delegation will also include a representative of the SDLP and there is provision for the participation of two Unionist representatives.

The formal inauguration of the Body will take place at 4 p.m. on Monday 26 February in Committee Room 14 of the House of Commons. Speakers will include the Lord President of the Council, Sir Geoffrey Howe MP; the Deputy Prime Minister of Ireland, Mr. Brian Lenihan TD; Mr. Roy Hattersley MP and Mr. Paddy Ashdown MP; and Mr. Peter Barry TD and Mr. Dick Spring TD.

Exchanges between the parliamentarians at next week's meeting are expected to cover a broad range of issues. Matters of common concern to the two countries will be debated at each of the four sessions, some of which will be open to the public.

The origins of the Body lie in the joint studies initiated by the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach (Prime Minister of Ireland) at their meeting on 8 December 1980. In November 1981, a report to the two Prime Ministers indicated that "it would be a natural and desirable development for the establishment of a new inter-governmental body to be complemented at an appropriate moment by the development of an inter-parliamentary body".

Following the expression of strong support for such a body, a joint inter-parliamentary working group was established to prepare recommendations to the two Parliaments and the two Governments. The foundations for the new Body were laid at a series of meetings over the intervening years. As provided for in the joint studies report and in Article 12 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, support for the Body has been made available by the two Governments.

Although established under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the new Body will have its own selection processes and rules of procedure. It will have consultative, advisory and review functions and it may submit reports on matters of mutual interest and concern for consideration by the two Parliaments.