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25 April 1991

TO: MR R WILSON - F

FROM: R B SPENCE

FEC REPORT ON MONITORING RETURNS

Attached is a line to take and a copy of the FEC's press release.

RBS

*For file
HW 346/4.*

R B SPENCE



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
An Equal Opportunities Organisation

FEC REPORT ON MONITORING RETURNS

Line to take

I am sorry that you were not given advance notice of the publication on the morning of Monday 22 April of the FEC's Report "A profile of the Workforce in Northern Ireland: A Summary of the 1990 Monitoring Returns".

NI Ministers did not learn of the publication date until Friday 19 April and at that stage only one copy of the report was available for Mr Needham. I understand that a copy was forwarded to Maryfield as soon as extra copies became available to us after publication. I gather that the FEC has had practical difficulties in printing the document.



FAIR EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

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Press Release

Contact: BOB COOPER/HARRY GOODMAN/COLIN McILHENY

Embargo: MIDDAY, MONDAY, APRIL 22, 1991

FEC REPORT A BENCHMARK FOR EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH

USING data gathered by province-wide employee monitoring, the Commission today released the very first analysis of employment as it affects the two communities in Northern Ireland.

Arguably the largest information-gathering exercise outside the Population Census, the data contained in the report has been obtained from the first monitoring returns provided last year by the public sector and by private sector firms employing more than 25 workers. The information covers almost 350,000 people employed by 99 public bodies and 1,758 private concerns - in all about two-thirds of the total workforce in the Province.

Never before has so much factual information been gleaned on the religious composition of so many organisations in Northern Ireland. In his foreword to the report the Chairman of the Fair Employment Commission, Bob Cooper, says:

"The debate on fair employment has been hampered to some extent by the absence of information on the industrial and occupational profile of the two sections of the population in Northern Ireland. To date it has been necessary to rely largely on information from the Population Census and it has thus only been possible to assess the extent to which change is taking place at 10-year intervals.

LETTER

"In addition, the problems connected with the last census relating to non-enumeration and non-response to the religion question made for particular problems in using the census data. Now, however, the receipt by the Commission of annual monitoring information makes it possible to chart change and continuity regularly."

Today's report is a benchmark for all future study of workforce patterns here and is divided into three main sections - an aggregate analysis of the entire workforce; a profile of the public sector; and an in-depth look at the private sector. Material is presented on employment patterns by community background and their interaction with gender and occupations and industries. This gives the reader the chance to focus on areas of particular interest such as patterns in management or specific industries.

The breakdown of the 349,400 workers in the Northern Ireland workforce is 61% Protestant, 33% Catholic and 6% Non-Determined. The composition of those for whom a community was determined was 65% Protestant and 35% Roman Catholic. For males for whom a community was determined the figures are 68% Protestant and 32% Catholic. For females the corresponding figures are 61.5% Protestant and 38.5% Catholic.

Within the public sector information was obtained on some 155,000 workers. The composition of those for whom a community was determined is 65% Protestant and 35% Catholic. A factor in shaping this pattern of return was the presence of those in security-related occupations. After they are excluded the composition of those for whom a community could be determined is 61% Protestant and 39% Catholic. Detailed figures in this section of the report are also presented for key areas such as district councils, the health sector, the education and library boards, and the Civil Service.

In the private sector information was collected on some 195,000 employees. The breakdown of the figures is also 65% Protestant and 35% Catholic. The rate of Non-Determined in this sector (4%) was only half that of the public sector employees (8%).

Commission Chairman, Bob Cooper, points out that a difficulty faced when examining the monitoring returns is a lack of certainty about the proportions of the economically active population who are Protestant and Catholic, and adds:

"It is probable, however, that the Protestant proportion is between 62 - 65% and the Catholic proportion is in the range of 35 - 38%. It is likely that the Catholic figure is close to the top of the range.

"If the economically active proportions are 62% Protestant and 38% Catholic and with the known male Catholic unemployment rate 2½ times that of the male Protestant unemployment rate, it can be shown that the expected Catholic proportion of those in employment would be 31.3%. This is very close to the actual figure of 32% shown in the monitoring returns."

Mr Cooper records the Commission's satisfaction with the excellent level of co-operation received from employers in carrying out the monitoring requirements of the legislation and places on record the FEC's appreciation of the time and effort involved, while adding:

"Monitoring is, of course, only the first stage in the task of securing fair representation of both communities in Northern Ireland.

"The pattern exhibited in this report constitutes a promising base on which to build whatever further action is necessary to promote equality of opportunity effectively throughout Northern Ireland. The Commission has already embarked on discussions about the need for affirmative action in those companies where there is significant under-representation of either community.

The task is not one for just employers and the Commission. In 1988 the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights recommended that Government should set a target for a reduction in the male Catholic/Protestant unemployment

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differential from 2½ to 1½. The Commission can help to alter employment flows but is firmly of the view that major changes in the composition of employment in general and in the unemployment differential in particular will also require action by Government."

- * **A Profile of the Workforce in Northern Ireland - A summary of the 1990 Monitoring Returns (Research Report No.1).** Available from the Fair Employment Commission, Andras House, 60 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7BB, price £5.00 post free.

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