



Northern Ireland Office

Press Notice

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L21/96

16 April 1996

NORTHERN IRELAND ELECTIONS BILL PUBLISHED

A draft Bill laying the legislative groundwork for elections in Northern Ireland on 30 May is published today.

Sir Patrick Mayhew QC MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said today:

"I look upon the forthcoming election as a gateway to negotiations that can lead towards a long term political settlement in Northern Ireland.

"It offers parties in Northern Ireland the opportunity to confirm their electoral mandate to negotiate in the democratic search for peace.

"The draft Bill also gives the people of Northern Ireland the opportunity to cast a vote for those they believe are best placed to deliver a peaceful settlement and I hope they will take this opportunity at the end of next month."

PST, PSS, S/S Ó hUiginn,
Counsellors A-I, Section,
F. Finlay, Messrs Teahon,
Donlon, Dalton & Kirwan,
Ambassadors London &
Washington, Joint Secretary

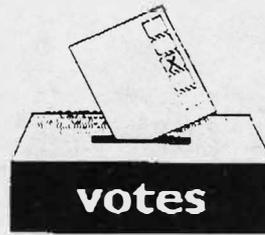
The Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations, etc) Bill:

- allows an election to be held to provide delegates from whom participants in all party negotiations may be chosen;
- allows the election to be conducted under the constituency list system supported by the regional list system;
- provides for the establishment of a forum to discuss issues relevant to promoting dialogue and understanding within Northern Ireland;
- makes clear that the forum, formed from delegates returned at election, will be deliberative only and will have no legislative, executive or administrative functions, or the power to determine the conduct, course or outcome of negotiations;
- provides that referendums may, with parliamentary approval, be held on any matter relating to Northern Ireland;
- provides for the forum to cease to have effect at the end of May 1997 but includes powers for the Secretary of State to maintain or return it to force until no later than May 1998.

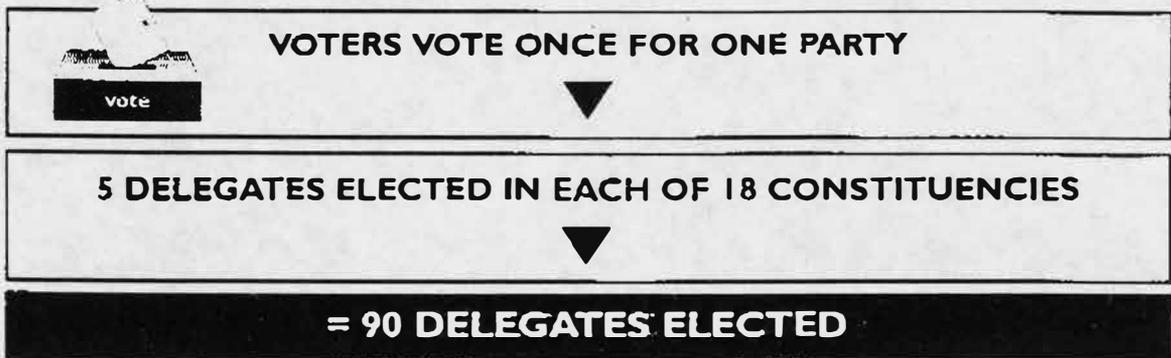
NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Government announced on 28 February 1996 its intention to bring forward legislation for an election in Northern Ireland leading to inclusive all-party negotiations on 10 June.
2. It was announced on 21 March that the election to be held on 30 May will be conducted under the constituency list system supplemented by the regional list system.
3. The election is to be held on the basis of lists submitted by a 'nominating representative' on behalf of the participating parties, which are listed in the schedule. Five delegates will be returned from each constituency in Northern Ireland; in addition two delegates will be returned for each of the ten parties who gain the largest aggregate vote across all the constituencies and on whose behalf a 'regional list' has been submitted.

THE FORM OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND ELECTION 30 May 1996

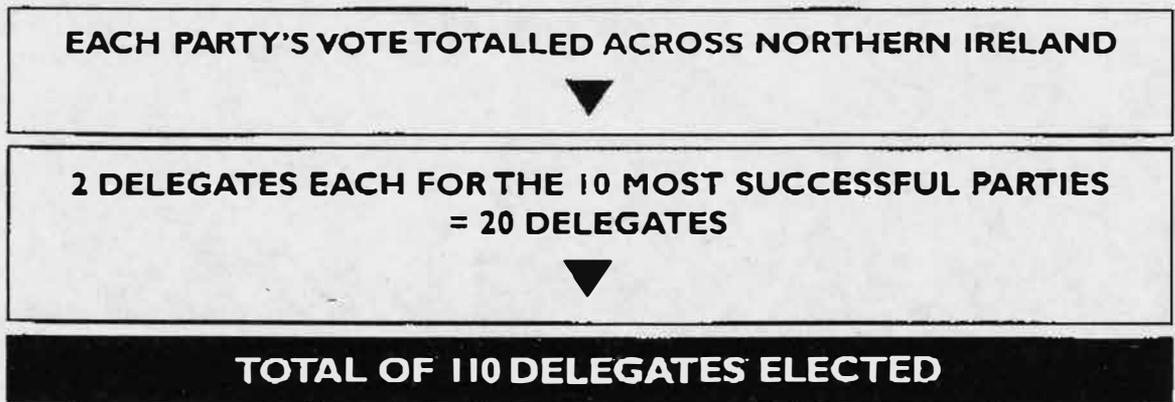


CONSTITUENCY LIST SYSTEM



PLUS

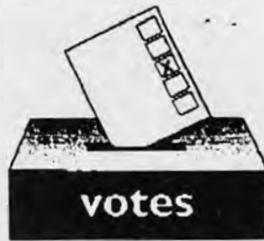
REGIONAL LIST SYSTEM



HOW THE NORTHERN IRELAND ELECTION WILL WORK

ELECTION 30 MAY 1996

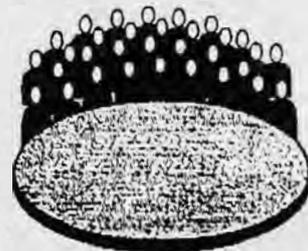
by constituency list system/regional list system.
Purpose: to establish a pool from which to select negotiating teams and to choose members for an elected forum.



110 DELEGATES ELECTED

ELECTED PARTIES
choose negotiators

ALL DELEGATES



Inclusive all party negotiations
10 June 1996

FORUM

Purpose: to negotiate a political settlement

Negotiators may refer matters

Purpose: to discuss issues relevant to promoting dialogue and understanding within Northern Ireland