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Mr. Keenan,
Copy for information please.

S. Hare 27.4.98.

Mr Bertie Ahern, TD
An Taoiseach
Government Buildings
Dublin 2

23 April 1998

Dear Taoiseach,

I am in receipt of your letter of 11th April 1998 in regard to the participation of people living in Northern Ireland in national political life.

The letter was drawn to the attention of the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution at their meeting held on 22nd April 1998. The parties represented on the Committee are Fianna Fáil the Republican Party, Fine Gael, The Labour Party, the Progressive Democrats and Democratic Left.

As a result of the meeting and subsequent consultation with the political interests involved, the Committee has decided to conduct a review of those provisions of the Constitution relating to the institutions of State. The relevant Articles of the Constitution which will be subject to the review are Articles 12-39 and Articles 46-50. In the conduct of the review the Committee will consider the matters referred to in your letter, the report of the Constitution Review Group and all submissions received. It is the view of the Committee that the matters referred to in your letter should be considered in the context of a review of the institutions of the State. The Committee are prepared to entertain further public and private submissions.

This review will be conducted as a matter of priority and completed not later than 30th November 1998. The Committee request the Government to:

- 1 sanction the proposed review
- 2 direct the Departments of State to extend to the Committee all necessary assistance in connection with the review
- 3 confirm that the review of the Electoral System envisaged in the Programme for Government shall be undertaken in the first instance by the Committee: this issue relates to an express constitutional provision concerning the institutions of State
- 4 sanction an increase in the budget of the secretariat to the Committee in the sum of £10,000.

Yours sincerely



Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

Mr. S. Harcourt
21/4/98

11 April 1998

All-Party Oireachtas Committee
on the Constitution
17 APR 1998
Received

Mr. Brian Lenihan T.D.
Chairman
Joint Oireachtas Committee
on the Constitution

Dear Brian,

In the context of the all-party agreement concluded today, I would like to recommend for the consideration of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Constitution how people living in Northern Ireland might play a more active part in national political life, to the extent that they so desire and in a spirit consistent with the principles underlying the peace settlement. I, of course, appreciate that the decision to examine any subject is a decision in the first instance for the Committee itself.

I would ask you to have the Committee actively consider the proposals that MPs elected in the North should be entitled to sit in the Dail and that Irish citizens living in the North should be entitled to vote in Presidential elections and referendums.

I look forward to your views on this subject.

Yours sincerely,

Taoiseach