

Ministers urged to drop 'Ireland' from state title

THE use of the term 'Ireland' to describe the Republic in official documents proved a major irritant to the unionist government in the 1950s, according to cabinet papers released in Belfast.

In January 1955, WN McWilliams, a Stormont official, reminded departments of the government's desire to avoid the use of the term 'Republic of

Ireland' in documents.

He wrote: "Republic of Ireland" is a phrase which it is government policy both here and in Great Britain to avoid unless its use is absolutely unavoidable.

The whole issue of terminology was the subject of a long memo circulated to the cabinet by Mr Eric Montgomery, the Stormont director of information in April

1959. Referring to the south's anti-partition propaganda, he wrote: "We, while vigorously denying their claim, yet often appear to contradict ourselves and even to support their case by our use of the word 'Irish'." All this tends to make people in Great Britain and abroad think of the partition of Ireland as an artificial, ephemeral thing and emphasises the perils we may

face at home if, as seems to be happening, the tensions between north and south begin to ease." The position, he went on, "was made worse by the attitude of the local BBC television station which seems to view Irish cottage plays, jigs and reels, pipes and harps and collie singing laments, as a picture of our 'Irish way of life'."

"It would, however, be wrong

to stress racial or national differences as a justification of the border. It does not keep the Scots and the English apart. Religion, not race, is the basic difference—a fact we should lose no opportunity to stress for it knocks on the head the racial argument for a united and independent Ireland."

The press chief argued that the use of 'Ireland' to describe

Northern Ireland organisations and sporting teams, including the Grand Orange Lodge, caused major ambiguity. He added: "We should do more to emphasise our separateness by ceasing to refer to Northern Ireland as a 'province' and finding a better description of our status."

The "crux of the matter", he argued, was the title of the state: "I believe it was a great mistake

ever to have included the word Ireland in the title of our new state in 1921. It links us forever with the south and with the stage-Irish interpretation of our character of which we feel ashamed."

"If only it were practicable, one of the biggest steps we could take towards cleaning up this confusion over our separateness from Eire would be to change the

title of our state to something which would exclude the word Ireland."

Uster was a possible title, but he preferred one which would also imply a connection with Britain.

The matter was considered by the cabinet on April 17 1959, but ministers agreed that there was no question of changing the official title of Northern Ireland.



• RESEARCH...
Dr Eamon Phoenix

Cabinet files on 1965 are released

THIS week the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland released to the public, under the 30-year rule, 2,000 cabinet files, mostly relating to 1965.

The files include some dating from earlier periods, mainly the 1930s, 40s and 50s.

British government files were also released in London.

A small number of files have been closed for a 10-year period from their cover dates on grounds of sensitivity. Among these is a cabinet file dated 1964/65 called *International Relations, including those with the Republic of Ireland*.

Another embargoed file deals with *Exploration and Exploitation of Mineral Resources, 1960/65*.

The Northern Ireland Cabinet of 1965 was headed by Captain Terence O'Neill and included several figures destined to dominate unionist politics in the 1960s and 70s. Among these were Brian Faulkner (minister of commerce); Herbert Kirk (minister of finance); Brian McConnell (minister of home affairs); WJ Morgan (minister of health and social services); Harry West (minister of agriculture); WK Fitzsimmons (minister of education); William Craig (minister of development) and FV Jones, QC (attorney-general).

Dr Eamon Phoenix, who compiled these reports, is senior lecturer in history at Stranmillis College, Belfast. He is the author of *Northern Nationalism*. He is editor of the recently published *A Century of Northern Life, 1890s-1990s* (Ulster Historical Foundation).

Stormont spurned History of Ireland

THE Stormont cabinet of Captain Terence O'Neill refused to support a new *History of Ireland* in 1965 in case the book would embarrass the Northern Ireland government.

On July 16 1965, Minister of Education WK Fitzsimmons circulated a memo to his cabinet colleagues supporting the idea of a new *History of Ireland* in 1965 in case the book would embarrass the Northern Ireland government.

Several members of the committee, he added, were known to the Ministry of Education's inspectors as "historians of repute."

The minister said that the Dublin government had agreed to support the scheme in principle to the amount of \$8,000 over five years.

Mr McConnell added: "Clearly, the production of a history of this nature might lead to embarrassment for the government. I think there is, however, some force in the suggestion made by the proposers that if there is to be support from public funds, it would come better from both governments rather than from one alone."

The issue was raised at a request from Professor FX Martin, secretary of the editorial committee, who sought financial assistance for a three volume history. The minister informed the Stormont cabinet: "If the work was proposed in accordance with existing standards of scholarship, it would be very valuable. At

Ministers afraid to support new book

the present time, no work of this nature on Irish history exists. It would probably be the basis for all school textbooks for many years."

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Accordingly, the minister sought cabinet approval to the principle of cooperation for the government. I think there is, however, some force in the suggestion made by the proposers that if there is to be support from public funds, it would come better from both governments rather than from one alone."

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full cabinet meeting on August 11 1965 at Stormont Castle. The minister said the experts accepted the need for such a history. It was left that the editorial committee would be reasonably objective and would produce a work of value. While parts of the work might well prove unwelcome in tone or content (to the Northern Ireland authorities), in the whole he considered that it would be difficult not to agree to participate, particularly as the government of the Republic had already promised support. The financial implications were comparatively trivial in any case.

However, the proposal provoked a hostile response from his cabinet colleagues. Prime Minister Captain O'Neill, Mr Faulkner, Minister of Commerce Mr Kirk, Minister of Finance Mr McConnell, Minister of Home Affairs and Mr West, the Minister of Agriculture all opposed involvement in a project which the government would have no control over and whose results might be badly received in Northern Ireland. There was no real precedent for direct government support of a work of scholarship of this kind.

In the end, the cabinet decided that the projected history should not be supported from public funds.

Parliament wanted trading concessions

THE O'Neill cabinet sought special concessions for northern goods entering the southern market in the run-up to the Anglo-Irish trade agreement of 1965.

At a cabinet meeting on 11 August 1965, Minister of Commerce Brian Faulkner reported on discussions with the Dublin authorities on the possibility of tariff reductions for some Northern Ireland industries at a faster rate than that envisaged under the Anglo-Irish trade proposals. The reaction of the Irish government, he added, had been most favourable.

The Dublin authorities had asked, however, for direct talks between the Irish government and its northern counterpart.

Mr Faulkner had told the Board of Trade that the Stormont government could not negotiate in a field in which it had no powers and the Board of Trade had agreed to allow the northern Ministry of Commerce to act as their agent.

The Dublin government no doubt expected some political kudos from being able to claim that it had done something for "the north", but equally it was both practically and politically important to secure advantages for Northern Ireland's manufacturers. Ministers agreed that talks with Dublin should proceed.



• NO AGREEMENT... Minister of Commerce Brian Faulkner reported that the two governments couldn't agree on tourist information

Governments couldn't agree on literature for tourists

THE idea of closer cooperation between the northern and southern tourists boards won the approval of the Stormont cabinet in the wake of the O'Neill-Lemass meeting in 1965, but faced insuperable difficulties over the production of maps and literature acceptable to both governments.

The issue of close cooperation in the field of tourism was first discussed by the Northern Ireland cabinet at its meeting on 20 January 1965.

The Minister of Commerce Brian Faulkner, reported that the Northern Ireland Tourist Board had been pressing him on the subject and he felt there was much substance in their recommendations. He had not so far acted in the matter because of a previous cabinet decision of 1960 opposing cooperative ventures.

However, the possibility of tourism cooperation had been mentioned by Captain O'Neill and Sean Lemass following their meeting on 14 January 1965 and on the following day he had made arrangements to meet Erskine Childers, the Minister for Transport and Power in the Irish Government.

It might be that Mr Childers and the Irish Tourist Board would make unacceptable proposals and that difficulties might arise over such questions as the separate designation of Northern Ireland in tourist maps.

Mr Faulkner also referred to the question of cooperation in electricity generation. The use of nuclear energy had also been raised at the meeting of the two prime ministers, but he favoured discussion without commitment.

This meeting would be for the purposes of purely exploratory discussion. No arrangements would be made without the concurrence of the Northern Tourist Board and the specific consent of the cabinet.

Bord Fáilte was understood to be anxious to secure cooperation in promoting the entire island of Ireland as a tourist area. This could be of considerable advantage to Northern Ireland, especially in the long term.

Northern Ireland inevitably was submerged in the wider UK effort. If foreigners were interested in 'Ireland', they tended to look to Bord Fáilte.

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The prime minister, Captain O'Neill, said it would be advantageous to promote easy movement of tourist traffic throughout the British Isles. The American tourist was likely to regard the border as an irritating obstacle to travel. He fully agreed, therefore, that exploratory talks were desirable, though the balance of advantage would have to be kept clearly in mind at every stage. The question of finding an acceptable presentation of joint publicity material could also present practical difficulties.

After further discussion, it was agreed that the Minister of Commerce should explore with Mr Childers the possibilities of cooperation in tourist publicity and in electricity generation and distribution, without commitment at this stage.

Following these discussions, the Minister of Commerce reported to a further Cabinet meeting on 1st April 1965 that the proposed North-South Joint Committee would help to attract more tourists from the south as there was considerable scope for

expansion. However, he wished to make it clear that all joint literature would contain suitable wording to indicate the separate constitutional status of Northern Ireland while maps would show the border.

Problems began to emerge in the cross-border discussions, however, as Mr Faulkner reported to the cabinet on 11 August 1965. He recalled that the cabinet had agreed that any map of Ireland, included in joint literature, must make the north's position clear, both pictorially and textually.

The Dublin authorities had suggested a number of variations which were wholly unacceptable, as implying some degree of impermanence in Northern Ireland's constitutional position.

It was intended that the map should be headed "Ireland"; that the border should be clearly shown; that the six counties should be labelled "Northern Ireland"; and that the territory of the Republic should not be labelled.

In the House it could be explained that the new dispositions were so recent that government could not yet consider any question of payment.

However, Minister of Education Mr Fitzsimmons felt there was some difficulty in using the argument against the Labour opposition and another against the Nationalist opposition.

It was agreed, after further discussion, that the request for the payment of salaries should be resisted on the basis suggested by the Minister of Finance.

At a cabinet meeting on the May 5 1965, Stormont ministers agreed that the relay of Edeas Edeag programmes into Northern Ireland should be "totally resisted".

No salary for McAteer who 'was unwilling to play proper part'

THE O'Neill cabinet rejected a request from the leader of the Nationalist Party, Eddie McAteer, for the payment of a salary to him as leader of the opposition following his party's historic acceptance of official opposition status in 1965.

The matter was discussed at a cabinet meeting at Stormont Castle on May 21 1965.

The minister of finance, Mr Kirk, informed the cabinet that he had received a request from the nationalist leader for the payment of salaries to the opposition leaders and whips in both houses at Stormont.

Previously, when the Northern Ireland Labour Party had been recognised by the speaker as the official opposition, payment had been resisted on the grounds that the party represented a minority element of the opposition.



• SALARY ROW ... Eddie McAteer

In the new circumstances, the minister explained, refusal would have to be justified on other grounds; for example, that the leader in the Commons did not have very onerous responsibilities; that payment in the Senate would be an absurdity and that the question was one on which two select committees had

been unable to make any possible recommendation.

Other members might well point out that an opposition should be "loyal in the sense of being willing to form an alternative government under the constitution and that the present leader of the Nationalist Party had already displayed his unwillingness to play his proper part at functions."

Minister of Home Affairs Brian McConnell felt that, since payment of the Labour leader had been resisted for many years, any payment to the Nationalists would be misconstrued.

Prime Minister Captain O'Neill said the Nationalists had opposed the idea at a select committee. He also recalled the Unionist chief whip's strong objections when the question of paying Mr McAteer had been canvassed.

By such action as his refusal to meet the Governor in Ireland (at a function attended by

Nationalist councillors) and to attend a dinner for the British home secretary, Mr McAteer had provided a simple justification for the argument that he was not playing his proper part.

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