



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

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From the Secretary of State for Social Services

Mike Alexander Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

21 May 1980

Dear Mike

Roy Harrington told me last night that you were seeking briefing for the Prime Minister's meeting today with the Irish Premier.

I attach a short note on health and social security matters.

Yours sincerely
Bernie

B C MERKEL
Private Secretary

ENC

To What extent do Irish Nationals get more favourable treatment in the UK than other nationalities with regard to health care and social security?

Irish nationals have the same entitlement to health care and social security in the United Kingdom as the nationals of other EEC countries. But they do have two small advantages in addition:

1. As there is freedom of movement between Ireland and the United Kingdom, Irish nationals entitled to supplementary benefit here cannot be sent back to Ireland after a period but can stay as long as they like (unlike other EEC nationals).
2. Since the Irish Social Security system is very similar to the United Kingdom's, Irish nationals do not need to have the special EEC form to get medical treatment on the National Health Service (other EEC nationals do).

21 MAY 1960



From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

21 May 1980

Dear Michael

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH
MR. HAUGHEY

Roy Harrington mentioned to me last night that you would like notes on the position of Irish citizens, insofar as special privileges are concerned. I enclose a note dealing with immigration, nationality and electoral aspects.

J. A. CHILCOT

*Yours,
John*

Michael Alexander, Esq.

IRISH CITIZENS: CIVIC AND OTHER PRIVILEGES IN THE
UNITED KINGDOM

IMMIGRATION

1. The United Kingdom has a Common Travel Area arrangement with the Republic of Ireland. This permits the free movement of nationals of either country without physical immigration controls when travelling between the two countries. (It also permits the movement of nationals of third countries when travelling between the United Kingdom and the Republic subject to the conditions and time limits on stay imposed on entry into the Common Travel Area or subsequently by either country).
2. Irish citizens are subject to physical immigration controls on entry to the United Kingdom from a third country. But in addition to their basic right as citizens of a member country of the European Community to enter to seek for work, Irish citizens may normally enter and remain without restriction on the length and purpose of their stay.

SECURITY, CRIME PREVENTION, ETC.

3. Irish citizens remain liable to deportation from the United Kingdom (and are then ineligible to re-enter and commit a criminal offence if they do so) if, for example, they are convicted of criminal offences here. The Prevention of Terrorism Act 1976 renders anyone, including an Irish citizen, who is concerned in terrorism in the Northern Ireland context, liable to be detained, and subsequently to be excluded from Great Britain unless he is both a citizen of this country and has a longstanding connection by birth/residence.

CITIZENSHIP

4. Irish citizens resident here may, like Commonwealth citizens, apply for registration as citizens of the United Kingdom. But additionally they may, if born before 1949, declare themselves always to have been British subjects (i.e. proclaiming an allegiance) and are then entitled to be regarded as citizens of the United Kingdom.

VOTING - IRISH CITIZENS

5. Citizens of the Irish Republic resident in Great Britain on the qualifying date each year may be registered as electors. When registered, they may vote in all elections in Great Britain. In Northern Ireland they may normally vote only in elections to Westminster and to the European Assembly. Precise figures of the number of such residents are not available, but the 1971 census recorded some 615,000 United Kingdom residents born in the Republic of Ireland and another 100,000 (in addition to Northern Ireland residents) born in either part of Ireland.

VOTING - UNITED KINGDOM CITIZENS

6. Citizens of the United Kingdom resident in the Republic may vote there only in local government and European Assembly elections; not in elections to the Dail.

OTHER CIVIC PRIVILEGES

7. Irish citizens are recognised in United Kingdom law not as foreign nationals but as if they were Commonwealth citizens. Accordingly, they enjoy the same civic privileges and obligations as British subjects (for example, eligibility for Crown service and liability to jury service).



21 MAY 1980

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

GREAT GEORGE STREET,

LONDON SW1P 3AJ

19 May 1980

Michael Alexander, Esq
10 Downing Street
SW1

p/w briefing folder.

Paul

Dear Michael,

Visit of the Taoiseach

In connection with Mr Haughey's visit, and following the discussion which the Prime Minister had with John Hume, you asked for a report on local government in Northern Ireland, with particular reference to John Hume's suggestion that discrimination remains a problem.

A brief report is enclosed.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Paul Lever (FCO) and David Wright.

Yours ever,

Ry Harrington

R A HARRINGTON

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Background

1. The Local Councils of Northern Ireland used to enjoy powers similar to their counterparts in GB. Discrimination in employment and the provision of housing led directly to the present troubles. They were therefore stripped of their powers and reduced in number.

Since 1973 local government in Northern Ireland has consisted of a single-tier system of 26 District Councils. The councils' only significant functions are cleansing (refuse collection, etc.) and recreation.

Monitoring Discrimination

2. To monitor and control discriminatory practices the post of Commissioner for Complaints was created in 1969, and the Fair Employment Agency (which is responsible for the investigation of allegations of discriminatory employment practices) was set up in 1976. But discrimination is notoriously difficult to prove.

Instances of Discrimination

3. Despite their limited powers Loyalist dominated councils have been accused, and in some instances found guilty, of practising sectarian discrimination in employment and the provision of services. Recent examples include:-

(a) Lisburn Borough Council delayed for 4 years before making any provision for community facilities for 10,000 Catholics in the Twinbrook Estate. It has now voted not to undertake any refuse collection or cleansing activities in the Poleglass Estate where 2,000 Catholic families from West Belfast will be housed. Also, the Recreation Officer has been forbidden to take any steps to provide recreation facilities for this Estate.

(b) The Armagh District Council, rather than appoint a Catholic as Chief Recreation Officer, abolished the post completely.

(c) The Armagh Council with a Loyalist majority of 12 to 8 is typical of Loyalist dominated councils in refusing to allow non-Loyalist councillors responsibility or to be appointed to public bodies.

(d) Magherafelt District Council was found guilty in 1977 of discrimination in excluding the Gaelic Athletic Association from its summer sports coaching scheme.

(e) Belfast City Council, in 1979, refused to provide a community centre for the Catholic Oldpark area. In the vote the Unionist Mayor both voted himself to tie the vote and exercised his casting vote against the proposal, ~~and there is good reason to suppose that this was part of the reason why he did not get a second term of office — another member of the same party was elected instead.~~

(f) Cookstown District Council was found guilty of discrimination in employment in 1977. The population of the district is evenly divided between Protestants and Catholics. It has 72 employees of whom 57 are Protestant and 15 Catholic. All but two of the Catholics are employed in the lowest manual grades.

(g) Councils which are under the control of Loyalist parties with strong sabbatarian flavours, such as Ballymena, Limavady, and Craigavon, refuse to allow sports facilities, such as swimming pools, to be opened on Sundays.

(h) 19 out of the 26 District Councils have declined to sign the FEA's voluntary fair employment declaration, which invites employers to emphasise their support for the principle of equal opportunity in employment irrespective of religious or political beliefs.

Non-Unionist Practice

4. All instances of discrimination have been practised by Loyalist dominated councils. The SDLP by contrast can point to the fact that where they control, or are the largest party in, a District Council they not only do not practice discrimination, but go out of their way to provide a role for the Unionists. In Londonderry, for example, where the SDLP are the largest party, they are scrupulous in ensuring fair representation on committees for the minority Loyalist parties and in rotating the Mayorship and Deputy Mayorship every year between themselves and the Official Unionists.

Conclusion

5. The performance of a number of Loyalist dominated councils in Northern Ireland has revealed a strong element of sectarian bias and on

occasions outright discrimination. The statutory safeguards, although extensive, have not prevented discrimination, largely because in many cases, however blatant, it is not susceptible of positive proof. There is an absolute conviction throughout the minority community (and many in the majority community are obliged to agree) that certain Unionist councils can and do find a way to discriminate against Catholics on occasions. The situation is tolerated (under protest) by the minority because the functions of the councils are so limited that the opportunities for discrimination are extremely restricted. However their view of current practices is such that they would bitterly resist any exercise of wider powers by councils operating on present lines which would greatly increase the potential for discriminatory action and take Northern Ireland back to the late 1960s.

Northern Ireland Office
19 May 1980