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23 Deireadh Fómhair, 1978.

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An Rúnaí
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha

I am directed by the Taoiseach to refer to Mr. Ó Broin's semi-official minute of 11 Deireadh Fómhair, 1978 addressed to Mr. Stokes of this Department in relation to the use of the designation "Republic of Ireland" in discursive texts recently published by your Department. I am to say that for the reasons given below, this Department considers that the practice in question is not in order and should be discontinued.

Instructions regarding the use of the name of the State were approved by the then Taoiseach in April, 1952. Point No. 2 in these instructions indicated that in any case in which the use of the word "Ireland" was open to ambiguity, either the expression "Ireland (exclusive of the Six Counties)" or the word "Ireland" with a footnote reading "Exclusive of the Six Counties" should be used, instead. In any case in which the use of the word "Ireland" was open to ambiguity and in which greater precision than was achieved by the foregoing solution was essential, either the expression "Ireland (exclusive of the Six Counties called 'Northern Ireland'))" or the word "Ireland" with a footnote reading "Exclusive of the Six Counties called 'Northern Ireland'" were prescribed. Point No. 4 in the instructions stated:

"With regard to the description of the State appearing in The Republic of Ireland Act, 1948, namely 'The Republic of Ireland', care should be taken, in using that expression (or the variant of it, 'The Irish Republic'), to avoid any suggestion that it is a geographical term applicable to the area of the Twenty Six Counties.

On 17th June, 1953 following the issue of an unofficial Note by the British Commonwealth Relations Office, a statement (copy enclosed) was issued by the Government Information Bureau, on behalf of this Department. You will note that the third paragraph of this statement indicated that:

"With regard to the statutory description of the State appearing in The Republic of Ireland Act, 1948, namely, 'The Republic of Ireland', care is taken, in using that expression, to avoid any suggestion that it is a geographical term applicable to the area of The Twenty Six Counties".

These guidelines have of course been modified by the decision to use the expression "Northern Ireland" in place of the term "The Six Counties" and by the decision referred to in the opening

paragraph of Mr. Ó Broin's minute. It is appreciated that the expression "Ireland (Republic)" would be inelegant in a discursive text. However, it is considered that the usage adopted by your Department to get over this difficulty is unacceptable, in that it clearly suggests that the expression "The Republic of Ireland" is a geographical term applicable to the area of the Twenty Six Counties.

It is understood that the booklet Facts About Ireland is being reprinted in a new edition at present. Proofs of the booklet supplied by your Department have been examined by reference to the general view stated above. It is considered - and the Taoiseach agrees - that a number of references in which the expression "Republic of Ireland" is used will have to be amended before publication of the booklet. I enclose a list of suggested amendments, all of which, with the exception of No. 6 relate to use of the expression in question. In drafting these amendments, we have been conscious that re-printing of the booklet has reached an advanced stage and we have sought to minimise the necessary changes. In relation to suggested amendment No. 6, the Arms of Ireland, reproduced on Page 51, is described, incorrectly, in a marginal note on Page 50, as "The standard of the President of Ireland". In fact, the harp on the Presidential Standard (the dimensions of which are the same as those of the National Flag) is not contained within a shield as it is in the Arms.

The use of the designation "the Republic of Ireland" in the manner of the first paragraph of the Facts Sheet on the Irish Economy is also unacceptable, as breaching the instructions cited above. It is considered that the case might rather be met by substitution of "Ireland" for "the Republic of Ireland" and insertion of a footnote, either at the end of the first page of the paper or immediately before or after the Bibliographical Guide at the end of the paper. The footnote could indicate that all statistics quoted in the sheet refer to "Ireland exclusive of Northern Ireland" or, alternatively, to "the area of jurisdiction of the Irish Parliament (Oireachtas)". It is considered that the earliest possible opportunities should be availed of to replace publications incorporating the unsatisfactory usage in question by versions revised as suggested here.

It is appreciated that the need to amend the booklet Facts about Ireland will lead to some delay and give rise to certain costs. These consequences could have been avoided if the Secretariat of this Department had been consulted at an earlier stage. You may wish to consider whether officers of your Department should be reminded of the guidelines set out in the statement of 17 Meitheamh, 1953, as modified by subsequent decisions.

Walter P. Kimms