

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Summary of meeting with Dublin and Wicklow Orange Lodge regarding their proposed march and plaque unveiling in Dawson St. on 28 May

1. Dermot Gallagher (who had to leave during the course of the meeting), Ray Bassett and the undersigned met with Mr. Ian Cox and Mr. Derek Simpson in Iveagh House on 4 April to discuss the Lodge's application for financial assistance towards the cost of organising their march in Dublin on 28 May.

2. Cox advised that they had not been ready to "go public" when the story broke in the newspapers. However, this would now give people an opportunity to get used to the idea of an Orange march in Dublin. They had had discussions with the Gardaí and Dublin Corporation over a considerable period, and nothing had leaked to the media. However, one meeting with the Grand Lodge and the story was in the following mornings papers!.

3. Simpson said that they had some 30 members in their lodge. They would have one reputable band at the march (from Tempo, Co Fermanagh), as well as lodges from the southern border counties (including Leitrim, which has a district with three lodges) and perhaps selected groups from Fermanagh and Tyrone. He expected that Eoin Harris, Ruth Dudley-Edwards and Chris Hudson would join them, as well as friends from the North, the US and Canada. They were expecting around 300 people in total.

4. They had sought permission to use St. Anne's Church in Dawson St. but had been refused permission. They had now made a provisional booking for the Round Room in the Mansion House; this was important as, apart from requiring somewhere to change, they wished to hold a religious service after the march.

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5. As regards the hiring of the room, the Corporation had advised them that this would cost £3,500. They wondered if there was any source of funding to help them cover this. Bassett thought it unlikely that an application for a march would come within the criteria of the Department's Reconciliation fund. Carpenter suggested that they might approach Co-operation Ireland for funding.

6. It would appear that, if the group cannot secure the Mansion House, they will have to reconsider the whole idea. They were also concerned that the Lord Mayor, who had initially agreed to unveil the plaque on the day of the march, was now giving the impression that she might prefer to do it at another time. However, if it was not done at some time on the day of the march, they would prefer that she didn't perform the ceremony at all.

7. In general discussion, Simpson and Cox made some points which are worth noting. Simpson said he believed that the Government had a more open attitude to joint citizenship than the British Home Office, which had blocked the possibility of people in the South securing British citizenship, despite the fact that they were in a different position to "the other former colonies". Cox stated that there was a general welcome for the Government's initiative on the Battle of the Boyne site; however, some colleagues felt that members in the South should have been brought into the consultation process (i.e. as distinct from the Orange Leadership in Belfast!). He added that, in his view, it would be inappropriate, and offensive to Unionists, to fly the tricolour at the site.

8. Overall, Cox and Simpson came across as genuine but rather naive people who seemed uneasy at the publicity their initiative had generated.

Peadar Carpenter

7 April

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