

GOVERNMENT OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Press and Publicity Office

Telephone:
BELFAST 63210.

Stormont Castle,
BELFAST.

29th May, 1953.

*Extracted from
file R.12A
1929
PRO Cdr. GR
12/1*

*Belfast Newsletter
18/2/1959*

Dear Sir,

As you are doubtless aware, the imminence of the Queen's Coronation visit to Northern Ireland has given rise to a number of inquiries, and also to some public discussion, regarding the existence of a Northern Ireland flag. The position is that the Union Jack is the only flag that has been officially authorised and flown. In view, however, of the desire of a number of people to fly a flag distinctive of Northern Ireland the Government has no objection to the flying, for this purpose, of the Government banner.

This would be a white flag, carrying the Cross of St. George (in red), and in the centre of the Cross a white six-pointed Star carrying the Red Hand of Ulster, the Star being surmounted by the Imperial Crown.

It is not desired to issue a formal Government announcement on the subject, but the above information is at your disposal for publication if you so desire. Inquiries have come from various parts of Northern Ireland; hence this explanatory letter.

Yours faithfully,

J. Adams
Government Press and
Publicity Officer.

To the Editor.

ULSTER FLAG HAS OFFICIAL RECOGNITION

At Stormont yesterday the Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Topping) declared that the Northern Ireland flag had official recognition and was justified by heraldic law and usage.

The Minister was replying to Mr. Morgan (U. Cromac), who had asked about a statement of a history lecturer at the Queen's University that there was no justification for the Ulster flag and that it was not recognised by the Herald's Office.

Mr. Topping said that the flag of Northern Ireland was the Union Jack just as it was the flag of every other part of the United Kingdom. In 1924 the Government of Northern Ireland were granted arms by Royal warrant and it had a right to display those arms on a banner or flag and to say to what use the banner might be put.

It was that banner which was generally known as the flag of Northern Ireland, and the Government had authorised its use by any citizen of Northern Ireland on any festive occasion. The use of the banner in that way was, therefore, fully justified by heraldic law and usage, and it came into being after consultation with Sir Gerald Wollaston, then Norroy and Ulster King of Arms.

Mr McCallough - pl retain for future reference - A. Hamilton 22/3/55

*Mr. J. Adams
Government Press and
Publicity Officer*