

DRAFT

Telephone: BELFAST 27311.

Any reply should be addressed to—
THE REGISTRAR GENERAL,
and the following number quoted—

Ref. No.

Your Ref. No.



GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE,

FERMANAGH HOUSE,

ORMEAU AVENUE,

BELFAST, 2.

19th August, 1965.

Dear Greeves,

Census of Population 1966

In accordance with the Census Act (N.I.) 1965, a census of population will be taken in Northern Ireland on the 24th April, 1966, which date is also to be the census date in Great Britain. An integral feature of census taking in Northern Ireland has always been the availability of the services of the Royal Ulster Constabulary who not only co-operate in the preliminary administrative work, including the formation of enumeration districts, but also act as enumerators, delivering the schedules to households, institutions, shipping, etc. for a period of some 8-10 days in advance of the census date and collecting same over a period of, say, 10 days following. The Registrar-General who will, as hitherto, be responsible for making the arrangements for the taking of the census, is perturbed (to say the least) to learn from County Inspector Walker that on the question of the extent of police assistance the Inspector General regrets that at this stage he cannot make an unqualified offer as the extent of assistance must depend on the peace of the country at and around the census date. The Jubilee of the 1916 Rebellion will fall at Easter 1966 and, in view of the fact that it is impossible to say in advance what police commitments may be in connection with whatever celebrations may be held or attempted, the Inspector General has given long-range notice that the police may not be available as enumerators generally or in certain areas.

While we welcome the promised co-operation of the police in the preliminary administrative work and in particular in the formation of enumeration districts, and while it is likely that District Inspectors would act as Superintendents of enumeration, the non-availability of the members of the R.U.C. to act as enumerators and the consequent necessity to make arrangements for enumeration by civilians would create most serious problems. There would, first of all, be the major difficulty of recruiting suitable persons as civilian enumerators. While, by reason of their experience and ability, some 1,000 members of the R.U.C. can cover the entire area, it would be necessary in the event of civilian enumerators being used to limit the size of enumeration districts to, say, 250 dwellings in Urban areas and 150 dwellings in Rural areas and on this basis 2,000/2,100 enumerators would have to be employed. Enumeration duties are by no means simple, requiring intelligence and ability to assimilate detailed instructions and this, coupled with the fact that the confidentiality of census returns is of paramount importance, makes it unlikely that many suitable enumerators could be recruited from the unemployed. The most suitable persons would be civil servants, Local Government staff and school teachers, but the problems arising in securing the availability of such staff would be considerable. Additionally, there would no doubt be vociferous criticism of our unwillingness to take persons in the main from those on the Unemployed Register.

If we have to resort to civilian enumeration, the cost of the census will be considerably increased. When, in connection with the 1961 census, we had to employ some 100 civilian enumerators in certain of the areas adjoining the Border, each was paid a basic fee of £18 plus a sum of 9d. per schedule collected, and even on this basis, without allowing for possible increased rates, the cost of civilian enumeration for Northern Ireland, taking into consideration travelling expenses, National Insurance and Graduated Pension payments, would be approximately £65,000 as compared with the £5,000 which covers the travelling and subsistence expenses arising from police enumeration. Additional printing costs for extra enumeration books and instructions arising from the larger number of enumeration districts, say, £1,000, would also arise.

An unfortunate aspect of the problem would appear to be the inability of the Inspector General to assess in advance of Easter 1966 the conditions likely to prevail at that time, but as the census date will be a fortnight after Easter is it not likely that if the enumerators are not called upon to commence delivery of the schedules until the Friday after Easter, viz. 15th April (although if conditions

/are



are normal we would hope that delivery would commence on 13th April), the assignment could be accepted by the Inspector General?

While the Act provides that an alternative Sunday may be prescribed by the Governor in Council as the census day, any departure from the date adopted in Great Britain has obvious disadvantages for comparative purposes and for compiling figures for the whole of the United Kingdom.

I am sorry to write at such length on this matter, but the problems that would arise from civilian enumeration as indicated above are of such magnitude that we hesitate to envisage the unavailability of the services of the police.

Yours sincerely,

J.E. Greeves, Esq.,
The Secretary,
Ministry of Home Affairs,
Stormont,
BELFAST, 4.