

7th December, 1965.

Dear Black,

We discussed recently the date of the 1966 Census which, as you know, the Act provides shall be taken on Sunday, 24th April next, or such other day, being Sunday, as may be fixed by the Governor in Council. It has now been decided, on Police advice, to postpone the Census date until October next and at the moment our preference is for Sunday, 9th October, as the date. Subject to confirmation from the Police we shall go ahead on this basis.

It is my intention to have prepared an Order in Council for the Governor's signature prescribing the revised date and if you agree I would suggest that this should be done in early January before the House resumes. As far as I am aware there is no requirement for the Order to be laid in the House and all that will happen is that it will be published in the Belfast Gazette. It will, however, be necessary to accompany the publication in the Gazette of the Order with suitable explanation for the public.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. BATEMAN.

H. Black, Esq.,
Secretary to the Cabinet,
Stormont Castle,
BELFAST, 4.

Mr. Butler

Reference.....C.66/1

A 425/59

(1) I note the decision to postpone the 1966 Census of Population until October. Much as I regret the departure from the original April date, preventing as this does the preparation of true United Kingdom statistics, I realise that we could not ignore the advice received through the Ministry of Home Affairs.

(2) While you and I have already "chosen" Sunday 9th October, 1966 as the operative date would you please obtain confirmation of same as soon as possible in order that I can authorise H.M.S.O. to get ahead now with the printing of schedules etc. As you are aware the paper has already been allocated and printing orders have been placed but held in temporary suspension. I consider 9th October to be the most suitable October date; reasonably early in the month with a hope of reasonable weather; within Summer Time and probably early enough to avoid a clash with a possible Imperial Election.

(3) I will arrange for the preparation and submission of an Order in Council for the Governor's signature in January, prescribing the revised date. This Order will not be subject to affirmative resolution by Parliament but it will be published in the Belfast Gazette. Whilst I consider that pending the publication of the Order we should not make any public announcement of the postponement I think that when the Order is signed and published we will be pressed for reasons. As the Prime Minister has not refrained from quoting the "Celebrations" as a reason for not holding a General Election next April I think we could be equally forthcoming in January.

(4) Meantime I am informing Works Division (regarding accommodation for Census Staff) and C.A.D.P.U. (regarding machine staff and programming) of the postponement and of course H.M.S.O. will also be made aware of the revised date. Certain other interested bodies e.g. Planning Departments of Local Authorities who have been in touch with us regarding forthcoming Census data will also learn of the postponement. Reasons will not be ascribed but in informing the Registrar General, Somerset House, and my opposite number in Scotland I will confidentially mention why we find it necessary to depart from the Great Britain enumeration date.

(5) I propose with your approval and that of Establishment Division, to retain the services of Mr. Bowden pending resumption of active work on the Census. There will be some continuing duties in that field which he can best discharge and additionally he can be fully employed on certain aspects of G.R.O. work.

The services of Mr. C. Loughnan, J.S.O., can be dispensed with until about 1st May, 1966, but I very much hope that we can have him back at that time.

On receipt of your approval I will minute Establishment Division.

*By May 1966 I will make
a first approach to the Registrar General
enumeration is October*

Registrar General

30th November, 1965.

General Register Office,
Fermanagh House,
Ormeau Avenue,
Belfast, 2.

Secretary.

May we make it that the

9th October is the date?

D 1/12/65