



THE CLERK TO THE ASSEMBLY
STORMONT
BELFAST BT4 3SY

1 December 1976

Mr W E Bell
Room 208
STORMONT

Destruction of Speakers' State Robes
by fire at Malone House

I have read the letter of 23 November from Warhurst, informing us of the destruction of the Speakers' State Robes in the fire at Malone House.

I attach herewith correspondence which illustrates the background to this matter. You will note that the Robes were deposited by me with the Ulster Museum for storage and safe keeping!

The Robes were purchased for the Speakers by the then Ministry of Finance in the late 1950's at a cost, to the best of my recollection of £500 each. /The files are being checked to ascertain date and figures/ When deposited with the Museum they were in first-class order, having been worn only about once per year (at State Opening of Parliament). I telephoned the makers, Messrs Ede & Ravenscroft, Chancery Lane, London, yesterday and they advise me that new Robes would cost approximately £1,800-£2,000 each. They will provide a written estimate on request.

I have discussed the letter from the Ulster Museum with Max Reid, who advises caution. He thinks that it would be useless for the Museum to include our claim in their general claim as they were not the owners of the Robes. He advises, at this stage, only a formal acknowledgement of the letter from the Museum and accordingly I have so written. I am copying all the papers to Max Reid so that he can give us advice.

R. Blackburn

R. Blackburn

ENCS



Ulster Museum
Botanic Gardens Belfast
Belfast BT9 5AB. 0232/668251-5

23 November 1976

Permanent Secretary,
Department of Finance,
Stormont,
Belfast 4.

Dear Sir,

Destruction of Malone House

It is my very sad responsibility to inform you that the Ulster Museum collection of textiles and costume was destroyed during the terrorist action of 11 November 1976.

Amongst this collection were items which you had very kindly loaned to us. As nothing has survived from our collection, we must assume that your items have, unfortunately, been destroyed along with our own. We are all much grieved by this catastrophe.

We are, of course, submitting through our solicitors, Messrs. Johns, Elliott, Wallace & Co. a compensation claim in respect of all our losses, and I assume that you would wish us to include your items along with ours for this purpose. Perhaps you would confirm that this is the case.

Our records show that the items loaned to us from you were as on the attached list.

Yours sincerely,

Director

Enc.

Copy sent to Mr M Reid (Solicitor) today
at request of Mr Blackburn. J.F.T.

Dr. E. Mayne Reid, C.B.E., B.Sc., F.R.I.C.

Director: Alan Warhurst, B.A., F.S.A., F.M.A.

3/12

Two black and gold speakers robes, held on behalf of the Department of Finance.