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Ms O Callaghan pt cc.

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2. Mr O Callaghan
(Secretary)

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Mr. O Floinn,

3. File SA/2

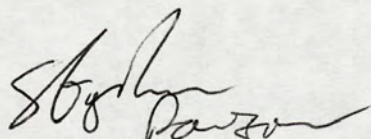
SA

I have examined the Acts of Parliament about which we spoke relating to the official use of the Irish language in Northern Ireland. It had been suggested to you by a contact in Northern Ireland that the 1949 act which prohibited the naming of streets in Irish also contained a clause allowing residents of a street to change the name of their street on a petition of 75% of householders. The extract of the Act on file suggested no such clause, but referred to two Acts of the British Parliament upon which it was based. Mention was also made of the 1737 *act* under which Irish in legal proceedings was prohibited, but whose original purpose had been to end the use of latin and french in court.

The purpose of the enquiry was to determine whether a slight amendment of these bills would allow Irish to be used in courts, and allow residents to choose their own streetnames (in Irish if they wished), without necessitating complete repeal or new legislation.

1. The Public Health and Local Government (Misc. Provisions) Act 1946 (NI)c. 21, contains no provision for the naming of a street other than by the district council.
2. The Town Improvement (Ireland) Act 1854, (17 + 18 Victoria, c. 103) simply provides for the extension to Ireland of parts of the 1847 act, including those sections dealing with street names.
3. The Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847, (10 + 11 Victoria, c. 34). Section 64 relates to the naming of streets by local authorities. It is almost identical to the later 1949 act. The act has over 200 sections, but none of them allow for any sort of determination of street names by residents.

4. The 1737 act is an act of the Irish Parliament, 11 George II, c. 6. It prescribes the exclusive use of English (with a few unimportant exceptions) in all legal proceedings. I presume it is based on an earlier English bill. The purpose of the act was to make court proceedings more understandable to laymen, but the insistence on using English alone is unambiguous. There is nothing else of interest in the act.



Stephen Dawson,

29 May 1986.