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Reference Code: 2004/21/605

Title: Department of Defence: memorandum for the government on the proposal to set aside St Patrick's Day as a day of national commemoration.

Creation Date(s): 4 July, 1973

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 1 page

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Access Conditions: Open

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4 Iúil 1973

OIFIG AN AIRE COSANTAMEMORANDUM FOR THE GOVERNMENT

on

St. Patrick's Day as a Day of National Commemoration and Reconciliation

1. The Minister for Defence and the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs have jointly had under consideration the question of the setting aside of St. Patrick's Day as a Day of National Commemoration and Reconciliation.
2. For many years the line has been taken that, in order to avoid the difficulties which would arise in the selection of individual anniversaries which might involve State participation, Easter Sunday should be set apart as a special day on which the State should celebrate the securing of Independence and honour all who took part in the struggle to achieve it. Normally the only variation of that line has been the annual State commemoration at Arbour Hill for those who died in the Rising of 1916.
3. It is considered that the ceremonies ^{on the Day} should include special ecumenical services (with maximum State participation), two minutes' silence in memory of all who died for Ireland and of all victims of civil strife in Ireland, and prayers for peace and reconciliation between Irish people of different traditions. The exact nature of the ceremonies would be a matter for arrangement with the Ecclesiastical Authorities.
As the ceremonies would be peace-orientated they would not include any military display.
The proposed Day of National Commemoration and Reconciliation, once inaugurated, would be the only day on which the State would participate in public commemoration.
4. The Minister for Defence recommends that the Government should decide that
 - (i) St. Patrick's Day should be set aside as a Day of National Commemoration and Reconciliation
 - (ii) the ceremonies on the Day should include special ecumenical services, two minutes' silence for those who died for Ireland and for the victims of civil strife in Ireland, and prayers for peace and reconciliation between Irish people of different traditions.
 - (iii) once inaugurated the Day of National Commemoration and Reconciliation should be the only day on which the State would participate in public commemoration.