



# PRESS RELEASE

The following statement was issued today by the Ministry of Home Affairs:-

It was reported in a national newspaper today that Northern Ireland does not have universal suffrage in its own Parliament. This is quite untrue. No property qualification of any kind is necessary to enable a citizen in Northern Ireland to vote at a Stormont election.

As for electoral boundaries, which were also the subject of press comment, a partial re-distribution of seats was recently carried out on the initiative of the Northern Ireland Government by members of the Westminster Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland.

The results, which were accepted on all sides as fair and impartial, are incorporated in a Bill which has now passed through the House of Commons at Stormont and is before the Senate.

This measure, as well as abolishing the University constituency and other forms of plural voting, provides for the setting up of a permanent Boundary Commission on Westminster lines. When it becomes law, no significant differences will remain between the Stormont and Westminster franchises.

As for local government procedure, the Government has made its position perfectly clear; a systematic examination of the structure of local government in Northern Ireland is taking place and the House of Commons was assured as long ago as December, 1966, that the franchise would be examined in terms of what the future role and functions of local government are to be.

The future of local government is a difficult and intricate question; its resolution is bound to take time in Northern Ireland just as it is doing in Great Britain.

10th October, 1968.