

British Standards, the Drawing of Londonderry's Ward Boundaries and the Location of Ulster's Second University

Paul Kingsley

British Rights and British Standards

Jim Callaghan, Home Secretary, speaking in the House of Commons, said: "I trust they [the Unionist Parliamentary Party] will take account of what is the general view in the Commons – that [what] we seek to acquire for all citizens in the United Kingdom is equality of right, of privileges and of responsibility. We cannot simply accept that people are part of the United Kingdom and proud to be so unless these standards obtain throughout."

With a certain amount of naivety, he went on: "Let us get one thing clear. We are not talking about the Border but about civil rights...The Border question will wither away when people of all denominations in Northern Ireland discover the common bond of humanity. It is a question of whether we will give to the people of Northern Ireland the same rights and privileges we expect on this side of the Irish Sea. It is as simple as that."¹

He was using a slogan that had been adopted by some sections of what was known as the civil rights movement. They claimed they wanted British rights and British standards.

For instance, Conn McCluskey of the Campaign for Social Justice, claimed that "Our idea was, since we lived in a part of the United Kingdom where the British remit ran, we should seek the ordinary rights of British citizens which were so obviously denied us"².

Aaron Edwards refers to the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster (CDU): "For the CDU, British standards of democracy had to apply to all British citizens without distinction."³

The same author says of the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP), "Its call for reform of these outstanding socio-economic grievances placed it [the NILP] in the vanguard of citizens' rights as a means of accomplishing its stated objectives of full 'British rights for British citizens.'"⁴. Senator Norman Kennedy spoke in Stormont of "the necessity to bring about changes that would bring us into conformity with Britain."⁵

Nell McCafferty, one time "civil rights" activist, claimed that "The plan was to undermine Unionism by demanding full British rights"⁶.

Looking back, one historian felt that "Catholics started to protest in the streets for 'British rights for British citizens'"⁷.

Another historian believed that "They [Nationalists] had often made the propaganda point that Catholics in Northern Ireland were denied equal rights as citizens of the United Kingdom, but this had never been more than a means of exposing the Unionists in front of British public opinion; the solution was still seen as a united Ireland."⁸

Regardless of whether Irish Nationalists and "civil rights" activists were sincere about wanting British rights and British standards (because they were militantly anti-British in other respects), these represented standards which could reasonably be applied to check, for instance, whether decisions in Northern Ireland were made fairly.

The approach in this paper has been to refer to British standards in evaluating two controversial decisions. The first of these was the redrawing of local government boundaries in the Londonderry County Borough (Londonderry Corporation) in 1936, which generated accusations of gerrymandering. Were decisions made in accord with modern British standards? To the extent that they were not, there is some scope for arguing that they were unfair.

The second controversial matter, which is dealt with in the second part of this paper, relates to the decision in the 1960s to locate Ulster's second university at Coleraine rather than Londonderry. To the extent that an interest group insisted that modern British standards should not apply to these decisions, let it be assumed that it wanted to act unfairly.

A Better Way of Doing Things

During the twentieth century, a view developed in British public administration that it did not seem to make sense to have all decisions reduced to a political battle between competing interests. The British answer was to convert many political decisions into issues of routine public administration. This was achieved by drawing up what was believed to be a set of objective criteria which would be applied to a whole class of decisions. Some of the advantages of this approach are

- a. The criteria are arrived at in advance with little knowledge of the specific future situations to which they will be applied. The criteria are therefore usually not open to the charge that they were designed to bring about a specific outcome in a specific situation.
- b. They make the question of motivation largely irrelevant. It would be common, in the making of controversial decisions, for aggrieved stakeholders to question the political motives of the decision makers. But if the decision makers are bound by a set of criteria, there is limited scope for their own political views to have an influence. With the drawing of modern electoral ward boundaries, for instance, political parties often make representations to the Boundary Commissions which are tasked with making decisions. Those representations can be self-interested, promoting boundaries which favour one party or another. But because the parties are bound to argue in terms of how well their proposals meet a set of pre-defined criteria, their political representations become less controversial. The criteria act as mediators to prevent undignified confrontations between self-interested politicians.
- c. Where an independent body makes adjudications, this often relieves politicians of having to take responsibility for controversial decisions. This can be a great comfort to them.
- d. Objective criteria reduce the number of decisions based on political horse-trading, a practice which leads to inconsistent decision making and the application of principles which are not generally seen as fair. Decision by political negotiation also exaggerates the influence of some stakeholders as compared to others. It favours powerful interest groups.

Following this use of objective criteria may be seen as a key component in what is involved in the application of British standards. It also provides enduring British rights to citizens who might otherwise be at the mercy of random political decision making. This approach developed during the twentieth century and large numbers of what would previously have been political decisions have been transferred into the realm of routine public administration.

The Way Things Were: the Belfast Corporation Bill 1896

Of course, things were not always decided in this way. In 1896, the Belfast Corporation proposed to draw up a new ward scheme which would be used for local government elections. Prior to 1896 there were five wards, each returning two aldermen and six councillors⁹. Early Belfast had grown up as an overwhelmingly Protestant city, and under the old ward scheme no Catholic/Irish Nationalist candidates could achieve enough votes to get elected in any of the five wards. By 1896, the Catholic population had grown, swelled by people coming in from the countryside. It was largely concentrated in West Belfast.

At this time, the only way in which a change in ward boundaries could be achieved was by passing an Act of Parliament at Westminster. Hence the Belfast Corporation Bill. What was known as the Hybrid Committee, a kind of Westminster select committee, dealt with most of the detail and heard representations from interested parties and their legal representatives.

Budge and O'Leary state that "Two wards (Falls and Smithfield) were to be carved out so as to ensure, as far as was possible, a permanent Catholic majority"¹⁰. This is clearly worthy of further investigation.

In the late nineteenth century, many modern British standards had still to be developed and the redrawing of the Belfast ward boundaries in 1896 owed little to the application of objective criteria. More important was political pressure exerted by an organisation known variously as the Catholic Representation Association or simply as the Catholic Association. This had been set up on 30 October 1894 at the instigation of the intriguingly named Rev Dr Henry Henry, Roman Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor, an area which included Belfast¹¹.

In June 1896, the *Irish Times* reported an agreement between the Catholic Association and the Unionist dominated Belfast Corporation. The boundaries of some thirteen new wards were to be drawn up by the Corporation. Boundaries of the other two wards were to be "laid down on the map signed by the town clerk, the Rev Henry Lavery, and Mr McErlean"¹². It was an unusual piece of obfuscation by civil servants or lawyers who may have been mildly embarrassed at what was going on.

In plain English, the Catholic Association had been allowed to draw the boundaries of two wards in West Belfast in such a way as to guarantee that their representatives would be elected. Lavery was a Catholic priest who was then President of St Malachy's College, and McErlean was the Catholic Association's solicitor. It was reported that the Lord Mayor of Belfast and the Roman Catholic Bishop had shaken hands over the agreement¹³.

The implications of what had been done here were earlier brought out in the evidence to the Hybrid Committee given by Joseph Donnelly, a solicitor, who explained what the Catholic Association wanted. Vesey Knox was an Irish Nationalist MP for Londonderry and Mr Fitzgerald QC was a barrister acting on behalf of Belfast Corporation. Donnelly preferred a 20 ward scheme in which the Catholic Association would define four ward boundaries, but he also commented on the implications of a 15 ward scheme put forward by the Corporation. Here are the verbatim exchanges as reported in the *Belfast News Letter*, starting with questions about the 15 ward proposal of the Belfast Corporation..

Mr Knox MP: And if the wards were divided haphazard the possibility of a slight majority in any of the fifteen wards would not be very great, and would not prove any blessing to Catholics?
Mr Donnelly: Not the slightest.

Mr Knox MP: Supposing a Commissioner was sent down to Belfast to divide the city into fifteen wards, could he give Catholic representation without express instruction from the committee?
Mr Donnelly: No.

Mr Knox MP: I suppose the Commissioner would have to get his information from the Corporation?

*Mr Donnelly: Not all of it. I presume that the Catholics would be allowed to put their case before the Commissioner, but I am certain that in naming a division of the wards he would not on his own volition make an allocation of Catholic wards.*¹⁴

The message seems to be quite clear. An independent Commissioner, acting on objective criteria or drawing boundaries in some random fashion, would be unlikely to deliver at least two wards in which the Catholic Association's representatives could be guaranteed to be elected. This favoured pre-determined outcome could only be guaranteed by the Catholic Association fixing the boundaries itself. Mr Fitzgerald here takes over the questioning and refers to Mr Donnelly's preferred 20 ward scheme.

Mr Fitzgerald QC: Your proposition is to lay out more Catholic districts?

Mr Donnelly: No. The proposition is to lay out two Catholic districts, which now exist, and are known as Catholic, and lay out two others where the Catholics and Protestants are somewhat mixed. In the first two we should of a certainty succeed, and in the other two our success would be more problematical.

Mr Fitzgerald QC: Your proposition is that these four wards that you have marked may be defined by this committee, and that as to the residue you do not care.

Mr Donnelly: Yes; the Protestants may be left to deal with the residue. It belongs to them, and they are entitled to it.

And here Mr Donnelly refers to the two wards which were later to be named Falls and Smithfield.

Mr Donnelly: Our proposition is that as to the two wards they should be made up of the large district in which the Catholics live.

Mr Fitzgerald QC: They are to be laid out because of the majority of Catholics in it?

Mr Donnelly: Yes.

Mr Fitzgerald QC: And so far it is the religious belief of the inhabitants that is to decide the boundaries?

Mr Donnelly: Yes; it may be taken that way.

Chairman: What are the names?

Mr Donnelly: The Falls Road Ward and the College Ward. In the latter there is a very considerable number of Protestants included.

Mr Fitzgerald QC: And as to the other two wards, the reason why they are laid out is because there is a considerable number of Catholics there – a majority I suppose?

Mr Donnelly: Yes.

Mr Fitzgerald QC: Then these two wards, also, you propose to lay out because the majority of the electors are believed to be Catholics?

Mr Donnelly: Yes.

Mr Fitzgerald QC: Is not that laying out the wards according to religious belief?

Mr Donnelly: As regards the first two, certainly; as regards the other two, not so.

Mr Fitzgerald QC: But your only object in suggesting the last two is because you think there is a Catholic majority there?

*Mr Donnelly: Yes; I go the length of saying that we have laid out the wards in the manner explained to the committee in order that we may get a Catholic majority in these.*¹⁴

British Standards in First-Past-the-Post Elections

In carrying out research for this paper a hypothetical question was put to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), to clarify what are modern British standards in the fixing of ward boundaries.

"My party has the most votes in the council area whose ward boundaries you are examining, but these voters are concentrated in a small number of areas, whereas our opponents' voters are more widely distributed.

Many of our voters have a community identity and will hence tend to be placed together in the same ward. The upshot is that our party will waste votes building up large majorities in a few areas whereas our opponents will win in more wards with smaller majorities. This is unjust. We should be in control.

Would it not be fairer to ignore community identities to distribute our voters in several different wards so that we can win in a majority of wards? This would be a more just outcome"

This is the reply which was received:

"The Commission does not take into account likely or possible political outcomes of its reviews. The distribution of voters of a particular party in any council area is immaterial to the Commission's deliberations.

When it agrees recommendations, the Commission must have regard to community interests and identities as set out in the legislation governing electoral reviews (Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009). We would, therefore, not be able to ignore arguments about community identities regardless of the reason put forward.

Every electoral review will seek to achieve what, in the Commission's view, is the best balance of three statutory criteria:

- *That the ward boundaries mean that each councillor represents roughly the same number of voters.*
- *That the wards reflect community interests and identities.*
- *That the wards promote effective and convenient local government.*" ¹⁵

If these modern British standards were applied to the Belfast Corporation ward scheme of 1896, it is highly likely that the Catholic Association would have got its Falls Ward. The concentration of people with a community of interest in that area would have supported its creation. However, Bishop Henry and Joseph Donnelly would be unlikely to have obtained their preferred boundaries in the second ward at Smithfield. At the time of the local government elections in 1897, the average number of voters in each of the 15 wards was 3153 ¹⁶. Each ward was represented by one alderman and three councillors. The Falls Ward, with 2775 electors, was not so very far below the average, and hence probably met the modern LGBCE standard of having councillors represent roughly the same number of voters. However, Smithfield, with just 1985 voters was an exceptionally small ward, having just half the electorate of the Pottinger Ward with its 4307 voters. It had only been possible to guarantee a win for the Catholic Association in Smithfield by departing from a modern British standard.

The Londonderry Corporation Ward Scheme

It has been repeatedly claimed that the ward boundaries for the Londonderry Corporation (Londonderry County Borough) were gerrymandered, meaning that they were drawn in an unnatural and unfair way to ensure that a possible majority of votes for one party resulted in their returning a minority of representatives. The last election to the Corporation was in 1967, and the previous occasion on which the ward boundaries were changed was in 1936. It is therefore to that year we must turn to examine the charge of gerrymandering. The criteria of fairness to be applied in this paper will be those of modern British standards

The Londonderry Corporation put forward its own proposals for changes to the ward scheme in March 1936, which were then the subject of a public inquiry chaired by Vice-Admiral Archdale. Armed with the inspector's report, the Ministry of Home Affairs amended the Corporation's scheme. It can be seen from the LGBCE communication what the modern British standards are. The British way is not to concern itself with possible political outcomes, but to apply a set of objective criteria. As large sections of the "civil rights" movement in Northern Ireland claimed to want British standards, it seems reasonable to check to see what result would be obtained from the application of British standards to Londonderry's ward scheme in 1936.

Of course, in 1936, British standards were still being evolved, often in the face of determined opposition. When the final ward scheme for Londonderry was announced in a letter from the Ministry for Home Affairs in December 1936, the Nationalist Councillor, James Bonner, stated that "The only scheme that will satisfy us is one that will give us a majority to which we are entitled by population and votes"¹⁷. It exemplified the thinking that was behind the redrawing of the Belfast Corporation boundaries in 1896. Boundaries should be manipulated so as to bring about a pre-determined political outcome. This, of course, is not the application of British standards, which reject the concept that a certain party "deserves" to be in control and that boundaries should be drawn in order to bring about this objective.

At one point in the public inquiry into the ward scheme, the transcript of which is available in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), there is a clear clash of political and administrative cultures. Mr William Lowry was the King's Counsel (senior barrister) representing the Londonderry Corporation. He was questioning James Joseph (JJ) McCarroll, Nationalist MP for the Foyle constituency at Stormont, and editor of the *Derry Journal*. McCarroll would have been fairly representative of local Irish Nationalist opinion. In what follows it is worth bearing in mind that the proposed new North Ward (basically a combination of the old North and East Wards) would have a Protestant and Unionist majority whereas the new South Ward (a combination of the old West and South Wards) would have a Catholic and Nationalist majority. The exchange started like this:

Mr Lowry: Will you agree that people with a community of interests as far as possible should be in the same Ward?

Mr McCarroll: These principles are excellent in the abstract, but they are not being applied here.

Mr Lowry: Would you agree with the principle that people with a community of interests should, as far as possible, be in the same Ward?

Mr McCarroll: The principle is quite all right, but I am dealing with facts.

Mr Lowry: Would you say that people situated in the North Ward have a community of interest?

*Mr McCarroll: What I say is that at the moment that is so. If to gerrymander Derry you wanted to discard that arrangement you would quickly discard it.*¹⁸

Lowry is using the language of fully developed British standards which would be recognisable in the 21st century. McCarroll rejects the application of objective standards, preferring to

concentrate on questioning motives which, as has been seen, become irrelevant if objective standards are applied correctly. The exchange continued, with McCarroll reluctant to admit the community of interest principle.

Mr Lowry: ...doesn't that old West Ward and old South Ward put together contain people who have a community of interest?

Mr McCarroll: The Ward is not created for that. It is because of their religious persuasion.

Mr Lowry: If their community of interests coincides with their religious persuasion doesn't that show their community of interests?

Mr McCarroll: They are herded in that Ward because of their particular faith.

Mr Lowry: But they have a community of interests, nevertheless?

Mr McCarroll: They are being put there and that extraordinary boundary is created because you don't want to give them the representation to which they are entitled.

Mr Lowry: Leave aside the reasons for creating this line. Those inside it have a community of interest in their means of livelihood?

Mr McCarroll: They are largely Catholic.

Mr Lowry: And in addition they have a similarity of pursuits?

Mr McCarroll: Again I say that is not the basis you are operating on. ¹⁹

It is certainly easy to imagine Mr Lowry being replaced by a 21st century barrister representing the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. His or her modern counterpart would be putting forward very similar questions to a witness firmly rooted in the 19th century method of arranging boundaries to give guaranteed representation to those who “deserve” it. The 21st century barrister would find this a frustrating experience.

Before the detailed boundary proposals from 1936 are examined, one thing must be made clear. JJ McCarroll is accusing the Londonderry Corporation of making changes for political reasons, but he is not saying that this is necessarily a bad thing. He is definitely not arguing for the application of objective standards, such as those which the modern day LGBCE would apply. McCarroll rejects such standards if they do not give him what he wants. He is implicitly arguing for a political decision in favour of his party, just as Councillor James Bonner was when he stated that “The only scheme that will satisfy us is one that will give us a majority to which we are entitled by population and votes”. But this is not the British way.

The Proposed 1936 Ward Scheme

By 1936, this situation had arisen:

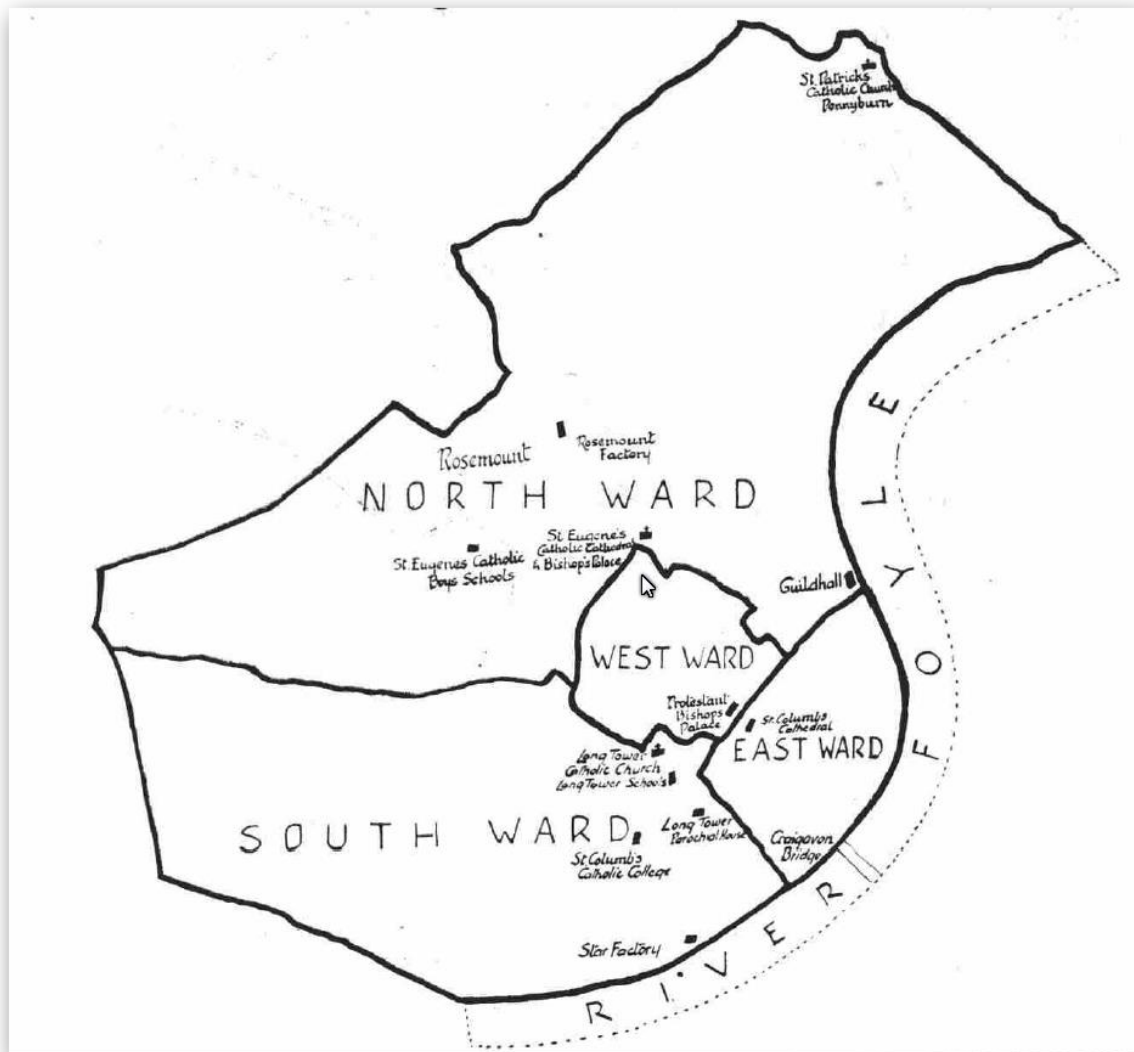
Table 1: The Old Wards and the Number of Voters in Each ²⁰

Ward	Voters	Seats	Voters per Seat
North Ward	4810	8	601
East Ward	2117	8	265
South Ward	3117	8	390
West Ward	3269	8	409
Waterside Ward	3632	8	454

Each ward was represented by 6 councillors and 2 aldermen. An earlier work by this author suggested that the North and East Wards had different numbers of representatives ²¹. That was a mistake. The correct figures underline the fact that the old scheme had departed from the modern British standard that each councillor should represent roughly the same number of voters. In particular, the North Ward was too big.

Under the proposals of the Londonderry Corporation and in the final decision of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the boundary of the Waterside Ward on the East Bank of the Foyle was to remain unaltered. The controversy surrounded the wards on the West Bank which were arranged as in Figure 1 prior to the 1936 revision.

Figure 1: Londonderry Corporation Ward Boundaries Prior to the 1936 Revision ²²



The Londonderry Corporation put forward a revised ward scheme which was approved by a full council meeting on 31 March 1936. The proposal was to reduce the number of councillors from 40 to 24 to streamline its operations. The number of wards was to be reduced from 5 to 3. The boundary of the Waterside Ward was unchanged, but the 4 wards on the West Bank were to be reduced to 2. It was argued that council areas in Ireland with a similar population favoured a smaller number of councillors.

The revision also provided an opportunity to make the number of voters per councillor more equal in the West Bank wards. The map in Figure 2 shows that the proposed new North and South Wards had a similar area. Table 2 sets out the number of voters in the proposed wards. In the new North and South Wards they were more or less equal.

Figure 2: Londonderry Corporation Proposed Ward Scheme March 1936 ²²

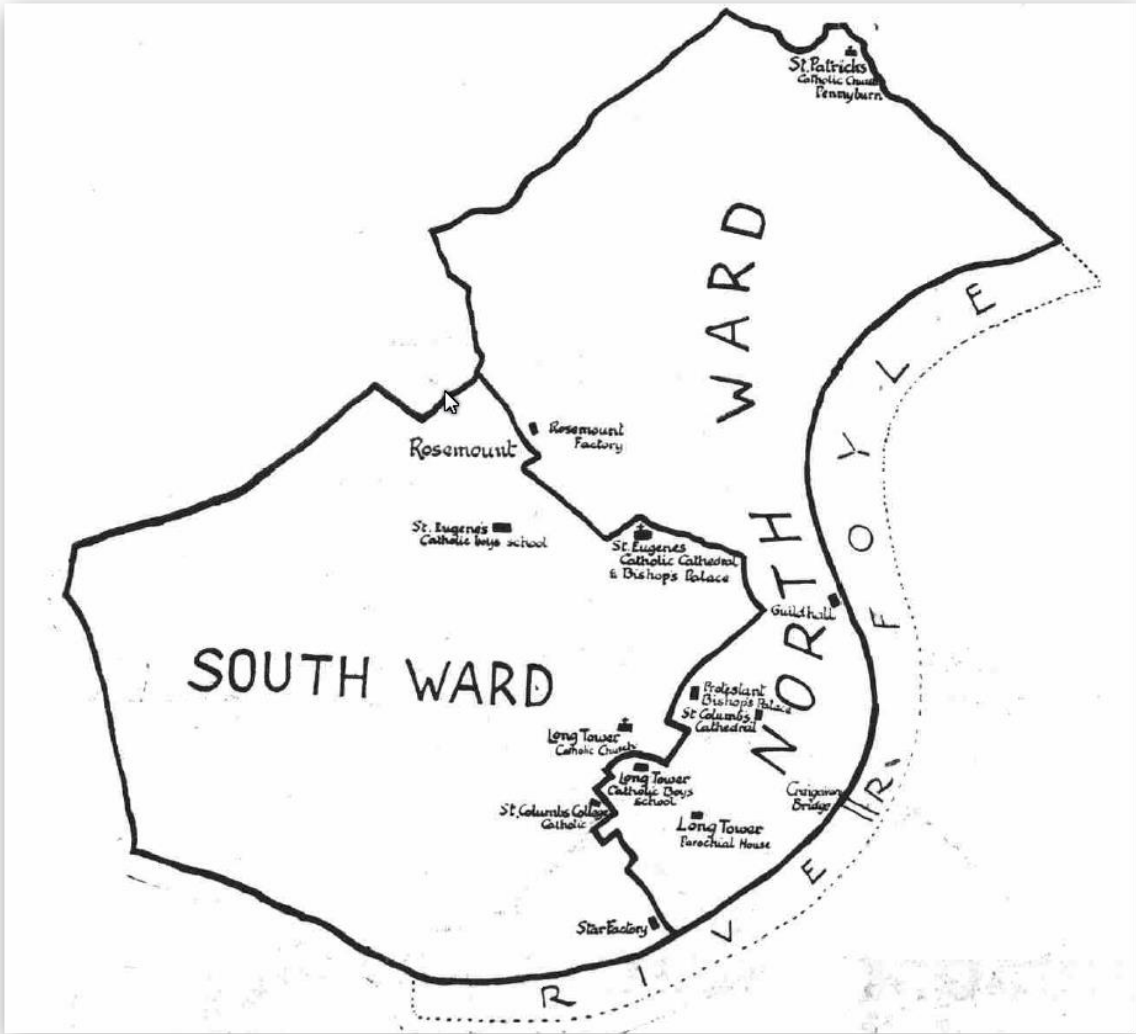


Table 2: Londonderry Proposed Ward Revision March 1936 ²³

Ward	Voters	Seats	Voters per Seat
North Ward	6779	8	847
South Ward	6534	8	817
Waterside Ward	3632	8	454

Arguments were brought forward that the Waterside Ward was the fastest growing area in the city and its population would soon catch up with that of the other wards. However, the suggestion that it should have 8 representatives was a little cheeky and, following the public inquiry, the Ministry of Home Affairs reduced its number of representatives to 4, meaning that there were 908 voters per council member. There was, perhaps surprisingly, little argument about the Waterside’s representation, possibly because everyone knew there would be a Unionist majority there for many years to come. The main controversy was about the boundary between the North and South Wards.

Irish Nationalists argued that there were 9406 Catholic local government voters and 7536 Protestant voters in the Londonderry Corporation area, and that they therefore “deserved” to be in control ²⁴. It is not the British way to take into account likely political outcomes in fixing ward boundaries. More important is to ask whether the drawing of the boundary between the North and South Wards complied with emerging British standards.

It has been seen that William Lowry, the King’s Counsel for the Londonderry Corporation, argued that people in the old North and East Wards had a community of interest, as did those in the old South and West Wards. JJ McCarroll did not dispute this. He simply did not like ward boundaries to be drawn according to the community of interest criterion. McCarroll rejected British standards and wanted political criteria to be applied in order to guarantee a majority to the representatives he favoured.

In Londonderry, Catholics and Protestants would not only have attended different churches, they would have socialised at different venues, probably attended different sporting fixtures, been members of different organisations, used different facilities, and had different patterns of shared interest. These things affected community interests and identity.

Although the Londonderry Corporation’s proposed scheme was based largely on an amalgamation of the North and East Wards on the one hand, and the South and West Wards on the other, there were some variations. The boundary line chosen to separate the new North and South Wards, did, for the most part, coincide with the boundary between the Foyle and City of Londonderry Stormont constituencies, and this use of an established line of demarcation would have appealed to a modern boundary commission.

The effect of using this line was to move a number of people from the old North Ward (which was too large) to the new South Ward. James Gallagher, the Catholic Registration Agent told the public inquiry that there were 1007 Catholic voters in this area and 650 Protestants ²⁵. Also included in the transferred portion was St. Eugene’s Roman Catholic Cathedral. If the community of interest principle is applied, it is hardly controversial, in equalizing voter numbers between the North and South Wards, to place a predominantly Catholic area in the same ward as predominantly Catholic areas immediately to the south-west. Similarly, putting a Catholic Cathedral in the same ward where most of its parishioners lived was a straightforward application of the community of interest principle.

The other variation, which was actually a departure from the Stormont boundary, saw the Corporation propose that the area around Ferguson Street, Barrack Street and Dark Lane be moved from the old South Ward to the new North Ward. James Gallagher estimated that there were 456 Catholic and 843 Protestant local government voters in this area ²⁶. It is clear that this predominantly Protestant area had a community of interest with the Fountain Street district immediately to its north-east.

The transfer of voters within the Walls of Londonderry from the old West Ward to the new North Ward was politically neutral. James Gallagher thought there were 99 Catholic and 110 Protestant voters in the transferred territory ²⁷.

The ward scheme in existence at the beginning of 1936 did not respect the community of interest principle or the requirement that councillors should represent a roughly equal number of electors. The main problem in this respect was the old North Ward. The Londonderry Corporation’s proposed changes to the ward scheme outlined above were, in effect, corrective measures which brought the boundaries more in line with British standards. They paid more respect to the community of interest principle and to the requirement that each councillor should represent a similar number of voters.

It is reasonable to ask how the main corrective measures, moving the areas around and to the south-west of St.Eugene’s Cathedral (Area 1), and the Ferguson Street/Barrack Street/Dark Lane district (Area 2), would have played out if there had still been 4 wards on the West Bank of the Foyle. The most logical way of doing this would have been to move Area 1 from the North to the South Ward, and Area 2 from the South to the East Ward. Both moves very much respect the community of interest principle. Tables 3 and 4 show the religious composition of the 4 wards before and after the hypothetical change, using the figures provided by James Gallagher of the Derry Catholic Registration Association.

Table 3: The Old Londonderry Ward Scheme Before March 1936 ²⁸

Ward	Catholic Voters	Protestant Voters	Total Voters
North	2159	2651	4810
East	643	1474	2117
South	2153	964	3117
West	3120	149	3269
Waterside	1334	2298	3632
Totals	9409	7536	16945

Table 4: A Londonderry Ward Scheme Still Using Five Wards, Moving Areas 1 and 2 ²⁹

Ward	Catholic Voters	Protestant Voters	Total Voters
North	1152	2001	3153
East	1099	2317	3416
South	2704	771	3475
West	3120	149	3269
Waterside	1334	2298	3632
Totals	9409	7536	16945

It can be seen that the number of electors in the West Bank wards are within 10% of each other, and that would be very acceptable by modern British standards. Because the Waterside Ward was geographically separated by the river, the 15% divergence would be tolerated. Such a scheme would still have delivered Unionist majorities in 3 out of the 5 wards. This exercise underlines the fact that it was difficult to imagine how the ward boundaries could have been drawn to the Catholic/Irish Nationalist advantage without violating modern British standards.

The Ministry's Decision

When the Ministry of Home Affairs delivered its judgement, following the public inquiry, it felt that it had to take valuation into account under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1922. This aimed to make electoral wards less unequal in terms of the amount of rates (property taxes) they paid. The North Ward, containing most of the commercial districts, contributed far more in rates than the South Ward. In the event, the ministry's solution was to decide that the boundary between the new North and South Wards should coincide precisely with the line which separated the Foyle and City of Londonderry Stormont constituencies. The effect of this was to make the South Ward a little bigger by giving back the area around Ferguson Street, Barrack Street and Dark Lane, and to reduce the potential Unionist majority in the North Ward. The final ward boundary and voter numbers are shown in Figure 3 and Table 5.

Figure 3: Londonderry Corporation Final Revised Boundary Between the North and South Wards December 1936

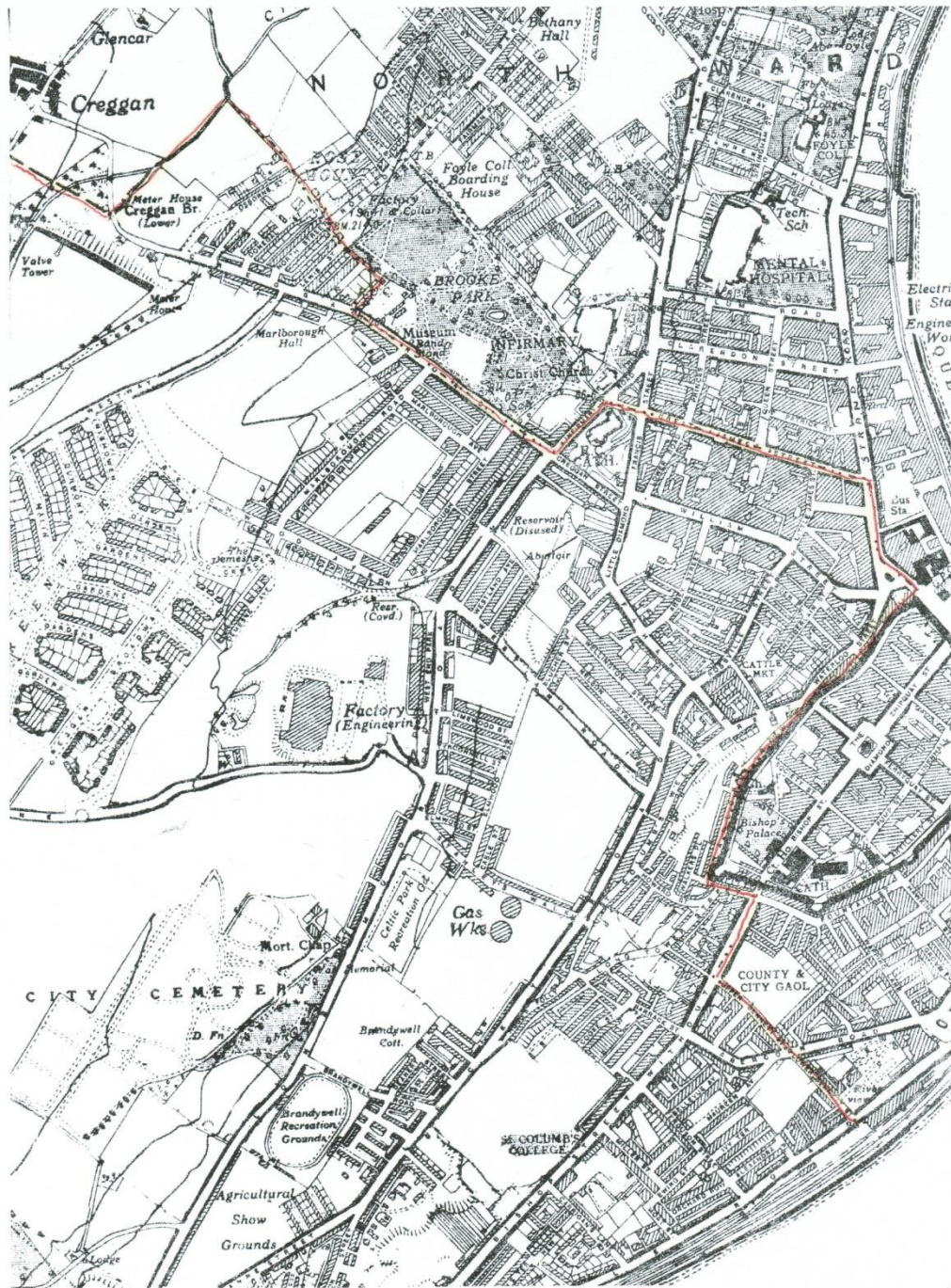


Table 5: Londonderry Final Ward Revision December 1936 ³⁰

Ward	Voters	Seats	Voters per Seat
North Ward	5469	8	684
South Ward	7844	8	980
Waterside Ward	3632	4	908

Taking into account valuation to comply with local legislative requirements did involve violating modern British standards. It meant that the community of interest principle was ignored in placing the largely Protestant district around Ferguson Street, Barrack Street and Dark Lane in with an adjacent area which was overwhelmingly Catholic. There was no community of interest there. The number of voters per seat was also thrown out of equilibrium. However, because the change introduced by the Ministry of Home Affairs was to the disadvantage of Protestants and Unionists, it did not form any legitimate basis for an Irish Nationalist grievance.

Vote Efficiency

Many studies have shown that electoral majorities can return a minority of representatives. This author has shown how this was the case in Brighton in the 1980s ³¹. There was no unfairness in the way Brighton's ward boundaries were drawn. It was simply the case that at the time of the study, Conservative voters were concentrated in certain areas and wasted votes building up large majorities in a few areas whereas Labour candidates were returned with smaller majorities in a larger number of wards.

Rallings et al made a similar study of ward boundary reviews in London. The reviews were fair and conducted according to British standards but there were council areas in 2002 like Bexley, Croydon, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Merton which produced the "wrong winner" ³². The phenomenon identified in Brighton is what Rallings et al call vote efficiency ³³. To have one's voters disproportionately concentrated in certain areas is an example of vote inefficiency. The application of British standards does not protect any party from vote inefficiency under the first-past-the-post system.

Londonderry Catholics had naturally congregated in certain areas long before there was any public sector housing programme in Londonderry. They exhibited poor vote efficiency. The old West Ward, covering the Bogside, had 3120 Catholic and 129 Protestant local government voters ³⁴. Such a concentration was not produced by drawing boundary lines in strange places on maps. This phenomenon could still be seen as late as 1973, when an independent body drew new local government boundaries for an expanded Londonderry with five district electoral areas (DEAs). At that time, under a wave of intimidation and IRA terrorist outrages, Protestants had begun an exodus from the West Bank of the Foyle. However, even under these conditions, the United Loyalist Group (a label under which Unionists fought the 1973 local elections in Londonderry) was able to top the poll in 3 out of the 5 DEAs ³⁵. Under a first-past-the-post system it would have won outright control of the new Londonderry City Council.

The only thing which saved local Irish Nationalists (in winning 14 out of 27 seats) was the application of proportional representation (PR), a method of voting which has won little support in the wider British political culture. In 2011, there was a United Kingdom-wide referendum on the introduction of the form of proportional representation known as the Alternative Vote for Westminster elections. The proposal was defeated by 13,013,123 votes to 6,152,607 ³⁶.

At the end of the Second World War, there was a flurry of electoral legislation, but an attempt to introduce PR for local government elections in Great Britain was defeated in the House of Commons by 208 votes to 17³⁷. In 1918 the House of Commons had rejected proportional representation for parliamentary elections by 223 to 113³⁸.

As far as the English were concerned, PR was something which was for export only. It failed to become a British standard. This thinking was reflected in 1919, when predominantly English politicians imposed an unwanted form of voting on Ireland in a cynical attempt to prevent Sinn Fein sweeping the board in local government elections held in the Southern counties. A *Northern Whig* editorial summed up the position:

*“The Attorney-General, who is in charge of the measure, admits that the Nationalists do not want it. The Ulster representatives certainly have no desire for it, and as far as the Sinn Fein opinion is known, Mr De Valera’s followers have no liking for it. What body of opinion, then, is behind the proposal? Outside the ranks of the Government only two Irish members have voted for the Bill. Sir Maurice Dockrell and the Attorney-General are the only Irish members who have spoken in its defence. Lieutenant-Colonel Walter Guinness has been a fervid champion of the change, but though an Irishman, he does not sit for an Irish constituency. It is an absurd and incongruous situation that the electoral machinery of Irish local government should be turned upside down to please three Irish members.”*³⁹

Once Northern Ireland had its own parliament, British voting standards were restored for local government elections.

The problem of vote inefficiency in the way Irish Nationalist voters were distributed in Londonderry was really only “solved” by ethnic cleansing. The West Bank of the Foyle became such a hostile place for Protestants after the late sixties that their numbers declined by at least 10,000, leaving only a couple of thousand behind⁴⁰.

A Second University for Ulster

In the 1960s there was a debate about whether Ulster needed a second university to deliver an increase in student places which Queen’s University Belfast might not be able to provide. The Northern Ireland Government appointed a committee under Sir John Lockwood to look into the matter. The main point at issue quickly became where the new university would be located. Londonderry, Coleraine, and the New City which was to be called Craigavon were the main contenders.

Coleraine got the decision. Both Unionists and Nationalists in Londonderry were displeased. John Hume, caught up in the paranoia of the 1960s, believed there was a conspiracy against the West of Ulster. It was deliberately being neglected. Hume said that “when the university went to Coleraine, the chances of orderly change in Northern Ireland probably disappeared”⁴¹. For John Hume, the decision to locate the university in Coleraine was political, which is how it should be. He paid no attention to the standards which the Lockwood Committee had been applying. He simply wanted a different political decision to be made in favour of Londonderry.

The issue of the location of Ulster’s second university is the second example in this paper of how British standards were rejected by Irish Nationalists in favour of a system of political horse-trading under which Londonderry should have been the main site of the new university because the city “deserved” it.

The paranoia of the times also produced the concept of “the nameless, faceless men” within Londonderry who had deterred the Unionist government from choosing the city because, in some unexplained way, a new university might benefit the local Catholic population.

Londonderry was the home of Magee University College, which did not have degree awarding powers. Most degree students started their education at Magee and then transferred to Trinity College, Dublin, to finish their studies. A minority of students completed their degree at Queen's University after starting at Magee. Under the cover of parliamentary privilege at Stormont, the Nationalist MP, Patrick Gormley, said

“I am informed that over two years ago a meeting of prominent and leading Unionists in Derry was held to discuss development of that city and the expansion of Magee College”. He went on “In a bid to preserve Unionist monopoly it was decided that the viewpoint of the local party should be against economic planning for the Foyle region, and that would include university development”⁴². Gormley then named the individuals alleged to be involved:

“The nameless, faceless men in favour of this policy are the following: G.S.Glover, Rev John Brown, Rev Professor R.L.Marshall; J.F.Bond, solicitor to the Unionist Party; Dr Abernethy, head of the Apprentice Boys; Mr Robert Stewart, a city business man; and one Mr Sidney Buchanan, journalist and BBC correspondent in Derry”⁴³. Gormley returned to the topic again on 2 June 1965 at Stormont, saying “If any of the allegations I have made can be proved to be untrue no one will be more glad than I”⁴⁴. These were not the words of someone who had proof.

The Unionist MP for North Down, Dr Robert Nixon, addressed a meeting of the Middle Liberties Unionist Association (an area within the Londonderry Rural District) on 6 May 1965 and alleged that “ ‘nameless, faceless men from Londonderry’ had gone to Stormont and advised against the siting of Ulster’s second university in the city”⁴⁵. Later, at Stormont, Nixon, on 23 June 1965, effectively supported Gormley’s story, when he said of the prime minister, Terence O’Neill, “he could have come and identified some of the nameless, faceless men. I cannot, for I have no proof”⁴⁶. This lack of proof did not stop him proclaiming on the subject.

Researchers are indebted to Gerard O’Brien for identifying the main historical documents now available in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland which have a bearing on the Magee situation⁴⁷. One of those documents consists of the notes of a meeting on 19 February 1965 between the Prime Minister, Terence O’Neill, the Minister of Education, and people broadly the same as the “nameless, faceless men” cited at Stormont. They are reported in the official notes as stating:

“The action committee statement handed in on Thursday, 18th February, contains points overlooked by the Lockwood Committee. Hope there is enough material in it for the Government to change its decision and do something more for Magee”. They proposed that “Magee should contain one of faculties of the new University – a second law faculty would be useful...Staff will disappear if their position is not safe guarded and the college is not given full University Status; we should bring the new University into being immediately but place it in Magee and to proceed from there without prejudice to the bulk going to Coleraine. In time it could be decided what faculty should remain in Londonderry and what goes to Coleraine”⁴⁸.

Having been confronted with a *fait accompli* by the Lockwood Committee, which recommended the closure of Magee, the so-called nameless, faceless men were fighting tooth and nail for a university presence in Londonderry based on Magee University College. The public records contain a paper from Reverend John Brown, one of the alleged nameless, faceless men, written after the Lockwood announcement, arguing vigorously that the new university should be established immediately in Londonderry with Coleraine being developed later as necessary⁴⁹.

The inclusion of the name of Sidney Buchanan on the list of conspirators is rather bizarre. It was Buchanan, as editor of the *Londonderry Sentinel*, who had started the campaign for a university in Londonderry back in 1961. For five weeks from 28 June of that year, the *Londonderry*

Sentinel gave a high profile to stories backing Londonderry as the site of Ulster's second university.

On 28 June 1961, a front page story was headed "Time Ripe to put Claim for University". It stated that "Londonderry people, it is felt, are too apathetic about the possibilities of the city being the home of a second university for Ulster." It was backed up by an editorial "Derry Must Move". "References to the great benefit a university would be to the city have been stressed in certain quarters, but surely a direct and emphatic claim must be made by the Education Committee, the Corporation itself or by, say, the Chamber of Commerce."

On 5 July 1961, another front page story in the *Londonderry Sentinel* was titled "Many Back City's Bid for University". Support was coming from quite different quarters, with Major Campbell Austin, Chairman of the Londonderry Corporation Education Committee, on the liberal wing of the Unionist Party, being joined in backing the idea by the Lord Mayor, Major Gerald Glover, on the traditional wing, who was later alleged to be one of the nameless, faceless men. The Secretary of the local branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, James Quinn, also supported the campaign for a university in Londonderry.

By the issue on 12 July 1961, the *Londonderry Sentinel* had the Corporation's Director of Education on board as well as Professor F.J.Lelievre of Magee University College. The front page story was "Derry Must Plan Case for a University". On 19 July 1961, Professor Lelievre was putting forward more detailed proposals in an interview with the *Sentinel*. An editorial in that issue stated "It is obvious that, at this early stage, agreement will be difficult to reach on the actual type of university establishment that could be set up here; there are so many men with so many minds on the subject that it would be best if those thoughts were laid aside and the first step taken to lodge a claim on behalf of Londonderry."

The following week, the *Sentinel* was floating the idea of a "Derry University for Arts and Economics". Later in the year on 25 October, it was reported that the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce was supporting the campaign. On 1 November 1961 the *Sentinel* wrote that "The [Church of Ireland] Synod of Derry and Raphoe Diocese at its annual meeting on Wednesday, gave its unanimous support for full university status for the university college in Londonderry and the Dean of Derry (Very Rev.L.R.Lawrenson MA) said the matter was urgent in view of the greatly increased numbers of students seeking university education."

When the issue was debated in Stormont in December, the MP for the City of Londonderry constituency, Edward Jones (another alleged nameless, faceless man) joined with the Labour MP, David Bleakley, in calling for a charter for Magee, meaning university status which would have allowed the college to grant its own degrees⁵⁰.

The campaign continued throughout 1962 and when Sidney Buchanan wrote an editorial on 13 June, he was able to say "for a long time, we were the only newspaper in the North who supported a 'university for Derry' project". It was a pointed remark, no doubt aimed at Londonderry's Irish Nationalist newspaper, the *Derry Journal*. A perusal of the pages of that paper, at the time that the *Londonderry Sentinel* was campaigning vigorously for a university, reveal that it was remarkably quiet on the issue. It does rather seem that Irish Nationalism later jumped on the bandwagon largely created by Sidney Buchanan of the *Londonderry Sentinel*.

On 4 November 1962 the following motion was passed: "That we the Council of the City of Londonderry and Foyle Unionist Association do hereby call on the Government of Northern Ireland to establish a University in Londonderry, should they decide that such a University is necessary for the well-being of the country"⁵¹.

Messrs Gormley and Nixon, in accusing "the nameless, faceless men" of opposing the idea of a university for Londonderry, were clearly barking up the wrong tree. It was the accused's efforts

which helped save Magee as one of the campuses of the New University of Ulster. Their efforts were summed up by Buchanan in an article entitled “Unionists Fought for University”⁵².

Gormley’s further allegation that Londonderry Unionists were “against economic planning for the Foyle region” was demolished within months. The *Derry Journal* on 26 October 1965 gave details of the Minister for Development, William Craig’s, speech to the Londonderry Chambers of Commerce. He is reported as saying “It was useless to think of Derry City alone for the kind of broad, long-term planning he had in mind.” He had previously met the Londonderry Corporation’s Finance Committee on 18 October and outlined his plans for the three local councils to work together for strategic planning purposes. Londonderry Unionism agreed this was a good idea and the Londonderry Corporation (on 22 November 1965)⁵³, the Londonderry Rural District Council, and the Londonderry County Council all appointed representatives to a Londonderry Area Steering Committee, supported by the James Munce Partnership, a firm of consultants. They jointly published a comprehensive planning document called the *Londonderry Area Plan* in March 1968.

If Lockwood’s recommendation that Ulster’s second university should go to Coleraine was not the result of a conspiracy by Londonderry Unionists, then what was the explanation? It should come as no surprise that it was the result of the application of British standards.

The Northern Ireland Parliament liked to think that it was sovereign, but its power was limited by the fact that by 1963 less than 6% of its income came from “transferred” taxes under local control⁵⁴. These included estate duties, stamp duties, some excise duties and motor vehicle tax. The vast majority of its budget came from taxes collected centrally in England and the amount returned to Northern Ireland was determined by a set formula. It would be more realistic to say that the Northern Ireland Government and Parliament could do what it wanted as long as a policy did not cost a great deal of money. For expensive projects it needed British government consent. A second university for Ulster was an expensive project.

John Hume seems to have bought into the idea that Northern Ireland could do what it wanted. For him, the location of the university was in the gift of the Stormont government, and it could award the institution to Londonderry on the grounds that the city “deserved” it, possibly because of alleged past misdeeds.

However, it should come as no surprise that there had emerged British standards which sought to take decisions about new universities largely out of the hands of politicians and base them instead on what were believed to be a set of objective standards. The guardian of those standards was the University Grants Committee (UGC).

The Lockwood Committee was dominated by four English academics. Sir John Lockwood was Master of Birkbeck College, one of the colleges which made up the University of London. He was a former Vice Chancellor of the university. Sir Willis Jackson was Professor of Electrical Engineering at Imperial College, another of the University of London colleges. Sir Peter Venables was Principal of the College of Advanced Technology (CAT), Birmingham. The CATs were forerunners of the polytechnics which were created later in the 1960s. Alice Rosemary Murray was Tutor-in-charge (later President) at New Hall, a constituent college of the University of Cambridge which catered for women students. She was to go on to become Cambridge’s first female Vice Chancellor. New Hall was later to be renamed Murray Edwards College, partly in her honour. Murray had served in the WRNS in Londonderry during the Second World War⁵⁵. It was always improbable that such a group of high powered academics would allow local politicians to tell them which location to select.

The academic composition of the commission naturally meant that they looked to apply British standards derived from the UGC. Their brief was to look at many different aspects of higher

education in Northern Ireland, but the only thing for which they are remembered is the choice of the location for Ulster's second university.

Initially Lockwood's committee was tasked with coming up with only general guidelines as to the type of location required but, in questioning representatives of areas competing for the university, it became clear that the criteria they had to apply were pointing to a specific location. There is a letter from John L.O.Andrews, then Minister of Finance, to Sir John Lockwood dated 3 July 1964 which says:

"I am writing to confirm that your Committee should consider itself free to deal with the question of location of a second university and to make a recommendation on what it considers to be the most suitable location for this purpose." ⁵⁶

The Northern Ireland government undoubtedly saw that the choice of location would be controversial, and it is likely that it saw some advantages in the Lockwood Committee making the recommendation. As outlined earlier in this paper "Where an independent body makes adjudications, this often relieves politicians of having to take responsibility for controversial decisions. This can be a great comfort to them."

The Minister of Finance, in later drawing up a timetable of events that led to the decision, pointed out that on 30 October 1963, David Holden, a civil servant in his department had outlined in a meeting with Sir John Lockwood what he saw as the role of the UGC. "It would give advice on the relative merit of possible sites from an academic point of view. The Lockwood Committee would be expected to advise only on the question of principle, not to adjudicate between claimants." ⁵⁷

However, the UGC later agreed to a change of roles. The same document reports that Sir John Lockwood called with Sir John Wolfenden, Chairman of the UGC, on 11 May 1964. Wolfenden indicated "that if the Lockwood Committee would appoint to a particular location or particular site no embarrassment would be caused to the UGC and that indeed it might be advantageous not to take two steps in the solution of the problem if one could be made to suffice. He agreed that it was extremely difficult to consider what a new University might do without having regard to its probable location" ⁵⁸. That opened the way for the Northern Ireland government to amend the Committee's terms of reference on 3 July 1964.

Edward Jones, Stormont MP for the City of Londonderry constituency, and the Attorney General, attracted a certain amount of flack in the city when he voted to confirm the choice of Coleraine as the site of the university. However, as he pointed out in a long memo defending his position, he was a member of the government and once it had decided to back Lockwood's recommendation, he was bound to vote with it ⁵⁹. As a lawyer, he seemed to have a better grasp of the political and administrative realities than most.

Jones claimed some credit for saving Magee and wrote of the decision to choose Coleraine as the main site of the new university "It was not what we wanted but in a matter like this a part of the loaf is better than no bread when one remembers that the University Grants Committee has got to pronounce on the matter and that it is very doubtful whether any major departure from the findings of the Lockwood Committee would secure the approval of the University Grants Committee on the recommendation of which the finding of the necessary finance by the Westminster Treasury depends" ⁶⁰.

The idea that the Northern Ireland government could do what it wanted was apparently an illusion that John Hume bought into. However, Westminster controlled the purse strings and it was guided by the UGC. Sir John Wolfenden had no doubt been confident to let the Lockwood Committee make a recommendation on location on the understanding that it would be applying UGC criteria. Once it had applied those criteria, the UGC would back Lockwood's choice. The

British government would then not go against the UGC's decision in making money available to build the university. There were many people, both Unionist and Nationalist, who simply did not grasp how the application of British standards worked in the choice of a location for a new university.

What Kind of University?

The English academics on the Lockwood Committee, in being guided by UGC criteria, naturally specified the kind of university which the UGC wanted to see built. In interviewing the promoters of various university sites, Sir John Lockwood made it clear that he was looking for a university which could initially cater for 2,000-3,000 students, and eventually 5,000-6,000 on a site of at least 200 acres⁶¹. This meant full-time students. The concept of part-time university education had not really gained much traction at this point. The Robbins Report found that while there were 118,400 full-time university students in Great Britain in 1962-63, there were only 9,000 part-time students in universities, and two thirds of those were postgraduates⁶². Initially, the scale of the UGC expectations rather caught out the supporters of Magee University College.

The campaign which Sidney Buchanan and the *Londonderry Sentinel* had been supporting since 1961, and for which they were getting considerable support, could be described as being in favour of a Magee Upgrade. The University College, which occupied a site of just 20 acres and had less than 300 students⁶³, would become a university and hence would be able to award its own degrees. Students would be able to complete an entire degree course at Magee. The *Londonderry Sentinel* had been speculating back in 1961 that Magee might grow to serve 1,000 students⁶⁴. This was a much smaller scale project than that envisaged by the Lockwood Committee.

Much of the discussion with the Londonderry delegation focused on the future role of Magee. It does seem that the Lockwood Committee saw Magee as a problem rather than an asset. It was difficult to see how it could be made to fit in with a large Londonderry University on a separate site. The Committee ultimately decided to rid itself of the problem by recommending that Magee be closed.

Student Accommodation

The questioning by the Lockwood Committee finally got around to one of the crunch issues. Mr McWilliams was the Director of Education at the Londonderry Corporation.

Rosemary Murray: Does it mean that the assumption is made that there would be finance available to provide the whole of the accommodation for students and staff on one of these sites? What about residence for students, are you envisaging a residential university with Halls of Residence for students all on the same site?

Mr McWilliams: In our document where we say that – on pages 18 and 19 – it is now accepted that the majority of students should be accommodated in students' hostels. Of course, no matter where you put a university, you have still got to get the money for students' hostels.

Sir John Lockwood: I know that the cost of this is very considerable; you wouldn't do it for less than £1,000 per student place, even with modern building techniques. For university types, it might be £1,500. If you have 2,000 students, this might be £3,000,000 on residences.

Mr McWilliams: If you put 2,000 more students in Belfast, you still have to find £3m....Regardless of where you have the university, you still have to find the £3,000,000 for your 2,000 students.⁶⁵

This, of course, was not true. Coleraine had a different solution. There is, however, little else that the Londonderry delegation could say. The city had a housing crisis. Although the Corporation's brochure boldly proclaimed "There is, however, always likely to be a demand for private lodgings for students. The council is satisfied that there will be little difficulty in meeting this demand"⁶⁶, it was something of a Pinocchio moment.

A letter had been submitted to the Londonderry Corporation Housing Sub-Committee on 6 June 1963:

Letter dated 24 May 1963, from the Hon. Secretary, Students' Representative Council, Magee University College, Londonderry, was submitted. The letter referred to the acute difficulties experienced by an increasing number of students in obtaining lodgings locally, and enquired whether the Corporation would permit Council-house tenants to take in lodgers.

This highlighted the housing situation in Londonderry.

"We know that at the time the Lockwood Committee was carrying out its investigation in 1964 there were 245 students at Magee and about 100 were resident in the College's hostels. We can therefore say that about 150 students in search of lodgings were stretching Londonderry's capacity to accommodate them. This was the city which hoped to house 2,000 students by 1973 and 6,000 in due course and where 'Accommodation of students and staff presents no major problem'."⁶⁷

Under the questioning of the Lockwood Committee, the Londonderry deputation's claims about lodgings collapsed and it was forced to admit that it was likely to need government to completely fund student accommodation for the new university. At the time of the meeting with the Lockwood Committee in May 1964, the Londonderry representatives were not to know that their claim was to become even more hopeless.

There is a memo from R.H.Kidd, a senior civil servant at the Stormont Department of Finance, describing a meeting he and some colleagues had with the UGC on 4 June 1964. It was confirmed that the question of accommodation of students had always been one of the criteria used for choosing the location of a new university. However, it had suddenly become of paramount importance.

Mr Fisher, a UGC Assistant Secretary "emphasised that Exchequer money for new buildings was being entirely devoted to academic buildings. Halls of Residence (with one exception which was a special case) were being financed from other resources, if they were provided at all. The most important criterion was therefore the supply of lodgings in the area chosen"⁶⁸. Mr Kidd also told a meeting of the Lockwood Committee on 5-6 June 1964 that "The UGC looked for 500-1,000 rooms immediately available in lodgings for areas seeking to sponsor new universities"⁶⁹. Londonderry's case, which was always weak on the question of student accommodation, became untenable. It expected the British government to cough up £3 million to build hostels or halls of residence. The Bank of England's Inflation Calculator⁷⁰ suggests that £3 million at 1965 prices is the equivalent of £57 million in 2018. The British government, faced with the cost of financing a major expansion of university education in the 1960s, was not prepared to spend that kind of money on halls of residence when alternatives were available.

Coleraine's Case

When a delegation from Coleraine, Portrush and Portstewart met the Lockwood Committee earlier on the same day as the Londonderry deputation, there was evidence that they had done more homework. There was more awareness of how the locations of new universities had been chosen in England, and hence of the kind of criteria that the UGC had applied.

The applicants stressed that the area had ample housing at reasonable rates to attract staff, as well as an "idyllic rural setting, wonderful beaches". They then started ticking the boxes. They pointed out that "the presence of already available accommodation would allow for the absorption of up to 2,500 residents"⁷¹.

Their publication had costed student accommodation in halls of residence at £1400 per head and acknowledged that the total cost of catering for 2,500 students would be "astronomical". It then played its ace card. "In the Portrush/Portstewart region there is accommodation for over 2,600 students of a standard registered and approved annually by the Tourist Board. This accommodation is available during the entire university terms...The local Hoteliers Association has discussed the problems arising from the utilisation of their accommodation by students, and have expressed their enthusiasm and willingness to co-operate with university authorities in setting up whatever regulations these authorities feel would be required. This figure of 2,600 places represents the largest single block of accommodation anywhere in Ulster"⁷².

Then came the evidence that they had done their homework. "Such factors have already weighed heavily in the setting up of the University of Essex and Sussex". The authors had trawled through British publications relating to the setting up of new universities and chose to concentrate on these criteria: (a) the geographical location and local amenities; (b) community reaction; (c) recreational and extra-curricular facilities; (d) availability of accommodation; (e) capital investment required and investment from local authorities; (f) attractability of the location for staff; (g) the student population distribution; (h) availability of sites⁷³.

The delegation which met the Lockwood Committee on 16 May 1964 sought to press home these points. There were a number of issues the members of the deputation had not thought about, such as how the new university might differ from Queen's, but as the meeting went on they were able to pull another rabbit out of the hat. Mr McCulloch of Chemstrand said:

"As far as research is concerned, both my own and other firms in the area have agreements with universities in which fellowships and scholarships have been placed at universities in order to carry out research associated with the respective businesses and I think that a university established at Coleraine would certainly receive the support of the very large industries which are already there...we do have this demand for basic research and development and we do have the demand for university graduates which will increase"⁷⁴.

A member of the Lockwood Committee, Sir Peter Venables, said "I am stimulated by these answers"⁷⁵. Coleraine had ticked another box. Aerial photographs of potential sites were left with the Committee. Later, there is a civil service note to Sir John Lockwood reporting that Mr Moore of Coleraine had rung on 11 June 1964 to say that he and his colleagues had identified another five or six possible sites for a university⁷⁶.

Both the Londonderry and Coleraine delegations were underprepared for the questions Sir John Lockwood asked about the character of the university they wanted to see established. However, Coleraine showed a greater awareness that there was a set of standards which new universities needed to meet. In this respect its delegation was more streetwise. It would be wrong however, to think that this was just a matter of research and presentation skills. Londonderry simply could not make a credible claim to have lodgings available which could save a fortune on building halls of residence. It did not have the same attractive seaside location as Portrush and

Portstewart which could easily attract staff. Londonderry's housing crisis did not enable it to put forward a strong case that it could comfortably supply homes for skilled staff coming from outside the area.

The criteria used by the UGC were set out in the minutes of one of the meetings of the Lockwood Committee. It was at this meeting that the Committee was told about the current UGC attitude to spending money on student accommodation, and hence this criterion became of paramount importance. See Table 6 below.

Table 6: The UGC Criteria – Lockwood Committee Minutes 5-6 June 1964

Criterion ⁷⁷	Comment
a. Are the proposed location, site and sponsors such as to suggest that the creation of a worthwhile academic institute of university standard of any sort placed there would proceed smoothly and effectively?	The Lockwood Committee saw Magee as a problem that would impede smooth implementation.
b. What, if any, particular sort of university is being aimed at in the light of the needs of the region of the UK in which it is to be established?	Neither the Coleraine nor Londonderry sponsors had really thought this through.
c. Will staff of the necessary quality and energy be attracted in appropriate numbers?	Coleraine/Portrush/Portstewart was probably a more attractive area to move to.
d. To what extent will the students to be catered for be i. day students; ii. require lodgings; iii. need to be provided with residence; iv. come from other parts of the UK? How do these requirements fit the particular sites under consideration?	Both locations seemed to assume that almost all students would require accommodation. Londonderry was at a big disadvantage here.
e. Is there, in fact, a suitable site on which to create a university and is it available on suitable terms?	Both locations had identified sites, but had no knowledge of the costs involved.
f. What local financial and other support is likely to be available?	Both locations made a general commitment to raise a local rate to support the university, but could not commit to it without Northern Ireland government permission.

g. Does the locality offer any necessary associated industrial or research activities?	Coleraine raised the prospect of fellowships and scholarships.
--	--

At the same meeting, the Committee summarised the strengths and weaknesses of the Coleraine and Londonderry cases.

Londonderry Advantages

- (1) *A suitable site could probably be found outside the city.*
- (2) *It would suit the development of agriculture and biology, being near good farming land and on the coast.*
- (3) *It had a concentration of population.*
- (4) *It supported a little cultural activity.*
- (5) *It might take the sting out of a change of function at Magee.*

Londonderry Disadvantages

- (1) *Further industrial development appeared doubtful and it was difficult to foresee that part of Northern Ireland becoming a stronger and more active part of the community.*
- (2) *The Promotion Committee was not inspiring.*
- (3) *The housing situation was particularly bad and few lodgings would be available which meant that expensive Halls of Residence would have to be provided.*
- (4) *The existence of Magee University College was a mixed blessing.*
- (5) *It gave the impression of a frontier town and had never lost the siege mentality. The pioneers of the new University might have to spend energies needed elsewhere on staying non-aligned in the "cold war".*⁷⁸

The comment about industrial development was too pessimistic. For the rest of the decade, Londonderry received a lot of Northern Ireland government support which was successful in attracting new industries. However, the closure of Monarch Electric and the decline of the shirtmaking industry meant that unemployment was a problem. The opposition of Irish Nationalists to the very existence of the Northern Ireland state did make Protestants feel under siege, and this same opposition to the state did mean that Londonderry Catholics did not necessarily want to play a full part in the development of a thriving Northern Ireland.

Coleraine Advantages

- (1) *It was suitable for agriculture, Marine Biology and Biology so that the academic bias pointed to it.*
- (2) *There was some industrial growth in the area.*
- (3) *It offered immediate living amenities to the staff.*
- (4) *An adequate site could probably be found though the two proposed by the Promotion Committee were possibly not suitable.*
- (5) *Lodgings were immediately available and the number of hotels etc would also allow for the holding of conferences.*
- (6) *Its proximity to Londonderry would soothe hurt feelings and attract support, while easing the demise of Magee.*
- (7) *The local population was adequate in numbers.*
- (8) *It was acceptable for economic and social reasons as a balance against the New City and Belfast.*
- (9) *Londonderry County Council favoured it rather than Londonderry City itself.*

Coleraine Disadvantages

- (1) *The Promotion Committee had not inspired confidence.*
- (2) *It had no cultural amenities.*⁷⁹

Point 6 in the list of advantages was extremely optimistic. Possibly only the Londonderry County Council would have seen things in those terms.

When the decision in favour of Coleraine was made, the supporters of Londonderry's claim sent a document to all members of the Senate and House of Commons at Stormont entitled "The Criteria That Count". It sought to replace the criteria of the University Grants Committee with its own. This was a complete misunderstanding of how British standards worked. The document concluded by asking "Are not these considerations of far more importance than the availability of boarding-houses and hotels throughout the winter months for short-term student accommodation...?"⁸⁰. The clear answer was No, because the question of student accommodation was in the UGC criteria and other criteria were not.

It is possible to argue about how well Londonderry and Coleraine met some of the UGC criteria. The criterion over which there can be no argument was that relating to student accommodation. Coleraine had a clear advantage. Under normal circumstances Coleraine would have presented a clear cost advantage. What the UGC meant when it said it would be very difficult to get money to build student accommodation was that the British government at Westminster had told it that money would not be made available for that purpose. At that point it became quite impossible to locate the kind of large university campus favoured by the UGC in Londonderry.

The Magee Upgrade

It could be argued that the Magee Upgrade promoted by the *Londonderry Sentinel* from 1961 onwards was what the city needed all along. When Londonderry's politicians on both sides of the divide were drawn into supporting a university of 2,000 students, growing to 5,000, they were, at that moment, biting off more than they could chew.

On 25 May 1965, the Minister of Education announced at Stormont that Magee was to be saved. It would be able to offer complete degree courses in a range of Arts subjects⁸¹. It was believed that Magee had been given permission to expand to 500 students but would not be able to provide further residential facilities. Magee was to become one campus of the New University of Ulster, with most of the students based at the Coleraine campus. Londonderry got its Magee Upgrade after all.

The outbreak of the Troubles in the late 1960s both solved and created problems for Magee. The British government's reaction to violence was to throw money at the problem, so much more cash was made available to build houses. The housing crisis was partly alleviated. At the same time, IRA terrorism and intimidation reduced the Protestant population on the West Bank by over 10,000⁸². Only a couple of thousand remained. The West Bank, on which the Magee campus was located, became a dangerous and unwelcoming place for Protestants. The murder of part-time Protestant student, Leslie Jarvis, by the IRA in 1987 as he sat in his car outside the university certainly did not help. As two policemen approached the car, a bomb exploded and killed them both⁸³. The area around Magee College had, until the late 1960s, been predominantly Protestant, but this changed dramatically. The mass exodus of Protestants meant that more housing became available which was suitable for conversion into student flats.

The negative effect of the exodus on Magee was that it became an unattractive location for Protestant students. Indeed, Magee can consider itself very fortunate to have received further

funding for expansion when it was so disproportionately serving one side of the community. The Protestant student population at Magee has struggled to reach 20% ⁸⁴.

One thing is clear. If Magee or any other site on the West Bank had been the location of the large university campus which ended up in Coleraine, it would have been a disaster. It would have been a second university which the majority community would have been reluctant to attend.

Conclusion

The Irish Nationalist and “civil rights” demand for British rights and British standards may have been insincere, but it pointed to a reasonable way of assessing whether decisions were fair. In the two cases examined in this paper, it was the application of British standards which proved to be unpopular with Irish Nationalism. With the redrawing of Londonderry’s ward boundaries and the selection of the site for Ulster’s second university, the demand was essentially to suspend the application of objective British standards, and to manipulate the process to bring about a pre-determined political outcome.

References

- ¹ *Londonderry Sentinel* 23 April 1969
- ² McCluskey, C. (1989) *Up off their Knees*, Conn McCluskey and associates.
- ³ Edwards, A. (2009) *A History of the Northern Ireland Labour Party*, Manchester University Press. p.123
- ⁴ Edwards, A. (2009). p.136
- ⁵ Edwards, A. (2009). p.143
- ⁶ McCafferty, N. (2009) "Ireland: Breaking the Shackles". In *1968: Memories and Legacies of a Global Revolt* (Bulletin of the German Historical Institute). p.215 Available online from: https://www.ghi-dc.org/fileadmin/user_upload/GHI_Washington/Publications/Supplements/Supplement_6/bus6_213.pdf
- ⁷ Prince, S. (2008). Mythologising a Movement: Northern Ireland's '68. *History Ireland*, September-October, p.26-27. Available online from: <http://www.nicivilrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/vmccormack.pdf>
- ⁸ Purdie, B. (1990). *Politics in the Streets: Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland*, Blackstaff Press. p.20
- ⁹ *Belfast News Letter* [26 November 1897](#)
- ¹⁰ Budge, I. and O'Leary, C (1973) *Belfast: Approach to Crisis*, Macmillan. p.119
- ¹¹ [Irish News 30 October 1894](#)
- ¹² [Irish Times](#) 4 June 1896
- ¹³ *The Freemans Journal* 24 June 1896
- ¹⁴ *Belfast News Letter* 15 May 1896
- ¹⁵ Email from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to the author 28 August 2019
- ¹⁶ *Belfast News Letter* 26 November 1897 and the author's calculation
- ¹⁷ *Derry Journal* 16 December 1936
- ¹⁸ Ministry of Home Affairs for Northern Ireland (1936) *Londonderry County Borough proposed reconstitution of wards* (Inquiry presided over by the Ministry Inspector, Vice-Admiral N.E. Archdale). PRONI HA/51/2 p.178-179, pars 1175-1177
- ¹⁹ Ministry of Home Affairs for Northern Ireland (1936). p.179-180, pars 1183-1187
- ²⁰ *Londonderry Sentinel* 28 March 1936, *Derry Journal* 30 March 1936 and 7 October 1936
- ²¹ Kingsley, P. (1989) *Londonderry Revisited*, Belfast Publications.p.23
- ²² *Derry Journal* 7 October 1936
- ²³ *Derry Journal* 30 March 1936
- ²⁴ *Derry Journal* 30 March 1936
- ²⁵ Ministry of Home Affairs for Northern Ireland (1936). p.206, par 1430
- ²⁶ Ministry of Home Affairs for Northern Ireland (1936). p.205, par 1425

- ²⁷ Ministry of Home Affairs for Northern Ireland (1936). p.206, par 1429
- ²⁸ Ministry of Home Affairs for Northern Ireland (1936). p.205, par 1420
- ²⁹ Ministry of Home Affairs for Northern Ireland (1936). p.205-206, pars 1420, 1425,1429 and the author's calculations
- ³⁰ *Derry Journal* 16 December 1936
- ³¹ Kingsley, P. (1989) *Londonderry Revisited*, Belfast Publications. p.33
- ³² Rallings, C., Johnston, R., and Thrasher, M. (2004). Equalising Votes but Enabling Bias: The Electoral Impact of the 1977 and 1999 Ward Boundary Reviews in London. *Urban Studies* 41, 7, p.1369
- ³³ Rallings, C., Johnston, R., and Thrasher, M. (2004). p.1390
- ³⁴ *Derry Journal* 30 March 1936
- ³⁵ *Londonderry Sentinel* 6 June 1973
- ³⁶ House of Commons Library (2011) *Alternative Vote Referendum 2011*. Available online from: <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/RP11-44>
- ³⁷ *Daily Herald* 24 January 1945
- ³⁸ *The People* 3 February 1918
- ³⁹ *Northern Whig* 2 May 1919
- ⁴⁰ Kingsley, P. *The 10,000 Londonderry Protestants Missing from the West Bank of the Foyle*. Available online from: <http://analogical.org.uk/historical-papers/>
- ⁴¹ Curran, F. (1986) *Derry: Countdown to Disaster*, Gill & Macmillan. p.43
- ⁴² Northern Ireland Parliamentary Debates: Official Report – House of Commons, col.42, 26 May 1965
- ⁴³ Northern Ireland Parliamentary Debates: Official Report – House of Commons, col.42, 26 May 1965
- ⁴⁴ Northern Ireland Parliamentary Debates: Official Report – House of Commons, col.305, 2 June 1965
- ⁴⁵ *Belfast Telegraph* 7 May 1965
- ⁴⁶ Northern Ireland Parliamentary Debates: Official Report – House of Commons, col.1112, 23 June 1965
- ⁴⁷ O'Brien, G. (1999) “ ‘Our Magee Problem’: Stormont and the Second University”, In *Derry & Londonderry: History & Society*, Geography Publications. p.647-696. Also available online at https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/education/second_university/obrien99.pdf
- ⁴⁸ *Notes of discussion between P.M., the Minister of Education with representatives of Unionist's organisation*, 19 February 1965. PRONI CAB/9/D/31/2
- ⁴⁹ Brown, J. (1965) *The setting up and development of a new university in Northern Ireland*. PRONI CAB/9/D/31/2
- ⁵⁰ *Londonderry Sentinel* 27 December 1961
- ⁵¹ Jones, E. (1965) *Edward Jones MP's defence of his position following a meeting of the council of the Londonderry and Foyle Unionist Association on 22 February 1965*. PRONI CAB/9/D/31/2

- ⁵² *Londonderry Sentinel* 2 June 1965
- ⁵³ *Derry Journal* 23 November 1965
- ⁵⁴ Lawrence, R.J. (1965) *The Government of Northern Ireland: Public Finance and Public Services 1921-1964*, Clarendon Press. p.83-84
- ⁵⁵ O'Brien, G. (1999). p.687 and "Obituary: Dame Rosemary Murray", *Daily Telegraph* 14 October 2004. Available online from:
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1474057/Dame-Rosemary-Murray.html>
- ⁵⁶ *Letter from John L.O.Andrews, then Minister of Finance, to Sir John Lockwood dated 3 July 1964*. PRONI FIN/58/9
- ⁵⁷ Minister of Finance (1965) *Memo on the Lockwood Report*, 1 March 1965. PRONI CAB/9/D/31/2
- ⁵⁸ Minister of Finance (1965) *Memo on the Lockwood Report*, 1 March 1965. PRONI CAB/9/D/31/2
- ⁵⁹ Jones, E. (1965) *Edward Jones MP's defence of his position following a meeting of the council of the Londonderry and Foyle Unionist Association on 22 February 1965*. PRONI CAB/9/D/31/2
- ⁶⁰ Jones, E. (1965) *Edward Jones MP's defence of his position following a meeting of the council of the Londonderry and Foyle Unionist Association on 22 February 1965*. PRONI CAB/9/D/31/2
- ⁶¹ *Lockwood Committee meeting with representatives of the Londonderry County Borough Council* 16 May 1964, p.2, 3 and 5. PRONI FIN/58/2
- ⁶² Robbins Report (1963) *Higher Education*, HMSO Cmnd.2154, p.14-15. Available online from: <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/robbins/robbins1963.html>
- ⁶³ Lockwood Report (1965) *Higher Education in Northern Ireland*, HMSO Cmnd.475, par.93
- ⁶⁴ *Londonderry Sentinel* 28 June 1961
- ⁶⁵ *Lockwood Committee meeting with representatives of the Londonderry County Borough Council* 16 May 1964, p.12-13. PRONI FIN/58/2
- ⁶⁶ Londonderry County Borough (1963) *Submission to the Government of Northern Ireland Presenting the Case for the Promotion of a University at Londonderry*. p.18-19
- ⁶⁷ Kingsley, P. (1989) *Londonderry Revisited*, Belfast Publications. p.108
- ⁶⁸ *Meeting of civil servants Kidd, Park and Davies with the UGC* 4 June 1964. PRONI FIN/58/9
- ⁶⁹ *Minutes of the Eleventh Meeting of the Lockwood Committee*, 5-6 June 1964. PRONI ED/39/9
- ⁷⁰ Bank of England Inflation Calculator. Available online from:
<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>
- ⁷¹ *A second University for Northern Ireland – Proposals from the Coleraine/Portrush/Portstewart area*, February 1964. PRONI CAB/9/D/31/2
- ⁷² *A second University for Northern Ireland – Proposals from the Coleraine/Portrush/Portstewart area*, February 1964. PRONI CAB/9/D/31/2
- ⁷³ *A second University for Northern Ireland – Proposals from the Coleraine/Portrush/Portstewart area*, February 1964. PRONI CAB/9/D/31/2

⁷⁴ *Lockwood Committee meeting with representatives of the Coleraine/Portrush/Portstewart area* 16 May 1964, p.7. PRONI FIN/58/2

⁷⁵ *Lockwood Committee meeting with representatives of the Coleraine/Portrush/Portstewart area* 16 May 1964, p.10. PRONI FIN/58/2

⁷⁶ *Letter from unnamed civil servant to Sir John Lockwood*, 12 June 1964. PRONI FIN/58/9

⁷⁷ *Minutes of the Eleventh Meeting of the Lockwood Committee*, 5-6 June 1964. PRONI ED/39/9

⁷⁸ *Minutes of the Eleventh Meeting of the Lockwood Committee*, 5-6 June 1964. PRONI ED/39/9

⁷⁹ *Minutes of the Eleventh Meeting of the Lockwood Committee*, 5-6 June 1964. PRONI ED/39/9

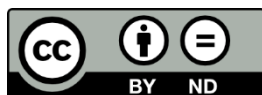
⁸⁰ *The Criteria That Count* (by authority of the Londonderry Corporation), 26 February 1965. PRONI CAB/9/D/31/2

⁸¹ *Londonderry Sentinel* 26 May 1965

⁸² Kingsley, P. *The 10,000 Londonderry Protestants Missing from the West Bank of the Foyle*. Available online from: <http://analogical.org.uk/historical-papers/>

⁸³ *Belfast Telegraph* 2 December 2001, “Cops re-open triple IRA murder probe”. Available online from: <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/imported/cops-reopen-triple-ira-murder-probe-28363226.html>

⁸⁴ *Irish News* 18 November 2014. Available online from: <http://www.irishnews.com/news/2014/11/18/news/catholic-majority-on-uu-campuses-108382/>



The copyright on this article (2020) is governed by the Creative Commons CC BY-ND 4.0 license (Attribution No-Derivatives 4.0). This broadly means that the paper can be freely reproduced without changes to the content as long as a proper citation/attribution is provided. The prohibitions on “derivatives” of this work should not limit the ability of authors to quote freely from the article if an appropriate citation/attribution is provided.

The full CC BY-ND license is at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/legalcode> and a quick summary of its provisions can be found at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>