

Press Release

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For immediate Release

Northern Ireland Stormont Administration - the original documents now available online

LONDON, UK, 2 May 2006 – Thomson Learning EMEA, part of The Thomson Corporation, today announced the online publication of original Cabinet papers from Northern Ireland Government. *Northern Ireland: A Divided Community 1921-1972: Cabinet Papers of the Stormont Administration*, is an online publication created in partnership with the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland under the general editorship of Dr Senia Paseta, St Hugh's College, Oxford and Dr Marc Mulholland, St Catherine's College, Oxford.

As the British and Irish governments renew their efforts to restore power-sharing devolution in Northern Ireland, this timely release offers all the available Cabinet papers of the government of the country from the establishment of the Stormont Administration in 1921 up to the introduction of direct rule in 1972.

Northern Ireland: A Divided Community 1921-1972 is an electronic, fully text-searchable publication of the Cabinet Conclusion files of the Northern Ireland Government (CAB/4) which offers for the first time, a detailed, flexible format which facilitates examination and study by researchers and students of this complex and often turbulent history. The records have been described as the best continuous record of government activity and decision-making in the world, and show "how government actually worked".

A full record of every Cabinet meeting for the duration of the Stormont administration - the devolved government of Northern Ireland, 1921-72 - is now available online.

Separate files exist for each Cabinet meeting and include minutes and memoranda. The discussions and decisions reflect the wide range of problems and activities involved in making the new administration work. Topics debated and reported in just one sample year of the Troubles (1970) include: policing, arms and explosives, social need, Prevention of Incitement to Religious Hatred, Army occupation of factories, road spiking, routing of Orange Day parades, dock strikes, law and order, riots and the roles of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC).

With access through browse indexes of organisations, subjects, places and people (Cabinet members, politicians, senior civil servants and police officers), in addition to full-text searching of the typed minutes themselves, this digital archive will be essential not only to teachers and researchers in Irish and British History, but will support students of politics, peace studies and conflict resolution. Grace McGrath, Education, Learning and Outreach Officer, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has written an introductory essay to the material, and the general editors, Dr Paseta and Dr Mulholland have added six essays on the Foundation of the State of Ulster, Sectarianism, the IRA, Civil Rights, the end of Stormont and the imposition of direct rule in 1972, and Northern Ireland during WWII - all with links directly to the original documents which act as informative introductions to specific areas of the archive.

On the release of *Northern Ireland: A Divided Community 1921-1972*, Dr Gerry Slater, Chief Executive of The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, said "The Cabinet Minutes and Memoranda series at PRONI have long been the most heavily used public records. This collaboration with Thomson Learning brings historians and students of politics a tremendous new opportunity to conduct detailed research from their own desks, and will we hope, lead to even greater global use and awareness of this unique archive."

Mark Holland, publisher of Thomson Learning EMEA Ltd, said "This new addition to Thomson's programme of digitized historical source materials brings to all researchers an unprecedented level of access to detailed primary records from one of the most compelling areas of recent history. With their specially-written introductory materials and topic surveys, our online primary source projects are intended to be particularly attractive and relevant to students and teachers."

Northern Ireland: A Divided Community 1921-1972, is part of Thomson Learning's growing Digital Collections programme. Developed in response to the changing library and learning environment, these online archives enable the electronic-based learning and teaching communities to benefit from wider access to important and prestigious primary source materials. The series already includes *The Times Digital Archive* (2002), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (2003-4), *The Making of Modern Law* (2004), *The Making of the Modern Economy: The Goldsmiths'-Kress Collection of Economic Literature 1450-1850* (2005), *Women, War and Society 1914-1918* (2005), *Testaments to the Holocaust* (2005) and *Arab-Israeli Relations 1917-1970: the Middle East Online Series One*.

Note: To review *Northern Ireland: A Divided Community 1921-1972*, go to <http://www.galeuk.com/trialsite/> and access using the following username and password:

username: xreviewer
password: stormont

Further information is available on the product information site:

<http://www.galeuk.com/stormont>

Contact Julia de Mowbray for a press pack (julia.demowbray@thomson.com)

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Notes to Editors:

About The Thomson Corporation and Thomson Learning EMEA Ltd

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The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

PRONI holds 54Km of archives and is the national archives for Northern Ireland. It is responsible for the acquisition and preservation of all public records in Northern Ireland, whether created centrally or locally, and at the same time it has acquired an impressive range of archives from private sources – those created, for example, by businesses, churches, landed estates, political parties and individuals and families including politicians.