



**Declaration of the Irish
Republic and the Ireland Act-**

1949

AFL Mark Scheme



Activity 1:

Why?

Officially part of the Commonwealth but in practice a republic
Clann na Poblachta more republican than De Valera- wanted an end to partition.
Threatened to leave the Commonwealth as a protest against partition.

Declaration of Irish Republic

Britain's Reaction

Accepted calmly because of pressure on Britain from Canada and Australia not to destroy relationships with Eire.
Resented the fact that Eire did not consult them.
Responded with the Ireland Act- this was to define relationships between two countries but also to reassure Unionists.

Republic of Ireland Act 1948

Eire officially became a republic on Easter Monday 1949.
Eire was now an independent country.

NI Unionist Reactions

Threat to the Union.
Afraid of renewed campaign to end partition.
Brooke (NI PM) regarded Republic as an aggressive state hostile to NI- wanted a law guaranteeing NI's place in the Union.

NI Nationalist Reactions

Resented the fact that they could not sit in the Dail.
Term Republic should be reserved for a 32 county Ireland.

Activity 2:

Terms

Irish Citizens would be treated as British citizens- they would not need passports or work permits etc
Favourable trading arrangements- shared benefits of Commonwealth without actually being a member.
NI to remain part of the UK unless its parliament decided other wise

Purpose

This recognised the Irish Republic and also guaranteed the position of NI within the UK- no change 'without the consent of the parliament of NI'

Ireland Act 1949

NI reactions

Reassured Unionists
Union guaranteed
Bound NI to Britain
Northern Nationalists felt isolated as their hopes for a united Ireland disappeared

Republic Reactions

Stunned surprise
Dublin government blamed Britain for sustaining partition
Republic refused to join NATO

N.B

Partition would only end when the South appeared attractive to Unionists.
Welfare state strengthened links with Britain and made re-unification unlikely.

Activity 3: Check your answers!

1. How did Unionists react to the declaration of the Irish Republic?

They were afraid that the Union was under threat and there would be renewed campaign to end partition. Brooke (NI PM) regarded the Republic as an aggressive state hostile to NI- wanted a law guaranteeing NI's place in the Union.

2. How did Britain react to the new Irish Republic?

Britain accepted the Republic calmly because of pressure on Britain from Canada and Australia not to destroy relationships with Eire. However, they resented the fact that Eire did not consult them first. Britain responded with the Ireland Act. This was to define relationships between two countries but also to reassure Unionists.

3. What was the purpose of the Ireland Act 1949?

The purpose of the Ireland act was to recognise the Irish Republic but also guarantee the position of NI within the UK as there could be no change 'without the consent of the parliament of NI'.

4. Outline the main terms of the Ireland Act.

- Irish Citizens would be treated as British citizens- they would not need passports or work permits etc.
- Favourable trading arrangements- shared benefits of Commonwealth without actually being a member.
- NI to remain part of the UK unless its parliament decided other wise

5. Why had an end to partition become even more unlikely?

Partition would only end when the South appeared attractive to Unionists. The Welfare state strengthened links with Britain and made re-unification unlikely.