

Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill

AMENDMENT

TO BE MOVED

IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

[Supplementary to the Second Marshalled List]

After Clause 46

LORD GODSON

Insert the following new Clause—

“Public history of the Troubles

- (1) Within six months of this Act being passed, the Secretary of State must commission a public history of the Troubles (‘the public history’).
- (2) The public history must take account of the lessons of the Government’s official history programme commenced in 1908, the official histories published by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and the Ministry of Defence as well as the advice given by Sir Joe Pilling and Bill Hamilton in ‘Reports on Future Plans for the Government’s Official History Programme 2009’.
- (3) In commissioning the public history, the Secretary of State must seek to achieve the objectives set out in subsections (4) to (7) in relation to the public history.
- (4) The public history should be completed and published within three years of its commissioning.
- (5) The public history should be made widely available in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland in print (hardback and paperback) as well as digital formats at a price which is affordable for the ordinary reading public.
- (6) The public history should not be undertaken as part of the Official History Programme but as part of the legacy programme, along the lines of a departmental history such as those produced in the past by the the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and the Ministry of Defence.
- (7) The public history must consider in particular the inclusion of—
 - (a) a security history of the Troubles;
 - (b) a social history of sectarian dispute and ethnic hostility in Northern Ireland;

After Clause 46 - continued

- (c) a political history of attempts to provide for the governance of Northern Ireland;
 - (d) an account of the contribution and involvement of the Republic of Ireland;
 - (e) an analysis of whether and how the key players followed and abided by their stated principles and purposes.
- (8) The Secretary of State, or a person commissioned to oversee the public history, must consider whether there should be appointed two or more public historians and the level of research and researcher support to be made available to them in order to achieve the objectives set out in this section.
- (9) The Secretary of State must consider the question of official records, following the precedents set by the Saville Inquiry –
- (a) whether the public historians will have access to all documents;
 - (b) the release programme for documents including the temporary or permanent retention of documents;
 - (c) that redactions are made as necessary.
- (10) The Secretary of State must consider on what terms the public historians should approach retired persons in the public service for interviews.
- (11) The public historians must produce regular reports to the Secretary of State on their recommendations for the public release of official documents related to the issues addressed and covered by the public history, including a final report that summarises the recommendations of the public historians.
- (12) The Secretary of State must take into account the recommendations of the public historians on the public release of documents, in general and as regards specific documents, as part of a programme of opening up the Troubles related archives to the public.
- (13) The Secretary of State must ensure that sufficient funding for the public history is provided so that the Secretary of State and the public historians are able to achieve the objectives established by this section.”

Member's explanatory statement

This new Clause requires the Secretary of State to commission a public history of the Troubles, taking into account lessons from the Government's official history programme and departmental histories, to decide the scale of resource to be applied and requiring the Secretary of State to decide the terms of access to official documents and access to retired officials. This Clause requires the Secretary of State to take into account recommendations from the public historians as to the public release of documents related to the Troubles.

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24 March 2023
