Guide to PRONI Sources

Government of Northern Ireland, 1919 – 1925
The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) is located in Titanic Quarter Belfast, within easy reach of the city centre.

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Images on front cover, left to right:
INF/7/A/5/2: Sir James Craig, Unionist MP for Mid Down, c. 1919
D1327/20/4/1: Programme, Opening of the Parliament of Northern Ireland, 22 June 1921
D4770/4: King George V and Queen Mary at the State Opening of NI Parliament, 22 June 1921
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Preface

The sources held by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) are particularly useful for researchers interested in the establishment of the Northern Ireland state and related agencies, such as the Royal Ulster Constabulary, as well as contemporary events. Recent interest in the Centenary of Northern Ireland is related to a wider story, that of the Decade of Centenaries, which has focused attention on the events of 1912-22. It is hoped that this Guide will contribute to further research and understanding of governance and civil administration in the north of Ireland from 1919-25.

There are a wide range of sources available in PRONI which cover the period from 1919-25. PRONI, which opened in 1924, was created primarily as a repository for the records of the new Northern Ireland Government. In practice, the Office has always had a wider remit. Many older official records have been transferred to PRONI, including records of the courts and local administration in the northern area. PRONI has also accepted records from private individuals, businesses and organisations.

Some transcriptions of records from the period have been reproduced in a PRONI resource pack, Ireland 1900-1925: Crisis, War and Revolution. Although this resource was designed for ‘A’ level study, it will be of interest to anyone exploring this period in our history.

The following guide lists the principal class of records which can be used for researching the government of Northern Ireland from 1919-25. Further details can be found in PRONI’s eCatalogue.
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Ulster Television archive
Digital Film archive
Interim Administration, 1919 to June 1921

Although the Government of Northern Ireland was established in 1921, it was clear from the end of 1919 that a separate administration would be formed in Belfast. PRONI holds some government records relating to the administration of the six counties from before June 1921.

AUS, Assistant Under Secretary’s Office, Belfast, 1920-21

In September 1920, Sir Ernest Clark was appointed Assistant Under Secretary for Ireland based in Belfast. His office (known as the Chief Secretary’s Office, Belfast Branch) was responsible for the administration of the six counties which became Northern Ireland, including control of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and the newly created Ulster Special Constabulary (USC). Clark was also involved with creating the infrastructure of the new Northern Ireland Government and became Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Finance and Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service in 1921.

The main record classes are:

AUS/1 Registered general file series, dealing with the establishment of the Assistant Under Secretary’s (AUS) Office and the various functions performed by the AUS, including RIC and USC administration. AUS/1/55 lists candidates of the 1921 general election.

AUS/2 Copies of reports to Dublin Castle by Departments in response to a circular regarding administrative changes necessitated by the Government of Ireland Act 1920.

PM/1, Department of Prime Minister, Correspondence, 1st Series, 1919-21

Correspondence of Sir James Craig (later 1st Viscount Craigavon of Stormont), 1919-21. This includes Craig’s correspondence during the period when he held the posts of Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Pensions, January 1919 to April 1920, and Parliamentary and Financial Secretary in the Admiralty, April 1920 to March 1921. It includes material relating to his roles as a Member of Parliament (MP) for East Down and Prime Minister designate of Northern Ireland. Much of the correspondence is concerned with patronage including applications for appointments in the new Northern Ireland administration.
CAB/5, Records of Cabinet Secretariat, Unregistered subject files, 1920-22

While CAB/5 consists of only seven files, included in these are several papers of lasting historical value. This is exemplified in the papers contained in CAB/5/1, which detail the ideas and manoeuvrings that lay behind the establishment of the Northern state. The file also contains papers relating to Craig's personal appraisal of the political situation. In that they deal with the financial arrangements associated with the establishment of the Northern state, these papers also complement other PRONI files such as CAB/9A and FIN/11.

FIN/18/1, Ministry of Finance, Treasury Division 'A' Registry files, files of 1921

These official files for the 1920-21 period originate with the Chief Secretary’s Office, Belfast Branch (see also AUS). They would have transferred to the Ministry of Finance when Sir Ernest Clarke became Permanent Secretary in 1921. Subjects covered include: the Special Constabulary, liaison with the Royal Irish Constabulary, civil unrest, and the establishment of the new Northern Ireland administration, including staffing and financial arrangements between Northern Ireland and the UK Government.

The Government of Northern Ireland, 1921-25

The Government of Northern Ireland was established in 1921 under the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920. The new structures mirrored those of the United Kingdom. The Parliament of Northern Ireland consisted of an elected House of Commons with 52 members and a Senate of 24 members. The Crown was represented by a Governor, whose role was largely ceremonial. The Executive was headed by a Prime Minister and Cabinet, drawn from members of the Parliament.

The new administration consisted of six departments or ministries plus the Prime Minister’s department. The new ministries took over functions previously performed by various boards and departments based in Dublin. Records relating to these functions were transferred from Dublin, over a period of time, so some of the records held under the classes below date from before 1921.

The following are the main record classes for the various government departments and other organisations.
**CAB, Records of Cabinet Secretariat**

The role of the Cabinet Secretariat (which was technically part of the Prime Minister’s Department) was to coordinate the work of the various departments and to act as a channel of communication between the Northern Ireland Government and the UK Government (usually referred to as the Imperial Government). It was under the control of the Secretary to the Cabinet, Wilfrid Spender who became head of the Civil Service in 1925. The main classes are:

**CAB/4 Cabinet Conclusions**

Records of the meetings of the Northern Ireland Cabinet. These include a short summary of the points discussed and conclusions reached, along with copies of supporting papers sent to the cabinet for consideration. No record was kept of the discussions at Cabinet meetings. The Cabinet usually meet every two weeks. A digital version of the series from 1921-72 is available in the Search Room.

**CAB/5 Unregistered subject files**

A small group of files date from 1920 covering the creation of the Ulster Special Constabulary, political developments and the financial arrangements for the new administration.

**CAB/6 Unregistered subject files**

These files date for the most part from 1921 and 1922, with a few as late as 1925. They cover the political developments of partition, security and inter-communal violence, the development of government services and relations between the NI administration and the London and Dublin Governments.

**CAB/8 Registered subject files, 1st series**

These files relate to the work of the Cabinet in the early years of the Northern Ireland state. The papers are classified under the Ministries from which they originated. Of interest are those papers that are concerned with the security situation in the province. **CAB/8B/11** is a file on the Cushendall incident of 23 June 1922, when three Catholics were shot by a patrol of the ‘A’ Special force of the Ulster Special Constabulary. This file complements other PRONI files on the incident (see **CAB/4/50; CAB/6/91** and **HA/20/A/2-15**).
CAB/9 Subject files, 2nd series

Most of the files date from 1924 onwards but there is some earlier material. As with CAB/8 the files are arranged by the government department who originated the correspondence or by subject. The following sections are of particular significance for this period:

- CAB/9/A: Ministry of Finance files
- CAB/9/B: Ministry of Home Affairs files
- CAB/9/C: Ministry of Labour files
- CAB/9/D: Ministry of Education files
- CAB/9/E: Ministry of Agriculture files
- CAB/9/F: Ministry of Commerce files
- CAB/9/G: Military and Police files
- CAB/9/R: Imperial Government files
- CAB/9/U: Irish Free State files
- CAB/9/W: Malicious Injuries files
- CAB/9/X: Kidnapping and Boycott files
- CAB/9/Z: Boundary Commission files

Boundary Commission files include CAB/9/Z/8: Correspondence with Mr Winston Churchill, Dominions Secretary and Mr James Craig, 1922-26; and CAB/9/Z/6/1: London Conference, 1924. See LA/34/3/AG/1 for representations made by Dungannon Urban District Council to the Boundary Commission against inclusion in the Irish Free State, 1925.

CAB/11 Cabinet Secretariat Telegrams

Copies of telegrams, mostly between Sir James Craig, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Sir Hamar Greenwood, Chief Secretary for Ireland, Winston Churchill, Colonial Secretary, and senior officials dealing with the security situation in Ulster and Northern Ireland Government relations with the Irish Provisional government, February to August 1922. The telegrams also reveal the on-going power struggle between the Northern Prime Minister, James Craig, and the Irish finance minister and commander-in-chief of the Irish Army, Michael Collins.
PM, Department of Prime Minister

The PM class contains the correspondence and other papers of the Prime Minister, the Secretary to the Cabinet and other senior officials. Sir James Craig (later Viscount Craigavon) was Prime Minister from May 1921 until his death in 1940. Wilfrid Spender served as Secretary to the Cabinet until 1925 when he became Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Finance. The Assistant Secretary C H Blackmore acted as Private Secretary to the Prime Minister and succeeded Spender as Secretary to the Cabinet.

There is considerable overlap in the papers between Craig’s official and political roles as Prime Minister and head of the Ulster Unionist Party. Craig prided himself on his accessibility and was prepared to receive deputations and respond to correspondence on a wide range of issues. The papers therefore cover social and economic issues as well as dealing with political developments. The main classes for this period are as follows:

PM/2 Correspondence, 2nd Series

These files are arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent. They relate mainly to people looking for practical assistance, including jobs or airing grievances. Similar correspondence from those looking for employment in the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) or USC can be found under PM/12.

PM/4 ‘PM1’ file series, 1st Series; PM/6 ‘PF’ files; and PM/7 ‘SF’ files

These files are organised by subject and year, including: the Prime Minister’s engagements, charitable and political subscriptions, texts of speeches, patronage, and propaganda.

PM/8 Correspondence of Secretary and Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet

PM/8/1 Correspondence of Sir Wilfred Spender

This series includes personal and political correspondence. Spender’s role was highly political, both as a close personal adviser to Craig and as a senior figure in the Unionist ranks. He accompanied Craig to negotiations with Sinn Féin leaders in London in 1921, and with Michael Collins, head of the provisional government, in Dublin in 1922. While his advice was not always taken, he played a significant political role in the early years of Northern Ireland’s existence.
Blackmore served as Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet (1921 - 1925) and Deputy Clerk of the Northern Ireland Privy Council (1921 - 1925). A close confidant of Craig, he was one of the architects of the Northern Ireland state and succeeded Sir Wilfred Spender as Secretary to the Cabinet (1925 - P1929) and Clerk of the Privy Council (1925 - 1939). Blackmore's posts did not carry a heavy workload, and much of his time was taken up with formal state functions and attending to the needs of Craig and his household.

**PM/9 Correspondence between Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretariat**

This series includes letters between Sir James Craig and Wilfrid Spender and other members of the Cabinet Secretariat, mostly written while Sir James was absent from Belfast, and keeping him informed of developments.

**PM/10 Miscellaneous Files**

This series of files includes correspondence relating to awards made to members of the RIC and RUC, and correspondence relating to Sir James Craig's border tour in October 1923.

**PM/11 Miscellaneous Unregistered Papers**

This series includes some important material on political developments, particularly PM/11/2 which contains correspondence between Sir James Craig and Michael Collins, 1921-22.

**PM/15 Press Cuttings (Government Information Office)**

Press cuttings, 1918-21, including Ulster and the Home Rule Bill, America and the Irish Problem, and other matters affecting Ulster.

**FIN, Ministry of Finance**

The Ministry of Finance for Northern Ireland was responsible for administering the financial business of the Government of Northern Ireland. Its functions in this regard corresponded to those discharged by H M Treasury in the rest of the United Kingdom. It also administered the business of the Government of Northern Ireland in connection with the taxes which the Parliament of Northern Ireland had power to impose. In addition, the Ministry was
responsible for the recruitment and regulation of civil servants and the Permanent Secretary was head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. A range of other functions came under the Ministry including: Public Works and Buildings, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), the General Registry Office and the Land Purchase Commission.

As nearly all items of public expenditure were referred to the Ministry of Finance for approval, the FIN files, and FIN/10 in particular, cover all aspects of government activity. The files also cover in detail the establishment of the machinery of government, recruitment of civil servants and procurement of office space. The most significant classes are:

**FIN/11 Colwyn Committee minutes and papers**
The 'Colwyn Committee', officially known as the Northern Ireland Arbitration Committee, which was established in 1923 and submitted its final report in 1924, played a key role in defining the financial relationship between Stormont and Westminster. This class contains the minutes, working papers and briefs for meetings of the Committee, between February 1923 and September 1924, and includes a copy of the final report of the Committee (see also FIN/30/B/C and FIN/41).

**FIN/18 Treasury Division 'A' Registry files**
The FIN/18 class covers the full range of responsibilities given to the Northern Ireland Government, as financing them was the central concern of Treasury Division. Nonetheless, the class has one obvious limitation, namely the fact that the departments in approaching the Ministry of Finance argued the best case they could. Much of the policy formulation papers will only be found in the archives of the different departments.

Topics covered in the class include: Government Staffing and Accommodation; the Imperial Contribution (the annual amount paid by the Northern Ireland Government to Westminster for 'imperial services'; the Joint Exchequer Board which allocated to Northern Ireland its share of the United Kingdom revenue; the Colwyn Committee (see FIN/11); the establishment and financing of the USC and RUC; the administration of prisons; support to industry; unemployment relief; assistance to agriculture; the boycott of goods made in and transported from Belfast, education and the administration of educational establishments.
**FIN/19 Works Division 'B' Registry registered files**
The files of Works Division cover the maintenance, equipment and provision of accommodation for Northern Ireland Government Departments, the Supreme Court, the Governor, the RUC, Prisons, Courthouses, etc.

**FIN/26 Joint Exchequer Board files**
The function of the Joint Exchequer Board was to determine the amount of reserved revenue, and the cost of reserved services attributable to Northern Ireland on an annual basis, together with the amount of the Imperial contribution.

**FIN/30 Private Office**
The Private Office material includes correspondence of the Minister of Finance (H M Pollock, 1921-37) and the Permanent Secretary and Head of the Civil Service (Sir Ernest Clark, 1921-25). The following classes contain important material for the period before 1925:

**FIN/30/B/C** Minutes and correspondence relating to the Arbitration Committee for financial questions between the governments of United Kingdom and Northern Ireland also known as the Colwyn Committee (see FIN/11).

**FIN/30/F/A** Miscellaneous correspondence of Sir Ernest Clark.

**FIN/30/F/C** Miscellaneous correspondence and papers, including material relating to the negotiations between Sir James Craig and Michael Collins in 1922.

**HA, Ministry of Home Affairs**
The Ministry of Home Affairs responsibilities covered two main areas: law and justice and local government services. This included: the administration of the RUC and USC; prisons, internment camps and training schools; court services; appointments of sheriffs, magistrates, justices of the peace and children's guardians; control of firearms, explosives and dangerous drugs; the exercise of the prerogative of mercy; licensing laws; roads and bridges; ferries; elections and franchise; supervision of local government, including poor relief, public health and housing.
HA/4 Police Administration Files

This series begins in 1922, and it deals with all aspects of police administration. The series is divided into four sections, all of which deal with the day-to-day administration of the police.

HA/4/1 Police Administration 'P' and 'PM' files

These files cover establishment issues including: design and supply of uniforms; provision of barracks and other accommodation; transport supply of arms and ammunition; and arrangements for the mobilisation of the B and C1 Special Constabulary. There are also files relating to compensation payments to individuals or their families killed or injured, kidnapping incidents and some material on recruitment to the RUC.

HA/5 General 'H' Files

The majority of these files relate to the period 1922-1924. There are a number of general files about internment, including files about the prison ship Argenta. In addition, there are many files relating to prosecutions for firearms offences, and the possession of seditious literature, usually banned newspapers and pamphlets, many of which are contained in the files. Also included are investigations into sectarian murders and kidnappings, police reports on incidents and outrages, and enquiries into the behaviour of the 'B' Specials. Other files in the series relate to such varied topics as the issue of wireless licences, and applications from foreign nationals to live in Northern Ireland ('Aliens' files).

HA/5/1493-2531 Internment files

Internment without trial was introduced in May 1922 as a means of containing individuals against whom there was insufficient evidence for criminal charges to be brought. Persons were interned because they were 'suspected of being about to act in a manner prejudicial to the preservation of the peace and the maintenance of order in Northern Ireland'. They could be kept interned 'until further order' but were able to petition an Advisory Committee for their release. Many were released after assurances of loyalty and on provision of bail. All the internees of 1922 and 1923 were released in 1924, but a small number were subsequently re-interned for a shorter period.
Files on individual internees contain papers about their arrest, a detention order, details of the activities which made internment desirable (ranging from support for Sinn Féin to active membership of the Irish Republican Army (IRA)), an internment order, petitions for release, reports to the Advisory Committee, medical reports, applications by family members for visits, and papers about conditions for release. Many files contain examples of 'seditious material', including Republican newspapers and leaflets, correspondence, and papers relating to membership of the IRA.

**HA/9 Prison Branch 'PI' Files**

The Ministry of Home Affairs became responsible for the administration of prisons through the General Prisons Board after the passing of the Government of Ireland Act 1920.

**HA/9/1 Prisoner 'H' files, Prison Branch 'PI' Files**

The files are dated from 1921 until 1938 and deal with named prisoners and the crimes for which they were convicted. Those crimes include rape, murder, possession of explosives or firearms and obtaining money by false pretences.

**HA/9/2 Prisons/Prisoner 'PI' files**

Includes many general files relating to the administration and staffing of Northern Ireland prisons, including some material for Londonderry Prison.

**HA/10 Reformatory and Industrial Schools Branch 'W' Files**

These files cover individual reformatory and industrial schools for example, Shamrock Lodge Reformatory for Protestant Girls, Nazareth Lodge Industrial School and Balmoral Training School. Inspectors’ reports, corporal punishment, juvenile delinquency and the teaching of religion are some of the subjects that are covered. Of particular interest is a series of files that deal with individual named detainees referred to as inmates and the schools and dates in which they were detained.
**HA/11 Establishment Division 'EG' Files**

This class relates to staff organisation and administration of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The majority of the files in this class deal with the staff organisation of the Ministry and its divisions.

**HA/20 Ministry of Home Affairs Private Office**

Papers of the Minister of Home Affairs (Dawson Bates, 1921-43) and Permanent Secretary.

**HA/20/A/1 Minister’s Office Unregistered Subject Files**

Miscellaneous correspondence including cabinet papers and papers relating to disturbances in Belfast.

**HA/20/A/2 Cushendall Inquiry**

These files relate to an incident in Cushendall, County Antrim in June 1922 when three civilians were killed by members of the Ulster Special Constabulary. Included are papers relating to the inquiries held by the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland governments and includes witness depositions, police statements, court hearings for compensation claims, and report of the incident.

**HA/20/B/2 Secretary's Office Unregistered Subject Files**

This series of files includes material that stretches back to before the foundation of the Northern Ireland state in 1921. Of particular interest are files that cover the years 1892 to 1912 that were taken from the Chief Secretary's Office in Dublin. Several files relate to the RUC and the USC, and one file of interest compares social conditions in Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State.

**HA/23 'PQ' Parliamentary Question Files**

The class listing Parliamentary Questions that were submitted for answer by the Minister of Home Affairs.
HA/27 Royal Ulster Constabulary
Included in this class are various administrative files including Inspector General’s Circulars, barracks maintenance registers, clothing and stores registers, and cash registers.

HA/32 Secret Files
This file series, beginning in 1921, covers a wide range of subject matter including: reports on incidents, i.e. murders, kidnapping, etc.; Reports on the shooting of Special Constables at Clones in 1922; internment and the administration of the prison ship Argenta, 1922-1924; postal and press censorship; Exclusion Orders on named individuals; the work of the Boundary Commission, 1922-1925 (HA/32/1/16-25); the establishment of the 'C' Special Constabulary, 1922-1925; the prohibition of meetings, assemblies and processions in various districts.

HA/47 Committee of Inquiry on Police Re-organisation in Northern Ireland
The Inquiry was instigated by the Minister of Home Affairs, Sir Dawson Bates, on 31 January 1922 and reported on 22 March 1922. The evidence in the these files was not published, the Committee restricting itself to the publication of a Command Paper, namely the Interim Report of the Departmental Committee of Inquiry on Police Reorganisation in Northern Ireland, 1922 (Cmd. 1).

AG, Ministry of Agriculture
The Ministry of Agriculture was established under the Government of Ireland Act 1920, and it began its operations in 1921. Its main functions and responsibilities were: the improvement and development of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, dairy, breeding livestock, home and cottage industries, the growing and preparation of flax, distributing agricultural produce, collating statistics and overseeing agricultural education. The Ministry also reviewed wages in the agriculture sector, carried out research projects and controlled and supervised ordnance and geological surveys.

AG/1 Press Cuttings on 1921 Treaty
Press cuttings dealing with the 'Terms of Agreement between the Imperial Parliament and Ireland' (The Treaty), 1921-1923. This comprehensive collection of cuttings was taken from a wide range of Irish Newspapers, including Northern Whig, Irish Independent, Freeman's
LAB, Ministry of Labour

The Ministry's responsibilities included: employment and insurance; industrial relations; the promotion of business through a trade board secretariat; administration of employment exchanges; schemes for disabled ex-servicemen; unemployment relief schemes; the administration of the Factories Acts; Workmen's Compensation Acts; and the National Insurance Acts.

ED, Ministry of Education

Responsible for the elementary and higher education systems, the distribution of state grants and the training of teachers.

COM, Ministry of Commerce

Responsible for: commercial intelligence; trade exhibitions; economic development; the regulation of railways, canals, harbours electricity undertakings and fisheries; registration of companies, trade unions building societies, etc.

GOV, Governor of Northern Ireland

The Irish Free State (Consequential Provisions) Act 1922 created the office of Governor of Northern Ireland. The Act transferred to the Governor the powers previously exercised in relation to Northern Ireland by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The Governor represented the Crown in Northern Ireland and, as such, exercised the powers of the Crown with regard to the Northern Ireland Parliament. The Governor's role was primarily ceremonial. The most important and visible aspects was to open, prorogue and dissolve Parliament. The Duke of Abercorn was Governor from 1922 to 1945.

INF/7, Northern Ireland Information Office, Photographs

Collection of photographs, mainly from contemporary newspapers, of personalities and events.
Photographs include: Northern Ireland House of Commons, June 1921; Northern Ireland Cabinet, Stormont Castle, 1922; Rt Hon. Sir James Craig, Bt, DL, MP, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland.

**INF/7/A/5, Northern Ireland Government and Politicians**

This series includes the minutes and papers of the Provisional Government of Ireland Committee, the UK Cabinet Committee, chaired by Winston Churchill, responsible for Irish affairs, 1922.

**HO/5, Home Office, London 'CIM' Files**

This series includes the minutes and papers of the Provisional Government of Ireland Committee, the UK Cabinet Committee, chaired by Winston Churchill, responsible for Irish affairs, 1922.

**CUS, Custom and Excise Records**

A customs barrier between Northern Ireland and Irish Free State came into effect on 1 April 1923. Records relating to what became known as the Northern Ireland Land Boundary can be found in the CUS class. This includes correspondence, reports and records of seizures.

**MIC523, Imperial Secretary to Governor of Northern Ireland**

From December 1922 to April 1924 communication between the governments of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland was maintained by the Irish Branch of the Home Office. From 1922 there was also an office of the Imperial Secretary to the Governor of Northern Ireland, through whom business was channelled and who acted as adviser to the Governor on reserved matters. The Imperial Secretary was S G Tallents, who had previously acted as Private Secretary to Lord FitzAlan-Howard of Derwent, the last Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The office was abolished in 1926.

Files include papers on the establishment of the Registry of Deeds and the Principal Probate Registry in Belfast, railways, legal and parliamentary matters, police and army questions, the Irish Boundary Commission and the Pensions Appeal Tribunal. There are also some inherited papers from the Chief Secretary and the Royal Irish Constabulary.
Ulster Special Constabulary

PRONI holds records relating to the Ulster Special Constabulary (USC) within a number of record classes. These include records within the Ministry of Finance FIN/18; Ministry of Home Affairs HA/4, HA/5 and HA/32; Northern Ireland Cabinet Papers, CAB/4 and CAB/9; and administrative and personnel files relating to Ulster Special Constabulary Papers USC. We estimate there are approximately 150 USC administration files relating to the 1920s to be classified, catalogued and reviewed. The files have not been released as they have not been sensitivity reviewed in accordance with Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation.

Northern Ireland Parliament

Several records of the period 1921-25, relating to the Parliament of Northern Ireland, are still to be catalogued. These include: a register of elections to Commons and Senate; Commons daily attendance sheets; Signed Bills; ledgers showing progress of bills; correspondence with the Speaker and Committee Books. For further information on consulting these records, please email: access@communities-ni.gov.uk.

Papers of Individuals and Organisations

As well as records generated by government departments and agencies, PRONI holds the papers of a number of individuals and organisations who played prominent roles during this period. Some of the more significant are listed below.

D1022, Papers of Sir Ernest Clark

Sir Ernest Clark (1864-51), was the first Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. After a career in the Civil Service in London and South Africa he was appointed to the newly created office of Assistant Under-Secretary for Ireland in 1920. From 1921-25 he was Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Finance and Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. He was also a member of the Joint Exchequer Board of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. His papers include a number of files relating to his time in Northern Ireland.
D921, Papers of Messrs Collins & Collins
Legal papers and correspondence of Messrs Collins & Collins, Newry, Co. Down. The firm was established at 5 Hill Street in 1910, the senior associate being John Henry Collins. The majority of the material relates to the period from the War of Independence, 1918-1921, and to the abandonment of the Boundary Commission in 1925. John H. Collins was a supporter of Home Rule prior to the Easter 1916 Rebellion, thereafter becoming an active 'Sinn Féiner' in the South Down and South Armagh area. He was the defence counsel for numerous IRA prisoners during the War of Independence and was a staunch supporter of Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins. After the Truce (July 1921) and subsequent Anglo-Irish Treaty, Collins sided with the Pro-Treaty party. He was appointed by the North Eastern Boundary Commission as the co-ordinator for the South Down, South Armagh and Newry submission to the Commission. He was elected to the Northern Ireland Parliament in April 1925 on a 'Smash Partition' mandate.

T2257, Joseph Devlin papers
Joseph Devlin was an Irish journalist and influential Nationalist politician. He was a Member of Parliament for the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) in the House of Commons and later a Nationalist Party MP in the Parliament of Northern Ireland. This collection includes a small amount of copy correspondence, mainly postcards sent between 1919 and 1923.

D2991, Cahir Healy papers
Cahir Healy (1877-1970) was a Nationalist politician who represented Fermanagh and Tyrone in the Westminster and Stormont parliaments. This collection contains Healy's political correspondence 1924-1970; general correspondence relating mainly to his historical and literary activities and constituency matters, 1900-1969; together with autobiographical accounts of his early life and political career, including his internment on board the prison ship Argenta, 1922-1924; and scrapbooks, notebooks, pamphlets and newspaper cuttings.

Please note, PRONI must contact the depositor on your behalf to request permission for documents from this collection to be reproduced.
D2720, Patrick O'Neill papers
Correspondence, election papers and receipts of Patrick O'Neill, Crown Hotel, Warrenpoint, Co Down, a Nationalist MP for the Mourne Division, County Down, relating to the General Election of 1921.

D1327 & D4503, Ulster Unionist Council papers
Formed in 1905, the Ulster Unionist Council was the main coordinating body for Unionists in Ulster. The collection includes material relating to the Council itself, local Unionist associations and affiliated bodies such as the Unionist Clubs, the Ulster Volunteer Force, the Ulster Unionist Labour Association and the Unionist Parliamentary parties at Westminster and Stormont. It also contains the correspondence of the Council's Secretary (Dawson Bates, 1905-21 then Wilson Hungerford 1921-41), printed material and election papers.

Within these papers, D1327/20/4/1 is the original Programme of the Opening of the Parliament of Northern Ireland on 22 June 1921.

D1098 & D2688, Ulster Women's Unionist Council papers
Formed in 1911, the Ulster Women’s Unionist Council supported the Unionist campaign against Home Rule and after 1918 canvased Women votes. The collection includes the minutes, correspondence and other papers of the Council, and papers relating to local branches.

D1507, Carson Papers
Edward Carson was the leading figure in Irish Unionism from 1910 until 1921 when Sir James Craig became leader of the Ulster Unionists. His papers relating to Irish affairs are listed chronologically D1507/A. The diaries of his second wife Ruby D1507/C provide an interesting commentary on the period.

D1415 & T3775, Craigavon Papers
Personal papers and some political correspondence of James Craig, later Viscount Craigavon, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland from 1921 to 1940. Craigavon's political papers (T3775) are full of important documentation and information relating to the turbulent period in Irish
history in the early decades of the twentieth century. They represent a very significant complement to the other Craigavon Papers in PRONI's custody (D1415) which do not contain any letters of a political nature. Amongst the most important are 28 letters, 1911-33, from Sir Edward Carson, discussing practical arrangements and political developments during the years of opposition to Home Rule and the early years of the Northern Ireland state.

**D1415/D/2** is the Visitors Book for Stormont Castle, including signatures of individuals at the 1st Cabinet Meeting (4 July 1922) and the 1st Privy Council Meeting (24 October 1922).

**D1415/D/3** is the Book of Signatures of all the guests who attended the official luncheon given by the Prime Minister on the occasion of the State Opening of the First Parliament of Northern Ireland, 22nd June 1921, by King George V.

An important correspondent was David Lloyd George who wrote to Craig on a number of occasions between 1917 and 1921; he also invited Craig and De Valera to a conference in London to find a settlement, 24 June 1921. For this same crucial period, 1921-1922, there are 'personal and secret' letters to Craig from Sir Hamar Greenwood, Chief Secretary for Ireland, pertaining to: a secret meeting between Craig and De Valera about terrorist outrages; papers about Craig's various meetings with De Valera, May-June 1921, and his subsequent agreement with Michael Collins in January 1922, including the original of that agreement.

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**D1295 & MIC559, Spender Papers**

Wilfrid Spender was an army officer who resigned his commission over his opposition to Home Rule and moved to Belfast in 1912 to help organise the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). After service in the War he returned to Ulster, initially to reactivate the UVF and then to act as an advisor to Sir James Craig. He became Secretary to the Northern Ireland Cabinet in 1921 and Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service in 1925. He played a significant part in the establishment of the Northern Ireland state, his role going beyond that of a traditional civil servant. The topics covered are wide-ranging, including the following subjects: the Imperial Economic Conference; Civil Service estimates; the organisation of the Great Northern
Railway; the composition of the Privy Council for Northern Ireland; the Ulster Special Constabulary; and the Boundary Commission.

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**D640, Crawford Papers**

Colonel Fred Crawford was a prominent Unionist activist. He played a leading role in the UVF gunning exploit in 1914 and after the War played a leading role in Unionist politics. His letters and diaries for the period 1920-2 provide a vivid picture of events in Belfast.

**D627, Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery papers**

Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery, 1844-1924, was a County Tyrone land owner who was active in the Liberal Unionist Association and the Irish Landowners' Convention. Between 1918 and 1922 there is correspondence with prominent individuals in Irish political life on the Unionist side.

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**D3099 & D4567, Londonderry Papers**

Charles Stewart, 7th Marquess of Londonderry, was a major landowner in Ireland and Great Britain. In 1921, he was appointed a member of the Northern Ireland Senate and Education Minister. He introduced an Education Act in 1923 which attempted to reduce the role of the churches in the school system. Some key elements of the Act were changed in 1925. Londonderry resigned in 1926 and subsequently pursued a career in British politics.

**D989, Irish Unionist Alliance papers**

Papers of the Irish Unionist Alliance and associated organisation including the Southern Irish Loyalist Relief Association, including correspondence and publications. The IUA was the main representative body for Irish Unionists outside Ulster.
The 1920 Act was intended to partition Ireland into two self-governing polities: the six north-eastern counties were to form Northern Ireland, while the larger part of the country was to form Southern Ireland. Both territories were to remain part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and provision was made for their future reunification through a Council of Ireland. The 1920 Act was passed by the British parliament in November 1920, received royal assent on 23 December 1920, and came into force on 3 May 1921.

The Anti-Partition League was formed in 1919 after the Irish Unionist Alliance (IUA) (see D989) split over the participation of Ulster in the movement. Lord Midleton, the IUA chairman, and his supporters resigned and formed the League. The Anti-Partition League was directed more against partition than Home Rule and thus played a significant role in shaping the Government of Ireland Act of 1920. The organisation was operational until 1922.

Photographs of individuals and locations associated with the State Opening of the Parliament of Northern Ireland in June 1921, in the City Hall, Belfast.

An agreement between PRONI, Northern Ireland Screen and ITV has resulted in the bulk of the UTV Film and Tape Archive being stored at PRONI. The following two clips provide, in part, later reflections on the period 1921-25:

D4677/3/3/6/3/1, Understanding NI – The Historical Evidence
An overview of the recent history of the island of Ireland, including partition, World War One, early political leaders, and the start of the Troubles. (Duration: [00:39:05]; Colour; Sound; Broadcast).

D4677/5/1/16/1/1, Our Century - The Early Years
Programme looking at life in Northern Ireland over the Twentieth Century. This episode focuses on the early years of the century. (Duration: 00:27:11; colour; sound; broadcast).
Please note, PRONI must contact the depositor on your behalf to request permission for films from this collection to be reproduced.

**Digital Film archive**

Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive (DFA) is a free public access resource located in the Search Room at PRONI. Constantly updated and expanding, the DFA contains hundreds of hours of moving image titles, spanning from 1897 to the present day. Clips from the period 1921 include:

**Ulster Parliament assembles, 9 June 1921**
[https://digitalfilmarchive.net/media/ulsters-parliament-assembles-67](https://digitalfilmarchive.net/media/ulsters-parliament-assembles-67)

**Northern Ireland Parliamentary Representatives, 1 May 1921**
[https://digitalfilmarchive.net/media/northern-ireland-parliamentary-representatives-59](https://digitalfilmarchive.net/media/northern-ireland-parliamentary-representatives-59)

**An interview with Lady Carson, wife of the late Ulster Unionist leader, Lord Edward Carson**
[https://digitalfilmarchive.net/media/lady-carson-interviewed-by-ivor-mills-263](https://digitalfilmarchive.net/media/lady-carson-interviewed-by-ivor-mills-263)

**Lord Basil Brookeborough speaks to William McGookin on a myriad of matters including his memories of 1921**
[https://digitalfilmarchive.net/media/an-interview-with-lord-brookeborough-3953](https://digitalfilmarchive.net/media/an-interview-with-lord-brookeborough-3953)