



RATHGAEL HOUSE
BALLOO ROAD
BANGOR
CO. DOWN

E611/92

Rev Dr R T W McCrea MP
The Manse
10 Highfield Road
MAGHERAFELT
Co Londonderry
BT45 5JD

3th September 1992

Dear Willie,

You wrote to me on 17 August 1992 regarding a letter from the Students' Union of Queen's University to graduates, concerning the playing of the national anthem at the University's graduation ceremonies. I am now in a position to respond.

I should, firstly, point out that Queen's University, as an autonomous and independent institution, is entirely responsible for the conduct of its own affairs. However, I have made enquiries of the Vice-Chancellor about the issuing of the Students' Union letter and he has advised me that, in accordance with custom, the Students' Union has always been given broad scope to regulate its own affairs within the overall framework of the University's Charter, Statutes and Regulations.

Under the terms of the University's Statutes, the Students' Union Council has the following functions:

1. to promote the interests of the students and to represent them in all matters affecting their interests;
2. to afford a recognised means of communication between the students and the Authorities of the University;

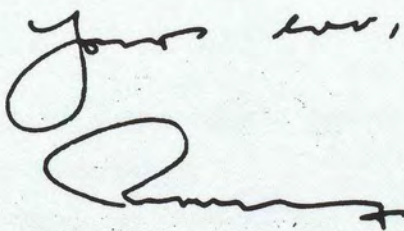
3. to promote social intercourse and unity of spirit and feeling among the students; and

4. to bring the students of the University into closer relations with the students of other universities.

In undertaking its functions the Students' Union has a responsibility to represent all of the University's students on a variety of matters and in the University's view it is not unreasonable for the Union to contact its members on issues which its elected students' representatives feel are relevant to them.

As regards the playing of the national anthem at graduation, the Vice-Chancellor has made it clear that this is part of the University's tradition for such ceremonies as Her Majesty the Queen is the "Visitor" of the University, who through the Board of Visitors, exercises ultimate supervision over the affairs of the University.

I hope this will clarify the position for your constituents.



JEREMY HANLEY MP
Minister for Education

FROM: J A Coote

Higher Education Branch

DATE: 30 September 1992

cc Miss Mills

TO: PS/Mr Hanley

PLAYING OF NATIONAL ANTHEM AT QUB GRADUATION CEREMONIES

I refer to my minute of 15 September regarding the above matter.

The Vice-Chancellor of The Queen's University of Belfast has now replied to my letter of 4th September, and a copy of his letter is attached together with a draft reply to Dr McCrea.

I should, firstly, point out that Queen's University, as an autonomous and self-governing institution, is entirely responsible for the conduct of its own affairs. I have made enquiries of the Vice-Chancellor about the issuing of the Students' Union letter and he has advised me that, in accordance with the University's Statutes, the Students' Union has always been given broad scope to regulate its own affairs within the overall framework of the University's Charter, Statutes and regulations.

JOHN COOTE

Under the terms of the University's Statutes, the Students' Union Council has the following functions:

- (1) to promote the interests of the students and to represent them in all matters affecting their interests;
- (2) to afford a recognised means of communication between the students and the Authorities of the University;
- (3) to promote social intercourse and unity of spirit and feeling among the students; and
- (4) to bring the students of the University into closer relations with the students of other universities.

In undertaking its functions the Students' Union has a responsibility to

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Rev Dr R T W McCrea MP

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September 1992

You wrote to me on 17th August 1992 regarding a letter from the Students' Union of Queen's University to graduates, concerning the playing of the national anthem at the University's graduation ceremonies. I am now in a position to respond.

I should, firstly, point out that Queen's University, as an autonomous and independent institution, is entirely responsible for the conduct of its own affairs. However, I have made enquiries of the Vice-Chancellor about the issuing of the Students' Union letter and he has advised me that, in accordance with custom, the Students' Union has always been given broad scope to regulate its own affairs within the overall framework of the University's Charter, Statutes and regulations.

Under the terms of the University's Statutes, the Students' Union Council has the following functions:

- (1) to promote the interests of the students and to represent them in all matters affecting their interests;
- (2) to afford a recognised means of communication between the students and the Authorities of the University;
- (3) to promote social intercourse and unity of spirit and feeling among the students; and
- (4) to bring the students of the University into closer relations with the students of other universities.

In undertaking its functions the Students' Union has a responsibility to

The Queen's University of Belfast

represent all of the University's students on a variety of matters and in the University's view it is not unreasonable for the Union to contact its members on issues which its elected students' representatives feel are relevant to them.

As regards the playing of the national anthem at graduation, the Vice-Chancellor has made it clear that this ^{is} part of the University's tradition for such ceremonies, as Her Majesty the Queen is the "Visitor" of the University, who through the Board of Visitors, exercises ultimate supervision over the affairs of the University.

I hope this will clarify the position for your constituents.

Dear Mr Coats

I refer to your letter of 4 September 1992 in connection with the question raised by the Reverend Canon with Mr Hanley on the subject of the circular letter sent out to the Presidents of the Students' Union about the playing of the national anthem at graduation ceremonies. The University has also received representations from a number of people in connection with the letter and there has been contact on the matter in the media.

JEREMY HANLEY MP

Minister for Education

The University's position on the matter is that, in the first place, the affairs of the student representatives are not controlled by the University. The Students' Union has a responsibility to represent all Queen's students on a variety of matters. Under the terms of the University's Statutes, the Students' Union Council has the following functions:-

- (i) to promote the interests of the students and to represent them in all matters affecting their interests;
- (ii) to afford a recognised means of communication between the students and the Authorities of the University;
- (iii) to promote social intercourse and unity of spirit and feeling among the students; and
- (iv) to bring the students of the University into closer relations with the students of other Universities.

Normally, in accordance with custom, the Students' Union has always been given wide scope to regulate its own affairs, always however, within the overall framework of the University's Charter and Statutes and regulations. It is not unreasonable for the Students' Union to contact its members on issues which the elected students' representatives feel are relevant to them.



From the Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Vice-Chancellor **Dr Gordon Beveridge**

The Queen's University of Belfast

Belfast BT7 1NN Northern Ireland

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Ext. 3130/3131

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Our ref. **ww**

Your ref.

22 September 1992

16/24/9.
Mr J A Coote
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor
Co Down
BT19 7PR

Dear Mr Coote

I refer to your letter of 4 September 1992 in connection with the question raised by the Reverend Dr W McCrea, MP, with Mr Hanley on the subject of the circular letter sent out to recent graduates by the Presidents of the Students' Union about the playing of the national anthem at graduation ceremonies. The University has also received representations from a number of people in connection with the letter and there has been comment on the matter in the media.

The University's position on the matter is that, in the first place, the actions of the student representatives are not controlled by the University. The Students' Union has a responsibility to represent all Queen's students on a variety of matters. Under the terms of the University's Statutes, the Students' Union Council has the following functions:-

- "(1) to promote the interests of the students and to represent them in all matters affecting their interests;
- (2) to afford a recognised means of communication between the students and the Authorities of the University;
- (3) to promote social intercourse and unity of spirit and feeling among the students; and
- (4) to bring the students of the University into closer relations with the students of other Universities."

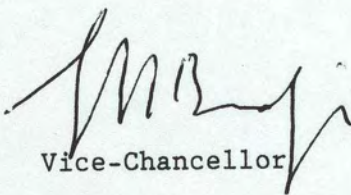
Secondly, in accordance with custom, the Students' Union has always been given broad scope to regulate its own affairs, always however, within the overall framework of the University's Charter and Statutes and regulations. It is not unreasonable for the Students' Union to contact its members on issues which the elected students' representatives feel are relevant to them.

- 2 -

The playing of the national anthem at graduation is part of the University's tradition for such ceremonies as it is "The Queen's University of Belfast", of which Her Majesty the Queen is the "Visitor" who, through the Board of Visitors, exercises ultimate supervision over the affairs of the University.

The University is a place where there is a wide diversity of views, legitimately held, on a whole range of issues. The University is aware of this and our procedures and arrangements are kept under regular review. We are mindful of our responsibilities to all members of the University and the community at large, and will continue to recognise all the sensibilities involved.

Yours sincerely,


Vice-Chancellor