



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

10th. December, 1936.

Dear Mr. de Valera,

By The King's command I enclose herewith signed originals of the Instrument of Abdication and of His Majesty's message.

Yours very truly,

A. H. L. Handasyde

The President of the Executive Council
of the Irish Free State.
Dublin.

COPY.

INSTRUMENT OF ABDICATION

I, Edward the Eighth, of Great Britain, Ireland,
and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King,
Emperor of India, do hereby declare My irrevocable
determination to renounce the Throne for Myself and
for My descendants, and My desire that effect should
be given to this Instrument of Abdication immediately.

In token whereof I have hereunto set My hand this
tenth day of December, nineteen hundred and thirty six,
in the presence of the witnesses whose signatures are
subscribed.

SIGNED AT
FORT BELVEDERE
IN THE PRESENCE
OF

EDWARD R I

ALBERT.

HENRY.

GEORGE.

Uimhir... S.9427....

ROINN AN UACHTARÁIN

Sgeul,

*The King**Abdication, 1936**10th*

On the ~~11th~~ December, 1936, King Edward VIII of England abdicated.

This act arose out of his determination to marry, in conflict with the advice of his Ministers in Great Britain, a twice divorced woman named Mrs Simpson.

Extracts from newspapers dealing with the matter are attached.

The abdication was given legislative effect in Great Britain and the Dominions, excluding the Irish Free State, by an Act of the British Parliament on the 11th December, 1936, entitled "His Majesty's Declaration of Abdication Act, 1936", a copy of which is attached.

The situation as regards the Irish Free State was dealt with by the passage of two separate Acts, namely

1. Constitution (Amendment No. 27) Act, 1936, which became law on the 11th December, 1936 (file S.9430), which in effect removed the King and the Governor General from the Constitution except for permissive authority embodied in an amendment of Article 51 of the Constitution, to utilise the King for the purposes of
 - a. appointment of Saorstat diplomatic and consular representatives abroad,

/ and

Uimhir... S.9427

ROINN AN UACHTARÁIN

Sgeul,.....

2.

b. conclusion of international agreements on behalf of Saorstat Eireann.

This permissive authority in respect of the functions mentioned was translated into more detailed legislation by the enactment of

2. Executive Authority (External Relations) Act, 1936, which became law on the 12th December, 1936 (file S.9429)

WS
12.12.36

Constitutional questions arising out of the abdication + the legislation enacted in S.E. in consequence thereof are dealt with in S.9425 -

Abdication of the King - Constitutional position of S.E.

WS
18.12.36.

10th December, 1936.

The following statement was issued by the President this afternoon:-

"I have been informed by His Majesty King Edward VIII that he has to-day executed an instrument of abdication.

"In so far as Saorstát Eireann is concerned, the abdication will not become effective until legislation for that purpose has been enacted by the Oireachtas."

MC

Copy Code Telegram

- received -

8th December 1936
(10.5 a.m.).

LONDON,
7/d2/35.

ESTERO,
DUBLIN.

A. SECRET AND PERSONAL. FOLLOWING FOR PRIME MINISTER FROM PRIME MINISTER BEGINS:- WE HAVE CONSIDERED DRAFT BILL IN THE LIGHT OF OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED FROM THE VARIOUS DOMINIONS AND PROPOSE MAKING FOLLOWING AMENDMENT (1) SECOND RECITAL TO READ AS FOLLOWS:- BEGINS:- "AND WHEREAS FOLLOWING UPON COMMUNICATION TO HIS DOMINIONS OF HIS MAJESTY'S SAID DECLARATION AND DESIRE, THE DOMINION OF CANADA, THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA AND DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND HAVE REQUESTED AND CONSENTED TO THE ENACTMENT OF THIS ACT AND UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA ASSENTED THERETO". ENDS. (2) CLAUSE I. OF (ONE) TO BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:- DELETE ALL WORDS AFTER "CEASE TO BE KING" AND SUBSTITUTE FOLLOWING "AND THERE SHALL BE A DEMISE OF THE CROWN A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY NEXT IN SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE SHALL SUCCEED THERETO AND TO ALL THE RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES AND DIGNITIES THEREUNTO BELONGING". (3) IN ADDITION TO ABOVE, IN FIRST PREAMBLE FOR "THE PRESENT YEAR" SUBSTITUTE "THIS PRESENT YEAR".

IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS TO MAKE PLEASE LET ME HAVE THEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ENDS.

SECDO.

G. C.

Secret



28. Nov. 1936.

10, Downing Street,
Whitehall,

My dear Mr. de Valera,

I am sending Sir Harry Batterbee specially in order that he may hand to you personally a message which I am also communicating to the Prime Minister of all the Dominions.

I am afraid that this

business creates difficulties
for all of us, and I
shall be grateful for
any informal comments
you may think fit to
make.

I shall of course keep
you informed of any
further developments.

Yours very sincerely

Stanley Baldwin

1. Secret and Personal. B615

1. You will, of course, be aware of the many references which are being made in Overseas newspapers and elsewhere to relations between the King and Mrs. Simpson. Recently I felt it my duty to broach the subject informally with His Majesty, warning him of the grave consequences which might flow from the existing state of affairs, especially if the divorce suit which was then pending was proceeded with. I had an opportunity of raising the matter with him again when he summoned me for an interview on November 16th, after the decree nisi was granted. In the course of that interview he told me, speaking informally, of his fixed intention to marry Mrs. Simpson. He said he appreciated, however, that the idea of her becoming Queen and her children succeeding to the Throne (as must be the position of the King's wife unless otherwise provided by legislation) was out of the question, and he told me that he therefore contemplated abdicating and leaving the Duke of York to succeed. This suggestion came as a complete surprise to me, and I told His Majesty that we ought to have a few days to think it over.

2. He subsequently informed the Queen and his brothers that he contemplated the above course of action. I should add that I do not think there is any possibility of dissuading His Majesty from this marriage, if the decree nisi

nisi is made absolute and such a course therefore does not seem to be one of the practicable alternatives before us.

3. The Dominions are, of course, as much concerned in this question touching the Crown as is the United Kingdom. You will appreciate that a declaration by the King that he was resolved to renounce the Throne (which would have to be made simultaneously to all his peoples in the British Commonwealth) would have to be followed by legislation amending the Act of Settlement and that the constitutional principles contained in the Statute of Westminster would apply.

4. I returned for a further talk with His Majesty on November 25th when he outlined to me a new proposal which had been put to him from some outside quarter and on which he asked my view. This proposal also assumes that Mrs. Simpson cannot be Queen but contemplates that His Majesty's marriage to her should not necessitate his leaving the Throne. The suggestion is that the marriage should be accompanied by an undertaking on his side that, though his wife would be resident in Buckingham Palace with him, she would not be treated as Queen and would not appear on any State occasions, and he would further agree that when the marriage was announced it would be proper that legislation should be introduced to fix the lady's position as the King's wife but not Queen

Queen and to amend the Act of Settlement so as to bar any issue of the marriage from succession to the Throne. It would be a necessary part of the suggested arrangement that the Governments on their side would undertake to acquiesce in the marriage on these conditions, and would be responsible for any legislation necessary to put it into effect.

5. While I promised to consider this suggestion I told the King that I did not think there was any chance of such an arrangement receiving the approval of Parliament here. I reminded him further of the very important factor that there was also to be considered the position in relation to the Dominions, whose assent would be equally essential.

6. I feel convinced that neither the Parliament nor the great majority of the public in all parties here should or would accept such a plan, any more than they would accept the proposal that Mrs. Simpson should become Queen. Moreover I think it very probable that if such an arrangement were agreed now, it would prove to be temporary, and that later on pressure would be brought to bear with a view to the King's wife being given her position as Queen.

7. It would be very helpful to me in my consideration of the question if I could have as soon as possible your personal views and what you think would be the view of public opinion in your Dominion regarding the following

three possibilities:-

- (1) The King's marriage to Mrs. Simpson
she to become Queen;
- (2) The King's marriage to Mrs. Simpson
without abdication but on the basis
that she should not become Queen, and
accompanied by the necessary
legislation on this basis;
- (3) A voluntary abdication by the King
carried out as above in favour of
the Duke of York.

8. I appreciate that you may desire to consult
one or two of your colleagues and this, of course,
I leave to your discretion having regard to the
necessity for absolute secrecy. At a later stage
you will, of course, require to consult your whole
Cabinet. Your answers will be very helpful to me
for my guidance in further informal conversations
with the King on this question as to which I have
expressed to him my provisional views.

9. I need not assure you that I appreciate fully
the vital concern of the Dominions in this whole
question, and that I shall keep you informed and
consult you at every stage. I am sending this message
also to the Prime Ministers of the other Dominions.