



Northern Ireland Act 1998

1998 CHAPTER 47

PART IV

THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Miscellaneous

49 Letters Patent etc

- (1) Her Majesty may by Order in Council make provision as to—
 - (a) the form and manner of preparation; and
 - (b) the publication,of Letters Patent signed with Her Majesty's own hand signifying Her Assent to a Bill passed by the Assembly.
- (2) If the First Minister and the deputy First Minister acting jointly so direct, impressions with the same device as the Great Seal of Northern Ireland shall be taken in such manner, of such size and on such material as is specified in the direction.
- (3) Each such impression—
 - (a) shall be known as a Wafer Great Seal of Northern Ireland; and
 - (b) shall be kept in accordance with directions of the First Minister and the deputy First Minister acting jointly.
- (4) If a Wafer Great Seal of Northern Ireland has been applied to Letters Patent mentioned in subsection (1), the document has the same validity as if it had passed under the Great Seal of Northern Ireland.

50 Privilege

- (1) For the purposes of the law of defamation, absolute privilege shall attach to—
 - (a) the making of a statement in proceedings of the Assembly; and
 - (b) the publication of a statement under the Assembly's authority.

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).

- (2) A person is not guilty of contempt of court under the strict liability rule as the publisher of any matter—
- (a) in the course of proceedings of the Assembly which relate to a Bill or subordinate legislation; or
 - (b) to the extent that it consists of a fair and accurate report of such proceedings which is made in good faith.
- (3) In this section—
- “statement” has the same meaning as in the Defamation Act 1996;
 - “the strict liability rule” has the same meaning as in the Contempt of Court Act 1981.

51 Resignation of members

A member of the Assembly may at any time resign his seat by notice in writing to the Presiding Officer.