

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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OIFIG AN AIRE OIDEACHAIS  
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH, 1.

Private Secretary,  
Office of the Minister  
for Foreign Affairs,  
DUBLIN, 2.

20 March, 1980.

c.c. Mr Mannix  
Mr Collins ✓  
For draft reply  
please as a matter  
of urgency.

Dear Private Secretary,

*Eugene Banks*  
Private Secretary  
26 March 1980

The Minister for Education, Mr. John P. Wilson, T.D.,  
will be attending the Sligo-Leitrim South Donegal  
Convention on Sunday next March 30th.

Could you please have notes prepared for the Minister  
on the attached motions.

I regret this short notice.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

*R. P. Wilson*  
\_\_\_\_\_

Private Secretary

Note for Minister Wilson T.D.  
attending Sligo Leitrim South  
Donegal Convention 30/3/80

1. It is estimated that some 50% of all cross-border roads, mainly minor roads serving local needs are now closed. The last major programme of cross-border road closures, carried out by the British authorities in the period September-November 1975 provoked vigorous local reaction, leading to confrontations with the British Army in some cases. Our attitude to the closure of cross-border crossings by the British authorities has been one of opposition, on the basis that such closures were counter-productive, ineffective and largely irrelevant ~~to the security problems in the North.~~ *and frequently appear to be ineffective* Successive Ministers for Foreign Affairs have raised with the British authorities the hardship and inconvenience accruing to the local population from border road closures. The decision to close cross border roads was taken by the British and Northern security forces on the basis of security considerations as they saw them and they can only be opened with the agreement of the British authorities. The situation is reviewed regularly by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the British authorities are fully aware of our desire to see cross-border roads reopened as soon as security considerations allow.
2. The more important of the cross-border roads affecting people in Leitrim, ~~Donegal~~ and Fermanagh which remain closed are those in (i) the Kiltyclogher area of Co. Leitrim and (ii) the Pettigo area of Co. Donegal.
  - (i) In all, five cross border roads are closed in the Kiltyclogher area which has resulted in Kiltyclogher being cut off from its natural hinterland. Access to Northern Ireland by the people of Kiltyclogher has now to be made via Blacklion, Co. Cavan to the East or in Co. Donegal (near Belleek) to the West both of which are ~~quite~~ *quite* some distance from Kiltyclogher. Representations to the British authorities at all levels including Ministerial to have a border road in the Kiltyclogher area reopened ~~have~~ not met with any success. The British authorities have given no reason to hope that there is a likelihood of reopenings in this area in the near future.
3. It appears that the road most in demand locally to be reopened in the Pettigo area is the Pettigo Belleek concession road. The roads in the Pettigo area have been raised with the British authorities as examples of where early reopenings would be particularly welcome but the British position at the present time is that these roads will remain closed.

Note for Minister

1. It is estimated that some 50% of all cross-border roads, mainly minor roads serving local needs are now closed. The last major programme of cross-border road closures, carried out by the British authorities in the period September-November 1975 provoked vigorous local reaction, leading to confrontations with the British Army in some cases. Our attitude to the closure of cross-border crossings by the British authorities has been one of opposition, on the basis that such closures were counter-productive, <sup>and frequently useless, for the</sup> ineffective and largely irrelevant to the security problems in the North. Successive Ministers for Foreign Affairs have raised with the British authorities the hardship and inconvenience accruing to the local population from border road closures. The decision to close cross border roads was taken by the British and Northern security forces on the basis of security considerations as they saw them and they can only be opened with the agreement of the British authorities. The situation is reviewed regularly by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the British authorities are fully aware of our desire to see cross-border roads reopened as soon as security considerations allow.
  
2. The more important of the cross-border roads affecting people in Leitrim, Donegal & Fermanagh which remain closed are those in (i) the Kiltyclogher area of Co. Leitrim and (ii) the Pettigo area of Co. Donegal.
  - (i) In all, five cross border roads are closed in the Kiltyclogher area which has resulted in Kiltyclogher being cut off from its natural hinterland. Access to Northern Ireland by the people of Kiltyclogher has now to be made via Blacklion, Co. Cavan to the East or in Co. Donegal (near Belleek) to the West both of which are quite some distance from Kiltyclogher. Representations to the British authorities at all levels including Ministerial to have a border road in the Kiltyclogher area reopened have not met with any success. The British authorities have given no reason to hope that there is a likelihood of reopenings in ~~the area~~ in the near future.
  
  - (ii) It appears that the road most in demand locally to be reopened in the Pettigo area is the Pettigo Belleek concession road. The roads in the Pettigo area have been raised with the British authorities as examples of where early reopenings would be particularly welcome but the British position at the present time is that these roads will remain closed.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

(1) This Cumann calls on the Government not to yield to external pressure in relation to the 1980 Olympic Games. Instead it should do all in its power to encourage Irish athletes to participate in the games in Moscow irrespective of the number of other countries competing there.

Creevela Cumann.

(2) This Convention calls on the relevant authorities to take into consideration the great disadvantages because of the closure of cross-border roads to people in the Leitrim and Fermanagh areas.