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AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
Department of Foreign Affairs

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH, 2.
Dublin 2.

*Mr. Holohan,
We spoke about this X
Paper as requested.*

MJB 8/6/88

31 May 1988

Mr. Colm O Floinn
Anglo-Irish Secretariat
Belfast

Dear Colm

You know that Niall Holohan and I were up North recently for meetings on the Mawhinney proposals.

In the course of one of these meetings - at the University of Ulster at Coleraine with Prof. Seamus MacMathúna and Diarmuid Devlin - discussion broadened out into the general status of the Irish language under the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The attached note covers the various points made to us.

X/ I would be glad to hear any views you may have on how we might approach some of the suggestions made.

Yours sincerely

Patricia

Patricia Cullen

Note: Points with particular reference to Irish language matters in Northern Ireland made in the course of a meeting at the Department of Irish Studies in Coleraine, 6 May 1988

(i) Placenames Research

Mr. Devlin said the Department of Irish Studies at Coleraine were unhappy that the £0.5m grant for research into placenames in Northern Ireland was given to Queen's without the project first being offered out to tender. (Prof. MacMathúna said Queen's had plagiarised his own research in their presentation to the D/Environment).

(ii) Writer in Residence

At present there is one Irish writer shared between Queen's and Coleraine (on a rotation basis, one year at Queen's etc); Prof. MacMathúna asked our assistance through the Secretariat so as to have a full time writer in both universities.

(iii) Teaching of Irish

Prof. MacMathúna proposed a system similar to that of other modern languages with native speakers or "lecteurs" being funded from outside. Coleraine currently has

3 French }
2 German } lecteurs
1 Spanish }

The respective governments fund these to the tune of 50% of salary. He said that native Irish speakers from the Donegal Gaeltacht could fulfill a similar role and suggested that the Irish Government should fund this?

(iv) Part-time diploma in Irish Studies

Mr. Devlin outlined a programme idea which was currently being examined. This was to set up a part-time Diploma course in Irish studies (non-degree, university course). The intended catchment area for this course was among mature students, otherwise unqualified formally for university. The diploma would provide access to full-time attendance at Coleraine. It was intended to teach the course in two centres, in Derry and West Belfast. Locations under consideration were the College of Technology, Derry and St. Thomas' School in West Belfast. Prof. MacMathúna said Mr. Henry McRory, the N.I. School's Inspector, had looked favourably on the idea when he had spoken with the latter. Mr. Holohan suggested they make a formal submission to DENI (they will require funding for teachers etc) and let him know what kind of response they get. If the reaction is a negative one the Secretariat could then take up the matter.

(v) Use of Irish language in Northern Ireland

Mr. Devlin made passing reference to a young (unnamed) Dublin girl currently employed by the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in Cultra. Devlin said the ethos of the museum was very "British oriented" and she had been forbidden to speak on the telephone in the Irish language when overheard doing so. Mr. Holohan suggested if the girl wanted the matter pursued she should write to the SDLP (Patsy McGlone) or to the Department and the matter could be taken from there.

P. Cullen

P. Cullen,

31 May 1988.

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