

## GOLDEN JUBILEE

**Mr Morrow:** I beg to move

That this Assembly calls on the Minister of Education in this, Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee year, to ensure provision is made for each primary school pupil in Northern Ireland to be provided with a suitable souvenir to mark this important and historic occasion.

In any circumstances, whether individually or collectively, celebrating 50 years of service is a special and, indeed, a unique occasion — and for no one more so than Her Majesty The Queen, who has served this nation with dignity and responsibility during the past 50 years. Our constitutional monarchy has brought stability to our United Kingdom, and Her Majesty has provided much wise counsel to the many Prime Ministers who have served her during her reign. Today we want to act with dignity and mark this special occasion in the manner that I feel it deserves.

This motion is not intended to be either divisive or offensive to anyone. It is intended to recognise the service given to the United Kingdom by Her Majesty, and it calls for this special year in our history to be marked in a way that is simple, yet reflective. Our children should be given the opportunity to receive a souvenir to commemorate the 50 years that Her Majesty has spent as head of state, just as children were given a souvenir at the time of the Queen's coronation. I suspect that many in the Assembly can recall that time and can look back to when they were at school and were given a memento to mark the Queen's coronation. They may not have placed much emphasis on it at the time. Indeed, they may not have seen it as important. However, having spoken to many who can recall that occasion — *[Interruption]*.

**Mr O'Neill:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Can you explain to the House the use of a Dispatch Box for Members? Is it available for all Members to use, or are we setting a new precedent this morning?

**Mr Speaker:** Properly speaking, the use of Lecterns, in lieu of Dispatch Boxes, is for Ministers when speaking as Ministers, if they choose — and not all Ministers choose to use one — or Chairpersons of Committees, if they choose, when presenting on behalf of their Committees. I see that the matter is no longer an issue.

**Mr Morrow:** Mr Speaker, I humbly apologise to the House for taking advantage. The Box was there, and I thought it would not offend anyone if I used it. I want it recorded that I humbly apologise.

**Mr Speaker:** Had the Member had 50 years service in the House, no doubt he would have been accorded it.

**Mr Morrow:** That demonstrates that I can be humble.

Many types of souvenirs will be created during this special year, and I do not wish to be prescriptive about the type or design of souvenir. I believe that every primary schoolchild should have an opportunity to mark the

jubilee tangibly, and if the Department of Education wants some ideas on what should be used, I am prepared to give it some. I suspect that it does not need that.

During the course of this debate there will be those who will say that Her Majesty is the British head of state and, as such, is not acceptable, or that many children could not participate. That is a poor argument. At the outset, I want to say that this should not be forced on every school. The option should be there, and it should be available to those schools and children who wish to avail of it. The Queen is the head of state of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, so she is the head of state to everyone who lives in Northern Ireland, regardless of political opinion, religious belief, ethnic origin or anything else that people may feel distinguishes them. We all are her subjects by virtue of where we live — the United Kingdom.

11.15 am

There is no basis for the claim that the majority of primary schoolchildren have no interest in receiving a souvenir in recognition of the Golden Jubilee. I suspect that many schools in the Province would welcome the opportunity to give their pupils a suitable gift. Perhaps some Members are opposed to the motion because to provide such an opportunity would expose the inaccuracy of their claims that children have no interest. I suggest that caution be taken. The Department of Education should not fall into the trap of restricting history and distorting reality. Why should schools not be given the choice of whether or not to present their pupils with a souvenir? Those who vote against the motion will deny every school in the Province that choice. If the Assembly were to reject the motion, it would deny the up-and-coming generation the unique opportunity to have a memento of the Queen's Golden Jubilee for years to come.

Some said, during the run-up to the debate, that the motion involves an element of flag-waving or an attempt to get one over on someone. That is not in my thoughts. It is an opportunity to recognise 50 years in which the Queen has served the United Kingdom with distinction and honour.

We are supposed to be living in an era of parity of esteem in which everybody's view is of equal status. I hope that the House will seize the opportunity to demonstrate tangibly to the Minister of Education that schools should have a choice and that the Department of Education should place at schools' disposal a suitable souvenir to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee. We ask for no more, and I trust that Members will support the motion.

**Mr Speaker:** I have received one amendment to the motion, which is published on the Marshalled List of Amendments in the name of Mrs E Bell.

**Mrs E Bell:** I beg to move the following amendment: In line 2, after "ensure" insert:

"where the board of governors deems it appropriate, that".



One of my earliest childhood memories is of being in a small parlour house in the Falls Road area, watching the Queen's coronation together with many other families. I do not remember much about the ceremony, but I remember how the young Queen was serious and controlled. She realised that she had a demanding life in front of her. That was the general feeling in the room, and nothing but tribute was paid to her. As time has passed, those thoughts have, in many ways, been proved correct. I hope that this jubilee year will be another resounding memory for all of us and, of course, for the Queen. The death of the Queen's sister was tragic, but it is to be hoped that she will still be able to take pride in her Golden Jubilee year.

I remember the Queen's Silver Jubilee. I lived in Windsor, where we held an enjoyable street party. The participating families were of different backgrounds, colours and creeds, but were united in their good wishes for the young Queen. Again I recall thinking that it would have been great if we could have had similar scenes throughout Northern Ireland in celebration of a life lived in duty and loyalty towards all citizens.

This year should be celebrated in Northern Ireland as much or as little as people wish. Ample opportunity should be given to note, or to not note, the historic occasion. Therefore, I hope that Members will view my amendment without prejudice, if that is possible in Northern Ireland. My reason for tabling the amendment is that I have several misgivings about the motion as it stands, not least on monetary grounds.

If the Department of Education is to ensure that a memento will be provided, it must be clear that schools will not bear the cost themselves. The Department must refer schools to the jubilee fund, which would allay budget pressures. In addition, district councils could be asked to become involved with local schools, because they have also had budget specifications for commemorative celebrations this year.

The decision for each school should be made by its board of governors, which is responsible to that school's pupils and staff. That board would know the feelings and circumstances of the school, its pupils, staff and parents. That would not be discriminatory, nor would it contravene equality Directives. It would simply be an understanding that each school will be different in its observance.

As regards different agendas, I suspect that the motion might produce attitudes that have more to do with the identity of the Minister of Education than with an acknowledgement of the Queen's work and commitment — I am aware that that does not apply to the proposer. I appeal to all shades of opinion in the Chamber not to use the Golden Jubilee as an opportunity for another instance of intolerance or backward thinking. Rather, they should view it as a fitting tribute to Queen Elizabeth II on reaching her Golden Jubilee.

**The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr McGimpsey):** I inform the House, Mr Morrow and others that it is not the Department of Education, but the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure that is taking the lead in the Golden Jubilee celebrations — I am, however, sure that most people are aware of that. That was agreed by the Executive some time ago. I have a budget line, which the Department has been working on for many months. There has been an enormous response from across the Province.

By your leave, Mr Speaker, I intend to make a statement next week to fully inform Members of the position in respect of the Golden Jubilee celebrations, outlining the many applications that the Department has received and the types of celebrations planned. I have not done so this week by agreement with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport — the lead Department in London — and other devolved Administrations throughout the United Kingdom, as a mark of respect following the death of Princess Margaret last Saturday. None of my colleagues in the devolved Administrations or the Government in London will be making announcements on the Golden Jubilee this week.

I regret that this motion is being debated this week. It is unseemly that we should discuss it at this time. It would be unseemly to become involved in divisive political debate on the issue. The motion could have been debated next week or in previous weeks. It would have been better had Mr Morrow and his party followed the lead of the devolved Administrations and the Government in London by not getting involved in the issue as a mark of respect. For that reason, my party will not be taking part in the debate today.

**Mr Gallagher:** I strongly oppose the motion as a Member of the Assembly and as someone with a background in education. It is ridiculous that such a motion should come before the Assembly today, given that we all know that a variety of identities and allegiances exist in this community. I presume that the motion refers to one of the two main identities. However, many others do not want to receive the souvenir to which the motion refers. It is proposed in the motion that that souvenir should be imposed on those who do not want to receive it. We should all oppose that.

The SDLP is committed, as it has always been, to the creation of a just, tolerant and pluralist society. We should all know the dangers and drawbacks of imposing things on others, especially on those from different backgrounds.

*(Mr Deputy Speaker [Mr McClelland] in the Chair)*

If I understood Mr Morrow correctly, I heard him refer to a pack that was provided for children by the education system in the coronation year. That was 50 years ago and, fortunately for all of us, things have moved on both politically and educationally. At that time, the education system discouraged the teaching of Irish history.



In hindsight, we all know that that was a mistake, and one that we do not wish to repeat.

Speaking as an educationalist, I know that many subjects, such as mathematics, economics and languages, have a place in the education system. However, education in its truest sense goes further than that. Education is about the fundamental worth of each individual and the common good. It is about imparting the values to which I referred earlier — justice, tolerance and pluralism. Since education should be about the common good, that includes the common good of people of whatever identity, whatever their allegiance or political background. That is how we should manage education, and we should all aspire to that.

The motion threatens that notion, so I oppose it. If we want to have an education system that provides a safe haven for all, regardless of religious or political persuasion, we should reject the motion.

**Rev Dr Ian Paisley:** I wish to inform the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure — and he should be careful about what he says — that the motion was tabled weeks ago. It was not tabled following Princess Margaret's death. His party did not approach Mr Morrow and ask him to withdraw the motion this week, yet Mr McGimpsey castigates the DUP for moving the motion, and is lauded by people from the opposite side of the House for doing so. That shows the spirit of both the UUP and the SDLP. If they do not get their way, they think that they can gag Members of the Assembly. This is an elected Assembly, and it is the only part of the Assembly that has any degree of democracy. I resent what the Minister said. If he is concerned about a motion being tabled, and he feels that he has to wait until the following week to tell people what he is going to do, that is his business. However, he has no right to castigate the Democratic Unionist Party for moving the motion.

I find Mr Gallagher's attitude amazing. He talked about a "safe haven" in the schools, yet people of his religion boycott the state education system.

**Mr Gallagher:** On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr Deputy Speaker:** Is it a point of order, Mr Gallagher?

**Mr Gallagher:** Yes, it is a point of order. I spoke about an education system that supports a society that provides a safe haven for all. I did not quite put it as — *[Interruption]*.

**Mr Deputy Speaker:** That is not really a point of order.

**Rev Dr Ian Paisley:** The hon Member can say what he likes. When we read Hansard in the morning we shall find out what he said.

Mr Gallagher's particular belief is that schools should be segregated and the people with whom he worships should all go to a school that is separate from the state system.

11.30 am

That is a fact of life, which we all accept. If people want to have a separate school system, they are entitled to have it. Some people would say that they are also entitled to pay for it. That is a different story, and not for debate today.

I also find it amazing that the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure is so concerned about this matter, given that, evidently, he was unconcerned about Princess Margaret's death. He knows that if the First Minister, supported by the Deputy First Minister, had moved a motion yesterday, we could have paid our tributes to Princess Margaret as they were paid in another place.

**Mr Deputy Speaker:** You are straying somewhat from the motion, Dr Paisley.

**Rev Dr Ian Paisley:** It is relevant to what Mr McGimpsey said. He should not have brought up those matters. He criticised us for our attitude to the death of Princess Margaret. I am entitled to defend myself. I am sure that you would be the first to defend my right to defend myself. We have to be realistic about this matter. I made my views known in the Chamber. We should have had a moment of silence. I noticed that they stood in silence in the imperial House at Westminster. I thought there would be conformity in all places. Evidently, that was not to be.

The motion is not asking for anything to be forced on anyone. It asks that the Department of Education should make a memento of this important event available to every schoolchild. If Mr McGimpsey has so much money in his kitty that he wants to pay for it, that is well and good. Nobody will argue with that.

It will be a long time before anyone will be able to celebrate another fiftieth anniversary of a Queen. Monarchs do not usually reign for 50 years. This is an unusual and special event. I go back quite a bit — more than 50 years. I am sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, that you also go back quite a bit. *[Laughter]* Members of the House should not despise age. If one has a halo as a result of one's age, it should not be despised. Some of us are fortunate to hold on to what little hair we have.

I remember the Silver Jubilee of King George V. We were all presented with a special mug, which I still have. I appreciate the fact that I was alive then and was given that mug. Everyone went to Ballymena Showgrounds, where Ballymena Urban District Council, as it was called in those days, put on a grand display of games and other events, and every child received a memento. That was a most acceptable thing to do. People who do not want to receive a memento are quite entitled to say that they do not want one. I know of one school in Ballymena where, on the direction of the schoolmaster, the pupils took the mugs out and broke them against a wall. There were



different views about these issues, even in those days. That will no doubt continue.

There is nothing in the motion that states that this should be forced on anyone. There was no need for the amendment to be tabled. The boards of governors will have control over the distribution of such a memento.

Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom — we are not in the Irish Republic yet. A Sinn Féin Member has told us that it already has a majority. In the next election we shall see who has the majority in this country. When I was a boy I was told that we would be outbred, but Protestant mothers have children too. The average Protestant family is much bigger today than it was when I was being brought up. The average Protestant family had two children, but now the average is four. There are those in this country who believe that their children should receive a memento, and they are entitled to want that. If that is going to bankrupt the education system, it must be almost bankrupt already.

Those arguments are puerile, but mine is sensible. I believe that most people on both sides of the religious divide want a memento, and they are entitled to that. The parents and the boards of governors should make that decision in the schools.

**Mr A Maginness:** I am unconvinced by Mr Morrow's arguments and his protestations of innocence on the motion. The motion is not about souvenirs; it is about party political advantage for the DUP. I agree with the Minister that this is not an appropriate time to table the motion. The SDLP has no problem whatsoever with people in Northern Ireland who wish to commemorate the Queen's jubilee; we support that. The former Minister of Finance and Personnel, Mr Durkan — now the Deputy First Minister — made funding available for that. The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure will use that money to celebrate the Queen's jubilee in an appropriate fashion.

The motion is mischievous, cynical, party political, unnecessary and inappropriate in the present circumstances. It has not been costed, and it is wrong for Members to table a motion asking a Department to expend money without properly costing the financial impact. There are 174,000 primary schoolchildren in Northern Ireland, so approximately £200,000 to £500,000 would be spent. The Department of Education could spend that money more appropriately by assisting those children in the learning process.

The SDLP is unconvinced by the DUP's arguments. We believe that it is an example of its desire to impose a view of society upon all the people of Northern Ireland without regard to their political tradition or sensitivities. Therefore we believe that this is not a good motion, and it is inappropriate in the present circumstances. We believe in parity of esteem, and the Executive and the Departments should exercise that parity of esteem in dealing with the public. The motion does not do that. It

is not sensitive, and it does not advance, in any way, goodwill and harmonious relations in our society.

However, despite our misgivings about the motion and given the Minister's announcement this morning, the SDLP believes that it would not be appropriate to oppose it in the present circumstances, so we shall abstain on the motion. On behalf of the SDLP, I believe that that is the most appropriate course of action. We shall also abstain on the amendment.

In conclusion, let me emphasise that the SDLP has no problems with people who wish to celebrate the Golden Jubilee in an appropriate manner. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has an allocation for that; it is the appropriate way to deal with it, and we support that.

**Mr Shannon:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to support the motion. This is the fiftiet yeir fae Quean Elspeth cum heid o the Kingrik; it is an importin tid for ilkane o us. The'r juist the five ither monarchs paregal wi whit she's eftir winnin til, an it's e'en mair poignant in the licht o recent events the lyke o the affgaun o the Princess Mairgret. It gars ye think on juist whit wey the wumman that heids this lede haes putten ower throu the ondings o modren lyfe, bringin bairns intil the warld an the IRA's ettil at murtherin hir in the 1980s in the course o the bygaun for ti merk hir birthday in Hyde Park. It's a testament til Hir Maijestie that she's haen the virr an smeddum ti gang on — for aw whit she's haed ti thole an the thraets til hir lyfe as cam forrit in the bygaen 50 yeir.

This is the fiftieth anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth II, and it is a momentous occasion for us all. Only five other monarchs have ever achieved this, and it is even more poignant in the light of the recent death of Princess Margaret.

It is remarkable that the woman who heads this nation has weathered the storms of modern life — as a queen and as a mother — and also the IRA's attempt to kill her during a parade celebrating her birthday in Hyde Park in the 1980s. It is a testament that Her Majesty has had the strength of character to carry on despite the trials and tribulations, and the threats to her life that have been made over the past 50 years.

Her Majesty is an inspiration to all children that they can be of supreme importance and carry out their duties as citizens with the dignity and commitment that she has shown over the past 50 years. It is for this reason that children across the Province — no matter what their religion or political background — should have some souvenir to remember a momentous occasion that may not be repeated in their lifetime. The occasion should be marked by something that the children can keep forever and that they can pass on to their children and to their children's children. Although we may have different political outlooks, it is imperative that all children are aware of all the traditions of this island, and that includes its association with the royal family. It would



be honourable for the Minister to put aside his own political prejudice and doctrine and to think of what is good for the whole country. The party that the Minister belongs to harps on about embracing other cultures on the island of Ireland — let him prove it by giving children a suitable and lasting souvenir of the Queen's jubilee.

Yesterday in the Chamber Sinn Féin got its way and did not commemorate the passing of Princess Margaret with a minute's silence. However, Sinn Féin Members stood in silence for Americans and other nationals that were killed on 11 September. They stood for a minute's silence last month for the murdered postman, Daniel McColgan. Is it too much for them to accept that the royal family is not responsible for their problems and to show a little respect for the head of the country's sister?

Perhaps Sinn Féin does not like to admit that there is a huge interest in the royal family. One of the most popular magazines in the Republic of Ireland is called 'Majesty', and its appeal is to those who venerate a set of people that have everything that we shall never have: the position, elegance and lifestyle that we should all like to enjoy. Many residents of the Republic are as much in awe of the royal family and its nuances as the Unionist community are.

11.45 am

Every little girl across Northern Ireland, be she Protestant, Roman Catholic, Hindu or Muslim, dreams about being a princess and looks to real royals to infuse her dreams with a little inspiration and glamour. A souvenir is one way of giving those wannabe princesses a token that will bring them within breathing distance of their dream.

**Mr McElduff:** Go raibh maith agat, a LeasCheann Comhairle. Ní nach ionadh, beidh mise ag labhairt in éadan an rúin, agus, mar a dúirt mé, ní cuid iontais ar bith sin. I rise to speak against the motion — which is not surprising. I listened to what Mr McGimpsey said about the timing and unsuitability of the motion. Given the circumstances of this week, there is certainly an issue there.

I am charged with interpreting the motion from an Irish Republican standpoint, and I am happy to do that. I respect the views of others, but, equally, I expect Sinn Féin's views — and those of Nationalists, Republicans and those who do not regard themselves as Unionists — to be similarly listened to.

I have no problem with people who think that this event is important, celebrating it. By the same token, I choose to commemorate the Easter Rising of 1916. As I have said before, 2003 is the bicentenary of the execution of Robert Emmet. Those are important historical events from a Republican perspective. We reasonably expect that the same level of recognition should be accorded to our historically important events.

In England, as well as in Ireland, many people are asking about the relevance of the British monarchy in today's society. My opinion, which I suspect will not be respected, is that the British monarchy is a relic of Britain's colonial history — *[Interruption]*.

**Rev Dr Ian Paisley:** Absolute nonsense. Rubbish.

**Mr McElduff:** That is what the British monarchy is all about — imperialism — *[Interruption]*.

**Mr Deputy Speaker:** Order. The Member is entitled to be heard.

**Mr McElduff:** To me the British monarchy is a relic of Britain's colonial history.

In 2002 school-age children come from a variety of culturally diverse backgrounds. That was not the case in 1952, but it is the situation today. Unionists should take note of the reality that the majority of school-age children in the Six Counties now come from a Nationalist, Catholic background, as research and statistical experts stated in the 'Belfast Telegraph' last evening. Many other sources will attest to that fact. It is a fact; it is, perhaps, for some an unpalatable reality.

Belfast City Council voted £100,000 to celebrate the British jubilee, yet it is giving nothing to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day. That needs to be put on the political agenda.

My suggestion is that schools, above all places, should be kept neutral. The Department of Education is charged with providing the best possible education for all our children. It is not charged with celebrating the British monarchy. Allegations have, quite properly, been made that the DUP is playing politics and is flag-waving. Earlier this morning a DUP Member gave an interview about this subject on the BBC, quickly followed by his party leader, who totally opposed the notion that an English Catholic could either marry a British monarch or become a British monarch.

Therein lies the true agenda. This is flag-waving by the DUP; it is a party political agenda. As an Irish Republican — *[Interruption]*.

**Mr Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr McElduff:** I will restate. As an Irish Republican my opinion is that the British monarchy is merely a relic of Britain's colonial past.

**Mr Gibson:** We have heard much about many people's memories of the coronation. This debate is about respect for one of the greatest and most brilliant concepts in the history of civilisation — a constitutional monarchy that allows the people to dictate the terms and thinking of a nation.

Despite Mr McElduff's rubbish allegations — when he talked about discrimination, or in McNamara's word, "scandal" — the day Mr McElduff decided to select a wife, he discriminated against, or scandalised, other women.



The constitutional monarchy gives us, as a nation, the ability to defend Catholic, neutral Belgium or respond to the attack on Poland, which is another Catholic nation. In other words, it is a constitutional monarchy that believes in upholding its agreements. This morning we have seen the direct violation of the Belfast Agreement. The agreement has been proven not to work because Barry McElduff, as spokesman for Sinn Féin, has shown that that party does not respect, or think of accommodating, other precepts or concepts in the Assembly. Sinn Féin has no regard for, or intention of accommodating, the concept of a constitutional monarchy.

I compare the concept of the constitutional monarchy to the concept of blood sacrifice of 1916 that Mr McElduff mentioned, which was epitomised in the celebrations of the 1960s. That blood sacrifice gave us thirty years of mayhem. Perhaps the greatest outworking of that sacrifice occurred in the two months when Sinn Féin/IRA controlled the suicide of 10 of their own people. Nothing matters as long as the blood lust is satisfied.

There is a difference in concepts. I am almost ashamed that the SDLP, which has piggybacked on the IRA for the past 30 years, has said that it does not support the motion. That is probably a form of non-violent boycott, which that party uses as a way out. However, there is a comparison, which has been well demonstrated in the Chamber, between those who wish to respect a constitutional monarch and the precepts, precedence and principles that the monarch embodies and those who respect the blood sacrifice of thirty years of mayhem — epitomised by the deeds of the 1916 rebellion and from 1966 onwards.

I still have my coronation spoon as a memento of those bygone days, when, as a small boy in Omagh, I heard a historic proclamation read from the courthouse steps. It demonstrated the seamless continuity of the monarchy, "The King is dead, long live the Queen." A coronation spoon, which was chromium-plated and probably worthless, is the memento I have to mark the fact that I was there to see the continuation of the concept of constitutional monarchy, which is probably no more perfect than any other human institution.

The death of Princess Margaret occurred this week. Despite her prestige and position, she struggled for many years to accept eventually the idea behind constitutional monarchy, that faith is the all-important personal precept. Therefore, if the Belfast Agreement is so all-accommodating and all-embracing, it should show respect to those Roman Catholics and others, who I believe are still the great majority, who support the idea of constitutional monarchy. If the Assembly cannot accommodate that, it is proof that the vision of blood sacrifice, so well demonstrated by Mr McElduff and supported by the massive contribution from the Minister of Education, is not wide enough to allow people to support the brilliant

concept of constitutional monarchy and to respect it for 50 years of stability in this nation.

**Rev Dr McCrea:** It is sad and regrettable that there are those in the Chamber today who seek to deny the people, and especially the children, of Northern Ireland the right, honour and privilege to celebrate 50 years of Her Majesty's reign.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland spoke recently about a cold place for Unionists. Unionists were not even allowed to stand in the Chamber yesterday to mark the death of Princess Margaret. One wonders whether the Chamber is becoming a cold place for Unionists. I am not surprised by the remarks of IRA/Sinn Féin. They tried to murder me, so why should I be surprised that they do not want to celebrate Her Majesty's reign? On my fortieth birthday I received a bomb. Life is supposed to begin at 40; mine was supposed to end, thanks to the Provisional IRA. Before the celebrated peace process the Provos' last act was to have been the murder of my wife and children. Therefore nothing that comes from the lips of those who would deny children the right to have a celebratory memento or souvenir surprises me. My children were to have been denied the right to life. Their souvenirs were to have been coffins.

Do not listen to the hypocrisy of Sinn Féin/IRA. The Member from West Tyrone says that schools should be kept neutral. Is this the same individual who campaigned against a member of the royal family visiting a school in Pomeroy, thereby denying children the right to see a royal person in case they might be contaminated if they stood in the same room?

**Mr McElduff:** On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr Deputy Speaker:** I hope that it is a point of order, Mr McElduff.

**Rev Dr McCrea:** Do not worry — I will come back to him if it is not.

**Mr McElduff:** It is a point of order on the grounds of untruth, Mr Deputy Speaker. I had no involvement whatsoever in the matter that the Member is referring to.

12.00

**Rev Dr William McCrea:** Does anyone believe that? It was Sinn Féin/IRA and, to be quite honest, they are all from the same litter. Sinn Féin/IRA denied a royal personage the right to come to a school in my constituency. If they could not let the children even see a person coming to talk about education, why should we be surprised that they would not allow a child the right to have a souvenir?

It is interesting to note that, despite all this Republican anti-monarch and anti-Queen propaganda, people who support that propaganda love to run to the post office or the bank to get Her Majesty The Queen on



banknotes. They love her very much when it comes to the day for paying out. That shows the brass neck of Republicanism and just exactly what Republicans stand for. However, I can understand it.

I can even understand the SDLP's perspective. I must challenge some remarks made by Alban Maginness. He said that the motion proposed the imposition of a souvenir on the children. The motion says

"That this Assembly calls on the Minister of Education in this, Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee year, to ensure provision is made for each primary school pupil in Northern Ireland to be provided with a suitable souvenir to mark this important and historic occasion."

Nothing is being imposed — a provision is being made. In other words, if a school and the children want a souvenir, provision is made for it. In fact, the imposition is coming from the other side, because the SDLP suggests imposing on the Unionist family the denial of a right to a souvenir.

Other Members have spoken about what they received for the coronation. I remember Her Majesty's celebrations back then. I was only a wee nipper. I was dressed up as a sailor boy. My sister was dressed up as an angel, and my other sister, who was dressed up as Little Bo Peep with her sheep, won first prize in Stewartstown, County Tyrone.

We have those memories, but we are not allowed to have them any more. It is only one road, one side. Therefore, it is an imposition. However, it is an imposition on the Unionist community, because the motion does not impose anything on any child from the Nationalist or Republican communities. There is no imposition; the motion makes provision for each child if the school desires it. What is wrong with that? I do not care whether it is the Department of Education or the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure that provides the souvenir.

I can understand the SDLP's perspective, but it was important to set the record straight because Mr Alban Maginness misunderstood. Having removed that misunderstanding, I hope that Mr Maginness and his Colleagues will not sit on the sidelines, but will come with the Unionist population rather than deny them their right.

**Rev Dr Ian Paisley:** Mr Gallagher denounced the motion and outlined his opposition to it in strong and strident tones. Mr Maginness then said that they were not to vote, that it would not do to vote and that it was not the time to vote. It seems very strange that from one voice we hear the denunciation of these evil Unionists who would dare to do such a thing, and then his leader — or half-leader, or whatever he is — says that they have all to go home and not vote at all.

**Rev Dr William McCrea:** The fact is that he desired to be deputy leader but did not actually make it.

I found Alban Maginness's tones more conciliatory than Mr Gallagher's. Divided voices within the SDLP

may be common, but I trust that sense and reason will prevail in this. However, it is right to put the record straight, because Mr Maginness's argument for rejecting the motion was that it was an imposition. I use his words — it was an imposition.

This motion makes no imposition upon anyone. It makes provision. I understand to a certain extent the SDLP viewpoint, but I cannot understand the route taken to the House today by the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure. If anything is to be regretted or deplored, it is the position of the Ulster Unionist spokesperson in this debate. It is true that flags are being taken down in the councils, but now it seems that that same party does not want to give children the right to receive a souvenir of Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee from the Department of Education. That is a disgrace. Minister McGimpsey must have got out of the wrong side of the bed this morning, come to the House in a fit of pique and let his tongue get away before his brain went into gear, so ill-considered was what he said.

To say the least, it is pathetic to use the death of Princess Margaret as a reason. That is obnoxious, revolting and scurrilous. I remind the House that Her Royal Highness was still alive when my hon Friend put this motion before the Business Committee, where it was accepted and supported by the Ulster Unionist members. Perhaps Minister McGimpsey did not talk to some of his Colleagues to find out what happened at the Business Committee. It is usual to do that, because there are several voices from that party on the Committee.

That he came to the Chamber this morning and abused the death of Princess Margaret in that way is to be regretted. I trust that before the end of this debate the Minister will do the honourable thing and withdraw those despicable, scurrilous and needless remarks in which he tried to abort and destroy the motion before this House.

I have no doubt whatsoever that we will watch with care the various activities to be announced by his Department for Her Majesty's celebration. It is certainly not his right to deny children their right to a souvenir of Her Majesty's reign.

We have a right to be proud of the 50 years' service given by Her Majesty to the United Kingdom. She has given that service with honour. Like any other mother she has had her heartaches, but she has carried herself with great dignity, and she has ruled with honour. My hon Friend has today brought to the House a simple yet proper and appropriate motion to mark Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee. I trust that on better thought the rest of the House will give it support.

**The Minister of Education (Mr M McGuinness):** I am sorry that I was not present at the beginning of the debate. I was at the launch of the Anne Frank History for Today exhibition at Queen's University students' union.



I apologise for that; the debate was not expected to start until later.

I have only a few things to say in response. It is important that events such as this do not prove divisive. Participation should be therefore a matter of choice, and I support that approach.

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure is co-ordinating the Golden Jubilee celebrations. I know that the Minister has taken a close interest. He is keen to encourage the involvement of schools, should they choose to become involved. There is a range of events and opportunities in which any parents' association or parent-teacher association can choose to participate.

The main event for schools is a special poetry competition that is open to pupils aged seven to 18. It is divided into three age groups and has the Golden Jubilee as its theme. Schools may submit up to three entries in each age category. The subject matter of poems can range from Queen Elizabeth of England to social or historical events from the past 50 years. Therefore, there is a great deal of scope for the budding poets. Mr McGimpsey attended the launch of the competition in Buckingham Palace in early October last year. The closing date for entries is 31 March.

Schools and parents' associations may run their own event for the jubilee; they may receive special funding for that purpose. Applications can be made to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, and several primary and post-primary schools have already made applications.

I appreciate some Members' views on my Department's provision of a souvenir for primary schoolchildren here. However, I see no justification in spending public funds that would be more effectively used in the classroom.

**Rev Dr Ian Paisley:** On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for the Member to refer to the Queen as the Queen of England? She is the Queen of the United Kingdom. Of course, he would not believe in that, but he is happy to be a so-called Minister of the Crown.

**Mr Deputy Speaker:** I am not sure that that was a point of order.

**Mrs E Bell:** This has been an interesting debate that has almost acknowledged the intention of the motion. However, I was right to predict that the debate would also border on somewhat intolerant attitudes.

I am aware that, as the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure said, the debate may have been ill-timed. Nevertheless, it took place, and I assert that my amendment would make specific what the DUP Members hinted at. That is, a souvenir would not be obligatory; each school would make its own decision. Therefore, all schools would be able to deal with the issue appropriately. In the interest of inclusiveness, I ask the mover of the motion, Mr Morrow, to include the amendment in his motion.

However, if he does not agree to that, I beg Members to support the amendment.

**Mr Morrow:** I thank those who participated in the debate. It has stimulated some interesting comments, and I sincerely thank those who found it within themselves to support the motion. They have fully grasped what we are trying to do, and I acknowledge their remarks. All Members have expressed themselves exceptionally well.

I listened intently to Mr Gallagher. He may be some things to some people, but he has a habit of coming across in a belligerent, sectarian way. Of course, that is the way that he is made, and he cannot hide that. He came across in that way today. However, he should, perhaps, have listened to his comrade, Mr Alban Maginness, because he was speaking in a completely different direction. That is a matter for Mr Gallagher and Mr Maginness. Perhaps they owe each other something, but whatever that may be, they should sort it out somewhere else and not in the Chamber.

Dr McCrea tried to analyse what Members were saying, and he said that there was a divide in the House. He said that the comments of those who call themselves Nationalists were, perhaps, understandable. He then turned his attention to this side of the House and addressed the comments that were made here. I am deeply offended by Mr McGimpsey's remarks. He appealed to the lowest common denominator. As Dr McCrea suggested, Mr McGimpsey should do the honourable thing and get to his feet to withdraw those scurrilous and tragic remarks. I will make way for him to do that. It is beyond contempt to try to make political capital from the Princess's death. I ask Mr McGimpsey whether he would like me to give way so that he can withdraw his remarks — his refusal speaks volumes.

12.15 pm

When I submitted the motion, Princess Margaret was alive. The Business Committee accepted the motion. Mr McGimpsey's party colleagues are here and can confirm that. If we had known or received any direction, we would have re-examined the situation. This House will know how to treat Mr McGimpsey for using that event in such a way. More importantly, the public will form its own opinion.

I did not table this motion to put anyone on the spot. There are plenty of ways and opportunities for politicians in this Chamber to put the Opposition on the spot. I was determined that I would not use this motion to do that. I care little whether it is Mr McGimpsey's Department, Mr McGuinness's Department or anyone else's Department that makes this provision. I want this House to ensure that a directive is given today to one of the Ministers so that schoolchildren will have the opportunity to pick up a simple memento that they can look back on in years to come and say that they received it in the Queen's Golden Jubilee year. If that is a political or



offensive suggestion, it goes right over my head. I want to assure people that politics is not the driving force behind this motion.

I cannot accept Eileen Bell's amendment for one simple reason: the amendment seeks to put the onus on the boards of governors. That is not right. The provision should be made so that those who wish to do so may take it up. It is not going to be forced down anyone's throat.

**Mr Ford:** The Member said that the school should decide whether to take up this provision. Who is the competent authority in any school, if not the board of governors?

**Mr Morrow:** The amendment clearly says that this would be the decision solely of the board of governors. That is not right. Provision should be made available so that those who wish to take up this offer can do so. It should not be the case that each board of governors must go to the Department to say whether it wishes to take up this provision. The Department of Education or the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure should make the provision. The schools should know that it is available and how to take up the offer.

**Rev Dr William McCrea:** Does my hon Friend agree that parents should make the decision? They should have the right to choose. Why should a headmaster or a board of governors deny children the right to take up this provision, simply because they do not feel that it is politically correct? There is availability through the schools. Therefore, parents and children should avail of it, rather than let boards of governors make that decision for them. I have been a member of boards of governors for several years, and I believe that some on those boards would deny children the right to a souvenir. It is a decision for parents and their children.

**Mr Morrow:** I thank the Member for his exceptionally well-made point. No further comment on the matter is necessary.

**Mrs E Bell:** I did not say what Rev William McCrea claimed that I said. If a matter such as this is brought before a school's board of governors — and each board has at least two parent governors — the decision will not be taken at one meeting; it will be referred to the staff, pupils and parents.

**Rev Dr William McCrea:** No, it will not.

**Mrs E Bell:** Yes, it will. I have been in education for many years. It may be different in the South Eastern Education and Library Board, or on Mr McCrea's board, but that is what we do. We never make a decision without referring it to parents. That may be wrong in the Member's eyes, but that is the practice. Why does Maurice Morrow simply not say, "I do not want to accept the amendment"? I would rather he said that — it would be more honest.

**Mr Morrow:** I should like to comment on the Minister of Education's remarks on the expenditure of public funds. I note that he does not have the same inhibition about delivering funds for the Irish language. This side of the House has very little appetite for that. Therefore, his remarks hold little water. I also understand that other Departments spend considerable amounts of money on such things — they put it down to spending on culture. If they want to create a sectarian divide with this matter — and I have no desire to do that — then I ask them to acknowledge others' culture and aspirations.

*Question put, That the amendment be made.*

*The Assembly divided: Ayes 5; Noes 23*

#### AYES

*Eileen Bell, David Ford, Kieran McCarthy, Monica McWilliams, Jane Morrice.*

#### NOES

*Fraser Agnew, Paul Berry, Mervyn Carrick, Wilson Clyde, Nigel Dodds, Boyd Douglas, Oliver Gibson, David Hilditch, Roger Hutchinson, Gardiner Kane, Robert McCartney, William McCrea, Maurice Morrow, Ian R K Paisley, Edwin Poots, Iris Robinson, Mark Robinson, Peter Robinson, Jim Shannon, Denis Watson, Peter Weir, Jim Wells, Sammy Wilson.*

*Question accordingly negatived.*

*Main Question put.*

*The Assembly divided: Ayes 26; Noes 11*

#### AYES

*Fraser Agnew, Paul Berry, Mervyn Carrick, Wilson Clyde, Nigel Dodds, Boyd Douglas, Oliver Gibson, David Hilditch, Derek Hussey, Roger Hutchinson, Gardiner Kane, Robert McCartney, William McCrea, Monica McWilliams, Jane Morrice, Maurice Morrow, Ian R K Paisley, Edwin Poots, Iris Robinson, Mark Robinson, Peter Robinson, Jim Shannon, Denis Watson, Peter Weir, Jim Wells, Sammy Wilson.*

#### NOES

*Michelle Gildernew, John Kelly, Alex Maskey, Barry McElduff, Martin McGuinness, Gerry McHugh, Pat McNamee, Conor Murphy, Mick Murphy, Dara O'Hagan, Sue Ramsey.*

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Resolved:*

That this Assembly calls on the Minister of Education in this, Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee year, to ensure provision is made for each primary school pupil in Northern Ireland to be provided with a suitable souvenir to mark this important and historic occasion.

*The sitting was suspended at 12.42 pm.*