

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

To:- 1. Mr G. Cribbin ^{file} 2. G. Shaw 3. Taoiseach

From:- Dr. Albert Jordan

Re:- **Reply to Senator Sam McAughtry re Irish language in Northern Ireland**

Please find attached draft reply for consideration and signature by the Taoiseach on his return from the USA.

In drafting it we have taken on board the observations of Mairtín Ó Fainin in the Department of Foreign Affairs.

10 September 1996

Albert,
In view of the reply
of 4 Sept (above) is there
any need for a further
letter? *Alan* 11/9

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
ANGLO IRISH DIVISION
80 ST STEPHENS GREEN
DUBLIN 2
IRELAND
TEL: (01) 4780822
FAX: (01) 4754505

C O V E R

FAX

S H E E T

To: Dr A. Jordan, D. Taoiseach

From: Martin O'Leary

Fax Nr.: 6624972

Subject: Seamus McCaughey letter

Date: 10
Sept

Pages: 2

MESSAGE:

I attach suggested changes to McCaughey letter you may wish to consider.

September. 1996

Senator Sam McCaughtry
14 Copeland Crescent
Comber
Co. Down
BT23 5HY

Dear Sam.

Thank you for your letter of 23 August.

I should point out in the first instance that the letter which the Sinn Féin councillor, Mr. Mairtin O'Muilleoir, was reputedly going to send me has not in fact been received.

I do however very much agree with your view that the Irish language is part of the heritage and culture of Unionists as well as Nationalists and is no more the property of one community than the other. It is unfortunate that anyone should try to use this shared heritage, and specifically the Irish language, in a divisive way when, if anything, it should be a means by which reconciliation and mutual understanding are promoted.

NEW Improvements over recent years with regard to State support for the Irish language and for Irish language schools will hopefully help to depoliticise the issue.

I can assure you that the Government in its efforts to support the position of the Irish language in Northern Ireland and in the island generally is very aware of the need to reach out to both communities. I am sure that this would be a sensitivity shared by all who genuinely seek to promote the language. In this context we have been particularly pleased to support the work of the Ultaich Trust in Northern Ireland.

NP I might add that your own support for the language as a trustee of Newry Bunscoil is an example of the cross community appeal of the Irish language.

I very much appreciate etc.,