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Title: Letter circulated from Clann na Saoirse to all members of the Fianna Fáil parliamentary party, condemning remarks made by Minister for Education Brian Lenihan in an interview with the *Daily Telegraph* on the development of Ireland since independence, and the effect of these remarks on the independence movements in Scotland and Wales.

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CLANN NA SAOIRSE

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29th August 1968.

A Chara,

At a meeting held in Dublin on 28th August, 1968, the National Executive of Clann Na Saoirse decided to circulate the following letter to all members of the Fianna Fail Parliamentary Party.

The National Executive of Clann Na Saoirse, having awaited some action being taken by the Government following our letter of 27th June calling for the resignation of Mr. Brian Lenihan, T. D., Minister for Education, has come to the conclusion that the Minister's statement in Dail Eireann on 11th July, 1968, is intended, apparently, to be the final explanation of this major blunder, - a situation which we cannot accept.

In that statement the Minister opened by saying 'that he could stand over completely his interview published in the "Daily Telegraph", thus indicating an attitude of defiance which makes it imperative that the Government and Fianna Fail Deputies in Dail Eireann should remove him from office without further delay.

Since our previous letter, already mentioned, and which was circulated to all Dail Deputies who are members of the Fianna Fail Parliamentary Party, there have been three different explanations regarding this matter, one from the Minister for Industry & Commerce to Mr. A. McDonald, P.R.O., Scottish National Party, emphasising that whether Scotland should or should not seek independence was a matter for the people of Scotland, and stating that he did not believe Mr. Lenihan could have intended the interpretation that Ireland's struggle for independence since about 1912 was useless. Another was from Mr. Lenihan himself, to a representative of the Gaeltacht newspaper "Amarach" in which he stated that his reference was misunderstood, and that he was explaining that there was a better way for the Irish to win self-government than by the means adopted to date. Thirdly there was the statement in Dail Eireann already mentioned.

With regard to the interview published in the "Daily Telegraph", it should be clearly understood that this newspaper, of very wide circulation, printed the interview under a double column heading entitled "'Stick to England", - Irish tell Welsh and Scots NATIONALISM DOESN'T PAY"'. Also, "A fall in the standard of living in Scotland and Wales would be the inevitable price of a declaration of independence from England, extreme nationalists in Scotland and Wales are warned by members of the Governments of both Northern Ireland and Eire". It can thus be seen how damaging such an unwise interview can become.

In the course of the interview Mr. Lenihan's opinions and Clann Na Saoirse's comments are as follows:-

The Minister.

The granting of independence to Scotland and Wales would not, in itself, solve any problems.

The issue was whether they should sacrifice the material benefits of integration with Britain (England) for the emotional attraction of independence. He was in no doubt that the two countries would be ill-advised to break away from Britain (England).

In Southern Ireland (sic) we have learned the hard way and have now turned the corner. We now have an expanding economy, balance of payments, and a rise in external reserves. This has only come about as the result of a whole generation's effort. It is a slow, painful grind, and independence, per se, will not solve the problems in Scotland and Wales.

He thought that Scotland and Wales would be well advised to maintain their links with England and develop some form of regional parliament to give them a greater voice in the running of local affairs.

"Why should he urge a different policy for Scotland and Wales than the one followed by Eire? If the British Parliament had

Clann Na Saoirse.

It would immediately place the very considerable resources of these countries in the hands of their own governments for the use and benefit of their peoples.

What qualification has the Minister to judge that there would be any sacrifice of material benefits in countries with traditional and highly developed industrial establishments, vast water power resources, extensive mineral wealth, and a highly efficient agriculture??

The Minister's discouraging advice ignores the fact that he represents a country which had to fight a war of independence, followed by the devastation of a civil War and the loss of six North East counties with all their industrial assets. To relate this experience to the prospects of complete countries such as Scotland and Wales is clearly absurd.

It is strange that the Minister should find himself holding the same views as the English Conservative Party, who, apprehensive of their prospects in Scotland and Wales at the next general election, are suggesting a similar compromise.

The only logical conclusion to be drawn from this observation is that we would have had today an all-Ireland type of Stormont

Cont/.....

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backed Gladstone and given us home rule,-
a limited form of self government, a lot of
bitterness between this country and Britain
would never have happened.

Parliament, subservient to Westminster,
without any of the essentials of
Nationhood.

It must also be pointed out that the Minister for Education's efforts to explain in Dail Eireann the "Daily Telegraph" interview became even more ridiculous when he attempted to relate the difficulties of the emergent African nations with economically developed countries such as Scotland and Wales, having a tradition of industry going right back to the beginnings of the industrial revolution. Ignorance of this kind is surely out of place in the holder of such an important and respected Cabinet post as the Minister for Education.

As a result of this unfortunate interview, Captain Terence O'Neill, Prime Minister of the Stormont Government, was able to say in a 12th of July speech;- "Many journalists from across the water come to see me and ask how Stormont works, and I always start by saying something like this; - 'Independence for Scotland would be crazy'. Before I can finish my sentence they often say: - 'Yes, that is what they told me in Dublin yesterday.' Can it be that after 48 years of massive emigration to Britain the dawn of truth is breaking??? - - We can have our present prosperity only as an integral part of the United Kingdom. What Dublin is now starting to realise may eventually filter through to the Nationalist Party here."

Similarly, at the recent bye-election at Caerphilly, Wales, the English Labour Party used Mr. Lenihan's statements to help defeat the Welsh National Party candidate.

By such an appalling lack of responsibility and national conviction Mr. Brian Lenihan, T. D., obviously does not measure up to the standard required from a member of the Government, and particularly from a Minister for Education. For this reason, and also the fact that the prestige of the Government and the country as a whole is at stake, it is essential that the Minister be relieved of his post.

Is Sinne, le meas,

George Kennedy Scott
George Kennedy Scott. (Chairman)

Jim Normile
Jim Normile. (General Secretary)

Normile