

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



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Joint Studies.

Working Group on Measures to Encourage Mutual Understanding.

1. The general background to the work of this group has been described in Mr. Kirwan's summary note introducing the general brief on the Joint Studies.

Membership.

2. The membership of the Group is as follows:-

Irish Side

D. Neligan, Assistant Secretary,  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
(Chairman)

B. Meehan, Assistant Secretary,  
Department of Education.

F. Murray, P.O., Department of  
the Taoiseach.

M. Burke, Counsellor, Department  
of Foreign Affairs.

Ambassador Kennedy attends all  
meetings held in London.

British Side.

P. Eyers, F.C.O. (Chair)

M. Moriarty, Under  
Secretary, N.I.O.

P. Carvill, Under Secretary,  
Northern Ireland Department  
of Education.

W.N. Weban Smith, Cabinet  
Office.

D.G. Libby, Under Secretary  
Department of Education and  
Science.

Ambassador Figg.

3. Terms of Reference

1. To analyse the reasons for misconceptions in each country over attitudes and Government policies in the other.

2. To consider measures which the two Governments might take, jointly or separately, to remove such misconceptions and improve mutual understanding; including measures in the fields of youth and other exchanges, secondment of officials, and co-operation over educational, scientific and cultural matters.

3. To consider measures which might be taken in co-operation with non-governmental organisations.

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#### 4. Progress to date.

Two meetings of this Group have been held to date. At the first meeting there was a wide-ranging discussion which covered such areas as youth and sport, education, official level contacts, municipal contacts, contacts between corresponding interest groups and cultural activities. The report of the first meeting of the group is at Tab 1. It was agreed that contacts already take place in all of these fields both with official support and informally. Papers were exchanged before the second meeting and discussion concentrated on the specific areas among those described above which seem to be susceptible to official encouragement. Copies of these initial papers are at Tab 2.

After the second meeting the Irish side handed over a second set of papers in the form of draft paragraphs for a report to the joint steering group, on the following subjects: youth and sport, and education. The report of the second meeting is at Tab 3 and copies of the second set of papers referred to are at Tab 4. The British side were to produce papers on contacts between special interest groups and cultural exchanges, but they have not yet done so. It may be assumed however that these papers are among those held by the British Embassy pending resumption of the Joint Studies process after the recent election.

Agreement in principle has been reached on a proposal for mutual secondment of officials. The British have stated that they were anxious for an early start in this area. At the meeting in London on 14 April it was felt that, assuming this broad agreement was approved by the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister, announcement of the proposed scheme of exchanges might be made in the communique issued following the next Heads of Government meeting.

In the course of both meetings of this group we indicated that we would be interested in utilising excess capacity at third level institutions in Northern Ireland in particular N.U.U. in Coleraine subject of course to feasibility. Both the N.I. and the British representatives responded favourable to this suggestion. At the London meeting of the 14 April the N.I. representative indicated that subject to reference back to the third level institutions concerned, the North could be of assistance to us in providing places for civil and structural engineering students and probably also for electrical/electronic engineering students. He was less certain about the capacity of the N.I. institutions to cater for our short-fall in the area of mechanical engineering. A projection of our lack of capacity is annexed - Tab 5.

A considerable amount of time was spent at both meetings on a draft paper on the reasons for misconceptions between the British and Irish peoples. While the Irish side have sought to concentrate on measures to remedy such misconceptions the British have attached considerable importance to defining the causes. After an exchange of papers - the British paper being unusually sharp in its wording - it was agreed to attempt a compromise paper and the Irish side handed over a draft compromise paper without any reply so far from the British side. A copy of our draft compromise paper is at Tab 6. (The British paper on misconceptions is included among the papers at Tab 2).

Also attached (Tab 7) is a copy of a Memorandum on Culture prepared by this Department in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Director of the Arts Council and handed over to the British side prior to the April meeting of the Working Group. We are awaiting a considered response to this Memorandum.

E MURRAY

Department of the Taoiseach.

2 July, 1981.