

An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Taoireach,
Our recommendations are as at A, B and
C of this note.

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To:

Mr. W. Kirwan, Assistant Secretary.

From:

B. McCarthy.

he When meditation to Taoiseach, as Minister for the Gaeltacht,
to Glor na nGael function, 16 May, 1987

The Private Office asked for views on this in the light of the not regarding the Northern Ireland dimensions of the matter.

It will be noted that the President is presenting Glór na nGael prizes on Sunday, 17 May, and West Belfast will be the recipients of the main Jubilee Year prize. Apart altogether from the possible of Sinn Féin dimensions, I would not support the recommendation of Roinn na Gaeltachta that the Taoiseach should attend. While it is true that his attendance is being sought in his capacity as Minister for the Gaeltacht, I think it quite excessive to have the President and a member of the Government attending functions on consecutive days at the invitation of any national organisation even one which promotes the Irish language. At most, I would recommend that the Minister of State at the Department of the Gaeltacht might attend.

On the Sinn Féin aspect, I asked the Department of Foreign Affairs to make discreet enquiries about the likely presence of members of that organisation at the function to which the Taoiseach has been invited and at the prize giving ceremony at which the President will be officiating. Foreign Affairs say that their contacts in Belfast suggest that there will not be any prominent P.S.F. members present. Ó Muilleoir who is the Chairman of Sinn Féin's Cultural Committee and one-time Chairman of the Glór na nGael Committee in West Belfast is unlikely to be there.

There does not seem to be any valid reason from the political point of view vis-a-vis policy on Sinn Féin, why the Taoiseach or the President should not attend. Indeed, in terms of preventing the

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hijacking of the language by P.S.F., it is important that some "official" presence be registered. It is also necessary to avoid labelling all members of West Belfast Glór na nGael as supporters or members of P.S.F..

This issue has arisen before in connection with the President's attendance at the 1985 awards and, more recently, in October 1986, when the Glór na nGael awards which are being presented by the President, were first announced. I attach a copy of Mr. Murray's note of 13 May, 1985 and yours of 23 October, 1986 which set out the issues considered at that time.

I consider that the President's presence on Sunday, 17 May, is sufficient recognition of Glór na nGael's 25th anniversary and that the Taoiseach should decline the invitation. At most, the Minister of State at the Department of the Gaeltacht should attend.

As the President has been attending prize giving ceremonies for Glór na nGael for a number of years now, the Áras did not consult us on this particular one. I think, however, that we should advise Áras of the outcome of the enquiries made by Foreign Affairs but pointing out that there can be no guarantee that prominent members of P.S.F. will not be present and that the President might therefore exercise the necessary care as regards photographs etc..

4 May, 1987.