

REPLY TO CIRCULAR OF 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 69

AN CHOIMISIUN LE RINCI GAELACHA

110, Ard Easmuinn,

DUNDEALGAN,

4 - 12 - '69

A Chara,

As you are possibly aware the time has come when you and all other registered teachers and adjudicators of Irish Dancing must make an important decision - whether to remain registered under the rules of An Choimisiun, or instead, to give your allegiance to another body, thereby becoming a teacher and/or adjudicator unregistered with An Choimisiun.

This position has arisen due to a decision taken at a meeting of the body known as Comhdhail Muinteciri na Rinci Gaelacha, which amounts in effect to breaking with An Choimisiun and taking over its functions. The net effect of this has been to place teachers and adjudicators in the position whereby they must choose, under whose authority they wish to place themselves - that of An Choimisiun or An Comhdhail.

If you were not at the meeting on 30th November, you may perhaps have been given the impression that all teachers were in favour of the decision taken - this is far from the truth. It is understood that only about 50% of all registered teachers attended the meeting in question. Of those who did attend, a substantial number left the meeting before any vote was taken, in protest against the manner in which the meeting was handled - a secret ballot was refused. These teachers and adjudicators have indicated their intention of remaining loyal to An Choimisiun, as have many others who did not attend the meeting. Even some of those who remained at the meeting have reconsidered, or are reconsidering their decision to support a "Break".

We are confident that at a minimum, 50% of registered teachers and adjudicators will give allegiance to An Choimisiun, and we feel that the final percentage will be much higher.

I wish to emphasise that An Choimisiun has no desire to pressurize you into re-registering, if you feel you should do otherwise. I would however, suggest that your decision be a personal one, i.e. that you yourself weigh up the "pros and cons", and make up your own mind as to your course of action, ignoring efforts to influence your decision by any individual or group. You are not legally bound by the way you voted at any meeting or by any document you may have signed.

If your decision is to remain with An Choimisiun, I assure you that there will be sufficient competitions for the teachers and adjudicators. Have no doubts, but that An Choimisiun will continue to function and function effectively. We do not claim that An Choimisiun cannot be faulted on the service it has provided up to now - it is unfortunate that the "break" has come when An Choimisiun is in the process of improving its efficiency by the appointment of extra officers, regional representatives etc. However, those who continue with An Choimisiun will have the benefit of the improved service we plan.

If you decide not to re-register, what will be your position with An Choimisiun? You will, in effect, be no longer a registered teacher or adjudicator of An Choimisiun and consequently ineligible to enter pupils for, or adjudicate at, competitions organised by An Choimisiun.

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continued.....

re-accepted - indeed to do so would possibly be unfair to the teachers and adjudicators who remain loyal in the present situation.

In order to give teachers and adjudicators adequate time to consider all aspects of the matter before reaching their decision it was decided, even before last Sunday's meeting, to extend the closing date for re-registration for 1970 to 31st December, 1969. Consequently teachers and adjudicators fall into four classes.

- (i) Those who have already paid their registration fees for 1970, to An Choimisiun, and intend to give their allegiance to An Choimisiun. If I do not hear from them to the contrary by 31st December, we will take it that they still support An Choimisiun.
- (ii) Those who have already paid their fees for 1970, but no longer wish to be registered with An Choimisiun. They should notify me accordingly by 31st December.
- (iii) Those who have not yet paid their fees for 1970 to An Choimisiun but wish to re-register. They should send their fees and registration forms by 31st December to the Treasurer  

Donal O Broin,  
Bothar Baile Mhuire,  
Rath Eanaigh,  
Baile Atha Cliath 5.
- (iv) Those who have not yet paid their fees to An Choimisiun, and do not wish to re-register. Unless application forms and fees are received by the Treasurer, by 31st December, we shall automatically take it that you are severing your connection with An Choimisiun.

What has led to the present "break" ? The reason advanced by An Comhdhail is "the Northern problem" As the various aspects of this are far from clear to many teachers and adjudicators, I have set out, for your information, the sequence of events as I see them. If this is the only major problem, I fail to see why it should be utilised as a weapon to attempt to wreck An Choimisiun north, south and overseas.

Up until 29th November, An Choimisiun gave "de facto" recognition to An Comhdhail i.e. it met delegations from An Comhdhail from time to time to discuss problems, discussed and accepted many recommendations from its Annual Convention, corresponded with it etc. In view of developments over the past few weeks An Choimisiun has now decided to withdraw all recognition from An Comhdhail and will no longer correspond, meet or deal with it in any way. An Choimisiun is, however, prepared to formally recognise and deal with area associations of teachers and adjudicators where such associations are in turn prepared to accept and abide by the rules of An Choimisiun.

It is now up to you to make your own decision as to where you stand, and act accordingly, keeping in mind that 31st December is the final date for acceptance of re-registration.

Mise le Meas,

Eamonn De Bhal  
Ard Runai.

"THE NORTHERN PROBLEM"

This is but a synopsis of the events which have led up to the present dispute. It being a rather complicated problem, I will mention only the more important issues.

A Feis had been held for many years at Moville in Co. Donegal. Until 1969 this had been an Unregistered Feis, although many of our registered teachers and adjudicators had taken part.

The programme for this feis in 1969 appeared some weeks before the feis was due to be held and included three entries for the dancing section which had been made by a parents association. It also included a catch-phrase which said "entries accepted from anyone, anywhere, but not after the closing date".

The teachers of Derry took exception to both of these items and convened a meeting to which they invited representatives of An Choimisiun (North and South) and An Comhdhail. At this meeting, which was held on the Sunday prior to the feis it was generally agreed that there were, or seemed to be, irregularities. The secretary of the feis was contacted by phone but he seemed reluctant to admit that there were irregularities or breakage of rules.

This event, being a Feis, was registered with Comhaltas Uladh of Connra na Gaeilge and therefore An Choimisiun were unable to take any action. It was therefore stated by An Choimisiun representatives that the matter would be put into the hands of the Secretary of Comhaltas Uladh. This was done on the following day, and the Secretary of Comhaltas Uladh spared no effort over the next couple of days to ensure that rules would be adhered to. On Thursday of that week agreement was reached and the Feis Secretary agreed to comply with the rules of An Choimisiun.

In the meantime the Derry teachers had decided not to support this feis and published a statement in the local paper to this effect. An Comhdhail issued a direction to all its adjudicators not to officiate and the two adjudicators who were already booked withdrew at the 11th hour. These two adjudicators informed the Feis Secretary, that they were not prepared to adjudicate and he in turn contacted the Secretary of Comhaltas Uladh and pointed out that he was now adhering to Commission Rules and yet the registered adjudicators would not fulfil their contract. The onus was then placed on the Secretary of Comhaltas Uladh to get two adjudicators. A genuine attempt was then made to get two other registered adjudicators. Many were contacted but because of the direction of An Comhdhail all but one refused. The one who agreed, Miss Sweeney, Derry, could unfortunately only officiate on one day and so Mr. S. McAuley (at great inconvenience to himself) decided to go along on the other day, but even he could not stay for all the sessions. There was one session without an adjudicator. In the circumstances the Secretary of Comhaltas Uladh decided "that the feis must not be let down", and so he appointed a capable person who was not and is not a registered adjudicator.

This is "the Northern problem". This is the irregularity or violation of rules which is being referred to by An Comhdhail.