

MEETING. 30 NOV 69  
COMHDHAIL na MUINTEOIRI RINCI GAELACHA.

54, Bothar Stiofan,  
Ath Cliath, 8.  
9u Nollag, 1969.

To : All Members.

A Chairde,

As you are aware, a Special Convention of An Comhdhail was held in Jury's Hotel, Dublin, on the 30th. November. The subjects to be discussed were, (a) The situation which had developed between our members in Ulster and the Commission, and (b) Relations between our members in general and the Commission. In connection with these matters, the Convention was being asked to consider a Motion from your Executive calling on all our members to terminate their connections with An Coimisiun le Rinci Gaelacha.

At the outset of the Meeting the Convention adopted Standing Orders which limited speakers to five minutes each so as to give the maximum opportunity for everyone to express his or her views. However, in view of the fact that there was a Motion in the name of the Executive, and in order to ensure that no member who was opposed to that Motion would have any grounds for complaint, the Chairman allowed speakers who opposed the Motion to address the Meeting several times and for longer periods than Standing Orders permitted. Even a suspended member, - who, of course, would not be entitled to attend such a Meeting in any other organisation, - was allowed to hold the floor on a number of occasions.

Towards the end of the Meeting, - when the members were preparing for a vote, - one member stated that he was going to remain with the Commission no matter what the result of the vote might be. This position was, of course, challenged. It was pointed out that the Comhdhail was a democratic organisation, and that all were bound, - by virtue of their membership, - to abide by the majority decision, whatever it might be, and those who were not prepared to do so should withdraw before the vote was taken. After some heated remarks, and with a lot of calling to one another to "Come on," 31 members left the Meeting. Let us be quite clear about this: there are absolutely no grounds for misunderstanding about the matter: those members withdrew simply and solely because they were not prepared to abide by a majority decision, and they did this before the vote had been taken, and when the result was still in doubt.

The Executive's Motion, to terminate relationships with the

Commission, was then put to the Meeting, and passed by 92 votes to 2. The Executive was then instructed to take certain steps to put the Motion into effect, and it was agreed that a Special Convention be convened on the 4th. January, 1970.

All our members have received a circular from the Secretary of An Coimisiun. We will confine our attention to two of the points raised by him.

1. The Secretary of the Commission suggests that members withdrew from the Special Convention because they were refused a secret ballot. The facts are as given by us above. True, there was a request by some member for a secret ballot, to which some other member replied that no one should be afraid to cast his vote in public. The request was not pursued any further. If it had been proposed and seconded, no vote could have been taken on the main Motion until the Secret Ballot proposal had been voted on.

However the important fact is that the teachers and adjudicators had a right to vote on the issues. They had that right by virtue of their membership of An Comhdhail. Their Registration with the Commission gives them no such right: it does not even give them membership of the Commission: the best it gives them is a vote in the election of eight members to the Commission out of a total of 33 members.

The position is even worse than appears above. Note, for instance, the difficulties that have arisen in the case of Ulster. In An Comhdhail, we had our Special Convention, every member having the right to be present, to speak, and to vote. When the matter came before the Commission, however, the "Registered" people are not even consulted. Only the 33 members of the Commission had a right to discuss the matter at all. The Commission asked for a meeting with the Coisde Gnotha of Connradh na Gaeilge to discuss the matter, but were refused this courtesy. Now, do you, or do you not, wish to have a proper voice in Irish Dancing affairs?

2. The Secretary of the Commission tells our members, "You are not legally bound by the way you voted at any meeting or by any document you may have signed."

It was he, himself, who underlined the statement in his letter. He left the statement without any qualification whatsoever. The implication is quite clear: moral obligations are of no consequence and are ignored. We wish to state quite clearly that we



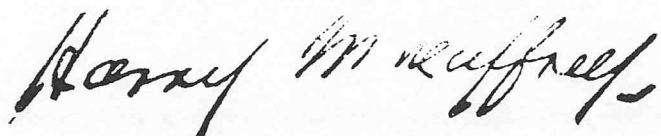
have no welcome in our ranks for anyone who accepts this morality: we believe that such a person is unfit to be a teacher of young children, and we earnestly hope that he or she stays, and goes down, with the Commission which adopts this strange morality.

As we have said, we do not wish to discuss the Commission any further, and we will only attack it if we are forced to do so in order to defend ourselves. We have more important work to do: to obtain a definite commitment from teachers and adjudicators, and to proceed to build up the world of Irish Dancing in an orderly and dignified way so as to win for it the proud place in our cultural life to which it is entitled.

You must commit yourself. We are entitled to be able to tell the other teachers and adjudicators that you are with them in your loyalty to your own organisation, and that you are not afraid to stand as a free person in a free professional body of your own.

An Official List of teachers and adjudicators will be published by us in January, 1970, and it is imperative that you notify us not later than the 31st. December, 1969, so that your name will appear on this list.

Is mise, le meas mór,



Ranai an Chomhdála.