

Brenda Bantable

COMDHAIL MUINTEOIRI NA RINCI GAELACHA

Date as Postmark.

A Chara,

In a recent statement issued by The Irish Dancing Commission to all teachers and Adjudicators, it was inferred in the opening paragraph that the contents of the circular was a recommendation emanating from a meeting which was held in Dundalk and attended by Individuals from both The Irish Dancing Commission and The Congress of Irish Dancing Teachers(An Comdhail). This is untrue. The Executive of An Comdhail emphatically deny the statements which were made in the circular issued by The Irish Dancing Commission.

The following are the facts:-

At the request of Fr. McNicholls of Strabane, a meeting was held in Dundalk on 29th December, 1970 with a view to opening exploratory talks on the Irish Dancing situation. The Executive of An Comdhail selected as their delegates Mr. Harry McCaffrey and Mr. Rory O'Connor. Representing The Commission were Mr. Eamon Wall (Studoir) and Mr. Eamon O'Connor (Chairman of the Northern Commission). In the chair was Fr. McNicholls.

After a prolonged and friendly meeting and discussion it was agreed that three proposals should be put before the Executives of both An Comdhail and The Irish Dancing Commission. Each body was to have reported back to Fr. McNicholls with the proposal they felt would be a basis for further talks.

Within a fortnight An Comdhail had forwarded on to Fr. McNicholls the proposal they were prepared to continue the talks on. Not so the Commission. To our knowledge they have held at least six Commission Meetings without coming to a decision on the Dundalk Proposals. They had not the common courtesy to notify Fr. McNicholls of the result of their deliberations on this important subject.

The Strabane Feis Committee, of which Fr. McNicholls is President, made a public statement to the press on 9th March, 1971. Included in the statement was the following...."Let it be said that the Executive of An Comdhail was most co-operative all the way and accepted every reasonable offer towards a solution".

"The same cannot be said, we state with regret of some members of The Commission (North & South) who rejected the proposed solutions of even their own members. They vindictively seem to want The Teachers Organisation to capitulate and repent from being in a position to which the mistakes and failures of An Commission of past years drove them".

In the light of this information it should be quite clear to the members of both organisations who is responsible for the present impasse.

The Executive of An Comdhail recommend that all its members ignore The Circular issued by The Irish Dancing Commission. If the time comes for positive action you will receive instructions from your Executive.

Mise le Meas

Annraoi Mac Gafraidh

(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 in 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.

Is this CWC refered 2 of leaf ?