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FORUM FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS HELD AT
DUBLIN CASTLE ON FRIDAY, 6 OCTOBER, 1995

Chairperson: Judge Catherine McGuinness

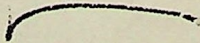
I hereby certify the following to be a true and accurate transcript of my shorthand notes of the above-named proceedings.

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MR. SEAMUS CLOSE: Thank you Chair. The paper - I am going to concentrate again on this necessity at the moment for teachers to have Irish for teaching in the south and this Parity of Esteem we hear a lot about and how it is not practised in this particular avenue. The document refers quite a lot to pluralism, to partnership, it refers to the need to identify and tackle factors which give rise to social exclusion and marginalisation. And I put it to you, that there is no single factor which more marginalises teachers graduates for example from Stranmillis College than the shackling of their mobility in looking for jobs through this compulsory necessity for Irish. While the paper suggests that the white paper is an important strategic statement by the government of the parameters in which the education system will develop over the coming years; could you identify to me where this problem is addressed and adequately addressed? Thank you.



MISS EILEEN BELL: Thank you Madam Chairman. I will try to be brief but I think I would be remiss in my duty if I didn't congratulate the two organisations on their work over the years. I think it was David who referred to the work of both organisations at the coal face level of education. So therefore I would like to congratulate them and Senator O' Toole's refreshing language showed how much in tune they are with the concerns.

My question is about, actually about educational administer both North and South, and I think both unions would be able to address this. You both recognise that there must be better flexibility and a consensual approach if we are to improve communication and mutual understanding. Regional educational councils have been recommended by one of you, and as you know the Minister in Northern Ireland Mr. Ancram, recently introduced a series of proposals in relation to the numbers of duties of our Education Library Boards, and you had upheld them as a good example for your own regional education councils.

Due to the intense lobbying, not least of all my own board which was going to disappear if his proposals went which we weren't happy about, so he deferred his decision until he consults with the political parties. I would like to know from you if you share the concerns of most of the people in education, and in the boards, that although we welcome the support of the political arena, the decision may well turn out to politically lead rather than educational lead one and our concerns are based on the fact that in the previous Department of Education proposals and procedures, such as LMS that Tommy touched on, education for EMU, transfer procedures, open enrolment, all these things that have been put in as I think again, I think it was Des said about legislation and then the whole, all those procedures have put a lot of help - sorry, a lot of hindrance within the practical role of day to day education in Northern Ireland, therefore they do not help they hamper the development of the education service in Northern Ireland. So although your

papers, in theory, are certainly very good future developments
I
would like to see how we could address those concerns before we
talk about future developments.