

MINISTER'S MEETING WITH FESTIVAL FOR YOUTH SOCIETY ON MONDAY 25 JULY AT 11.30 AM IN STORMONT HOUSE

1. PRESENT: FESTIVAL FOR YOUTH SOCIETY

IN ATTENDANCE

J Carson (President)  
G Corbett (UEL)  
T Donnelly  
R Friers  
R Hope  
L Jones  
C Larmour  
E Rainey (Chairman)

T Johnston (DENI)  
K Wallace "  
S Law "  
R Spence (PSG)  
J McConnell "  
R Templeton "

2. INTRODUCTION

The Minister welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr Carson expressed thanks on behalf of the Society members for the Minister agreeing to meet with them.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE SOCIETY

Mr Rainey commenced by briefly describing the history of the Society and their involvement in the setting up of 2 previous youth festivals in 1983 and 1985. He explained that the aim of the Society was to bring the youth of the province, from whatever backgrounds, together, and in this respect the previous festivals had been successful. Mr Corbett presented to the Minister photographs of the last festival held in the King's Hall, Belfast, and added that it was hoped to hold a similar event in 1989 or 1990.

The Minister asked for details of the proposed festival including the duration, the entertainment and sporting components which would be provided, together with the venue.

Mr Corbett explained that it was hoped to be a 5-day event running from Monday-Friday. In previous festivals Downtown Radio had catered for the entertainment value with young people being permitted to try their hand at radio presentation. Les Jones stated that on the sporting side the army had provided equipment for absailing and fitness testing which had proved a great success.

The Minister put forward his idea of a province-wide festival as he felt that an event confined merely to the King's Hall might be fairly static. Such things as cricket, football and other sporting competitions could be organised together with music and scientific exhibitions. He stressed that he did not wish to take the emphasis away from the King's Hall venue but could envisage a much broader and more successful event than had been held previously. Mr Jones expressed slight reservations about the Society's ability to cope with such a proposition and pointed out the need for more professional and voluntary staff to assist.

Mr Donnelly asked the Minister if finance would be made available. He replied that there would be some Government input but at this stage it was too early to say exactly how much. He hoped that there would be commercial interest which would help with the costings. He closed the meeting by requesting that the Society take away some of the ideas discussed and come back to officials at a later date with a more complete package for presentation.



E. R.

RB5/273/88

1) Mr R. A. Kegan *Ref'd 28/7*

*To note pl. Mr Vallance & I attended the meeting referred to at x below.*

2) Mr K. W. H. A. A. A.

cc. Mr T Johnston - DENI  
Mr McCusker

*To see & have filed pl.*

Mr Sample

*Ms Law*

*for Festival File pl.*

*28/7*

*JF-26/7*

INTERNATIONAL FUND : A COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAMME

1. Further to my minute of 22 July, you might note the possibility of International Fund support for a major cross-community youth festival planned for 1990.
2. The NI Festival for Youth Society Ltd - a registered charity - has run two youth festivals in 1983 and 1985 based in the King's Hall and involving a mixture of entertainment, sport and information. A couple of meetings have been held with the Society (including a meeting today chaired by Dr Mawhinney) about their ideas for a further festival. We have stressed the need to broaden their approach and to think in terms of a series of Province-wide and cross-community events for young people in addition to a 5-day King's Hall exhibition. We have indicated that the Fund might be a possible source of financial support as well as Government and the private sector.
3. The next step is for the Society - which endeavours to operate on a cross-community basis - to work up more detailed proposals for submission to potential sponsors; officials will be keeping in touch with their deliberations.
4. Until we see the Society's proposals, it is difficult to make even a crude guess at total costs, but we are probably talking about something in the region of £ $\frac{1}{4}$  - £ $\frac{1}{2}$  million. If this turns out to be a reasonable guess, the Society could be seeking up to £1-200,000 from the Fund.
5. For your present purposes as Chairman of the Fund's Advisory Committee I think that all you need to do is to note the idea of a major cross-community Youth Festival in 1990 as an example of the sort of activity which the Fund might support under "a community relations programme".

*R/B*

R B SPENCE

Central Secretariat

25 July 1988

/JH

*J24A/1*



BRIEFING FOR MINISTER'S MEETING WITH FESTIVAL FOR YOUTH SOCIETY ON MONDAY,  
25 JULY

BACKGROUND

In 1982 a number of individuals including Lord Blease of Cromac came together to promote the concept of alternative openings for young people in the absence of real jobs. They formed themselves into a Festival Society employing Ulster Exhibitions Ltd to promote a Festival of Youth in January 1983.

This was very much a pilot exercise aimed at displaying to young people the wide range of opportunities and services available in the Province ranging from training programmes to volunteering in social services. Government agreed to underpin the costs of staging the event to the tune of £30,000 but, when floor space rental and stand construction costs are added, the total was in the region of £95,000. The event was opened by the Secretary of State with about 25,000 people attending over a four day period and it was seen as a moderate success.

The Festival Society remained in being and in 1984 put a similar proposal to the Secretary of State for a 1985 event to celebrate International Youth Year. Government again provided a substantial amount of money for the purchase of floor space<sup>and</sup> by way of block grant. The event ran for four days in January 1985 - probably the most severe weather conditions of the Winter - and attracted in excess of 44,000 people. The Festival was more professionally organised and presented thus ensuring a wide media coverage. From the International Youth Year point of view, the Festival provided a very strong base and gave impetus to the varied programme of events throughout the year.

CURRENT PROPOSAL

The Festival Society had planned to mount a similar exercise in the Spring of 1989 and this matched the Secretary of State's expressed wish that a major event should be planned to demonstrate the positive side of life in Northern Ireland.



A meeting took place on 15 March between Messrs Rainey and Corbett of the Festival Society, Spence and Hamilton of Central Secretariat and Johnston and Wallace of DENI. Various possibilities to combine the desires of the Society and the Secretary of State were discussed and it was agreed that representatives of the Society should develop their ideas at a meeting with the Minister.

Because of a misunderstanding as to who would be setting up such a meeting, there has been a delay and any proposals for a major event will probably be targeted at early 1990 rather than 1989. From recent conversations with Eric Rainey, I understand that the Society would be keen to organise another festival which would be run in conjunction with a major conference - possibly on the theme of community relations.

#### PRECEDENTS

Apart from supporting the two previous Youth Festivals, DENI played a major role in the arrangements for a major Recreation Management Conference in 1979 which was held at Queen's University. That event attracted about 400 participants from the United Kingdom and the Continent and was regarded as one of the most successful of these annual Conferences which are mounted by the Sports Council. Accommodation was arranged in the QUB Halls of Residence and the Conference included a reception at Parliament Buildings and a dinner at the City Hall. Needless to say the media coverage was extensive and very favourable.

#### PERSONALITIES

The following members of the Society's Committee of management will be attending:-

Mr John Carson	President
Mr Eric Rainey	Chairman
Mr Rowel Friers	Treasurer
Mr Tom Donnelly	Past Chairman and ex-SDLP
Mr Roger Hope	SCOYO
Mr Les Jones	NIAAA
Mr Cyril Larmour	King George VI Council



(possibly) Mr Garth Corbett  
Mr "Dusty" Miller

Ulster Exhibitions Ltd  
Sports Council

Officials: PSG Mr R Spence  
Mr R Templeton  
Mr J McConnell

DENI T Johnston  
K Wallace