

1. Private Office *Re 12/11/86.*
2. Minister

#### EUROPEAN STUDIES (IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN) PROJECT

1. This is to bring you up to date on the progress of this curriculum development project before your meeting with Mr Thompson on 21 January.
2. The Project Steering Committee has met twice, on 22 November 1985 and 14 January 1986, and has co-opted Mr Thompson as a member. It has agreed that a press release (attached) and advertisement for a Director should be sent to the press in all 3 countries for publication during the week 27-31 January. Interviewing of candidates will take place on 24 March, so that an appointment may be made before Easter.
3. The Trustees of the Museum were asked on 13 January for their agreement to the basing of the Project in the Museum. One of them, Mr Cedric Wilson (Councillor, DUP) leaked the contents of the paper describing the project which had been sent to the Board. Press extracts are attached. As you will see the Belfast Telegraph of 13 January quoted extensively from the document, only adding Mr Wilson's interpretation at the end, the News Letter report was brief and factual, and the Irish News concentrated on the (ludicrous) claim that the 7th floor of Rathgael House would be cleared to make way for the Project personnel. We are hoping that, having made their point, the DUP will now drop the issue in favour of something else.

In ignorance of this leak, the Trustees unanimously agreed to host the Project. Some of the strongest support came, surprisingly, from the Official Unionist Councillors on the Board, who (unlike the DUP) did not boycott the meeting. It remains to be seen whether this support will continue when the 2 unionist parties realise that they have taken different positions over the Project. I am hopeful, however, that the Official Unionist Councillors will not renege on their approval especially as the Belfast Telegraph of 14 January published a statement from DENI denying Councillor Wilson's allegations and setting the setting



the Project in the context of the long standing co-operation between the  
3 Departments of Education in curriculum development.

*J B S O'Kelly*

J B S O'KELLY

17 January 1986

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## PUBLICITY RELEASE

A curriculum development project, entitled: "European Studies (Ireland and Great Britain)", the planning of which began in early 1984, is to be organised and funded jointly by the Department of Education (Northern Ireland), the Department of Education (Dublin) and the Department of Education and Science (London). This will extend their long-standing co-operation in the educational field, and contribute to current educational developments in the wider dimension of the European Community, where for some years schools from across Europe have taken part in the transition from education to adult and working life and European Community Environmental Education Network projects.

The aim of the project will be to encourage pupils in the 11-15 age group in a number of schools in Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic (6 in each area) to explore the shared elements and rich diversity in their historical and environmental heritage in the European context. This will be assisted by aspects of new technology such as interactive video and computer networking.