



**BRITISH-IRISH
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY**

**COMHLAUGHT IDIR-PHARLAIMINTEACH
NA BREATAINE AGUS NA hÉIREANN**

REPORT

from

COMMITTEE D (Cultura, Education & the Environment)

on

- 1. SABHAL MÒR OSTAIG AND THE COLUMBA INITIATIVE**
- 2. THE WARRINGTON PROJECT**

1. Committee D's last report to the 1999 March Plenary was concerned with Education and Inter-community relations and sought to identify areas in which co-operation both north-south and east-west could promote mutual understanding between those involved in education. In that report, we mentioned the work of two projects which we felt were deserving of greater attention than we had time to give them during the course of the work for the March Report. The first was the **Columba Initiative**. We described the launch of the project on 7 June 1997 and explained its aim of facilitating cultural and linguistic exchanges between the Gaelic-speaking communities of Scotland and the island of Ireland.

2. The second was the **Warrington Project**. This project was launched in Warrington after the death of Jonathan Ball and Tim Parry in the IRA bombing of March 1993. In the words of the project's literature "The Warrington Project aims to promote mutual understanding between the peoples of Ireland and Britain at community level and to influence grass roots opinion by breaking down traditional prejudice, misunderstanding and stereotypes". The focus of its work is schools and the development of teaching strategies which permit Irish source materials to be incorporated into the National Curriculum. The Committee very much regretted that it did not have the time to travel to the offices of the Columba Initiative and the Warrington Project during the course of the work for the March report. However, we have subsequently made such visits and present a short information report to the Body about the work of the Columba Initiative, of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (the Gaelic-medium higher education college which forms a base for the offices of the Columba Initiative) and the Warrington Project.

SABHAL MÒR OSTAIG AND THE COLUMBA INITIATIVE

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

3. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig was founded in 1973 in Sleat on the Isle of Skye, initially offering summer courses in the Gaelic language and music. Today, such summer courses remain an important part of the work of the college, offering students total immersion courses in the Gaelic language for beginners and for those returning to the language at differing levels of competence. In addition, the growth in popularity of these courses has encouraged the college greatly to expand its activities and to launch a range of full time Gaelic-medium courses to Higher National Certificate [HNC] and Higher National Diploma [HND] level. These are supplemented with courses in business management, broadcasting and information technology. The most recent prospectus now offers full-time courses such as the HNC Cursa Comais ann an Gàidhlig (a one-year intensive course leading to fluency in spoken Gaelic), Business Administration with Gaidhealtachd Studies and an HNC course on rural development in the Gaidhealtachd. Successful completion of these and other courses can also count towards BA courses offered at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig through the University of the Highlands and Islands [UHI], of which it is a constituent college.

4. Two such degree courses are presently offered at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig: a BA in Gaelic Language and Culture and a BA in Gaelic Arts with hands-on experience of

drama, music and dance. A third - Gaelic and North Atlantic Studies with an emphasis on comparative studies of social, linguistic and cultural developments - is planned for the autumn. In addition, the college offers a diploma in Gaelic Television which is taught from professionally-equipped studios within the college.

5. During our visit, we toured the facilities of the college and saw many of the summer schools at work. The new part of the campus, the stunningly situated Arainn Chaluim Chille, brought home to us the intimate links between the college and the community that it supports. The whole of the entrance foyer offers beautiful views across the water to the mainland and offers meeting places and residences for students and staff where Gaelic is spoken both at lessons and in leisure time. We were told that the college gives 56 people full-time Gaelic language related employment in a community of 700 people - a substantial contribution to the continuing vitality of the language on Skye.

6. The recent expansion of the college into these new premises had occurred as a result of an expansion of interest in Gaelic both from within Scotland and abroad. Staff at the college told us that the Scottish Office and subsequently the Scottish Parliament had contributed, and they believed would continue to contribute, to a native interest in the language. At present 50% of the students were based in Scotland and many were returning to education after periods of employment because they wished to take part in the increasing opportunities for the use of language which were developing in non-academic fields such as tourism, catering and the arts. Many of the students were 25 years old and above, exemplifying "Lifelong Learning", because the modular-based courses offered at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig meant that people could take years off between parts of a course.

7. The College was attempting to respond to the needs of the community and of its foreign visitors by developing a pilot project in cultural tourism in the Western Isles. It hoped to develop packages for holidaymakers which were distinctively language-based and which would encourage tourists to spend more than one night on the island to sample its culture and food. This development was partly in response to the great expansion of contacts with the college which were made through the Internet - 50% of orders for texts and teaching materials in Gaelic were now arriving via the Internet from abroad and the potential for development in this area of contact was something which the college was keen to expand as a benefit to the whole community.

8. The Committee was very impressed by the many ways in which the college used technology to its advantage. We visited the room which was used for video conferencing between the 13 constituent sites of the University of the Highland and Islands and saw how such systems could create a strong sense of community within very isolated populations. We were told that in addition to these 13 main sites, partner institutions were being identified where connection to the network would greatly strengthen regeneration of the Gaelic language. Once established, such sites could be used as a base for training in the use of the Internet and in other communication skills, to the benefit of remote communities. We also toured the

impressive broadcasting facilities, where dedicated courses in broadcasting were taught from fully operational studios. Nine students were accepted onto the course each year - a number that was carefully chosen so that the industry could absorb all those who were successful enough to be able to pursue a career in Gaelic Broadcasting. This course was particularly effective in promoting links between the Gaelic-speaking communities of Ireland and Scotland. Several Irish students had in recent years completed the course and returned to Ireland to work in Gaelic broadcasting.

9. During the visit we saw much at the college to demonstrate that there was great scope for effective links between Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the Gaelic language education projects that we had seen during the work for our March report to the Body. The staff of the college acknowledged the importance of building such partnerships by taking groups of students to Gaelic-speaking areas of Ireland and by learning from Irish methods of promotion of the language and literature. During the work for our March report on our visit to Meanscoil Feirste on the Falls Road in Belfast we noted that one of the most important contributions to the self-confidence of Gaelic school pupils was the availability of 'A' Level papers in Irish; they felt that insufficient present-day status was afforded to the language for its study to be worthwhile. We therefore applaud the way in which Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has linked Gaelic and information technology, Gaelic and business studies and has supported posts for a writer and a musician in residence so that Gaelic culture is seen to be something which is vibrant and developing, rather than as an historical survival. The fact that the current writer in residence is from Dublin serves to emphasise the links between the two language communities.

10. The staff of the college said that they needed to learn more about the promotion of literature and music from their Irish colleagues but there are equally other areas in which we hope that there will be opportunities for the college to lend its experience to the work which is taking place in Gaelic-speaking communities in the island of Ireland. On our visits to Belfast we were told that one of the greatest problems for teachers at Irish-medium schools was the availability of attractive teaching materials in the language. During our visit to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig we were shown the offices of Cànan Publishing which worked from within the college to provide a wide range of Gaelic teaching resources for all ages and abilities and for tourism and cultural activities in the Gaelic-speaking parts of Scotland. Included in the samples described to us were back-up materials for children who joined a TV club to encourage them to listen to Gaelic on the television and radio, guides for teaching in Gaelic, and a CD-ROM for tourists from abroad, sections of which would be made available over the Internet as a "taster" for the full retail version. The unit was experienced in the need to "sell" Gaelic to a sceptical population before selling its products in Gaelic, but in 1997 it reported sales to the value of £1800 after a week promoting Gaelic language teaching in the main Scottish cities.

11. We noted in our March report that the problems of differences in dialect mean that it is difficult for primary school teachers in the North of Ireland to use teaching materials from schools in the South. Therefore we do not consider it likely that there

could be direct exchange of the texts and materials which we were shown. However, the exchange of ideas by publishers in Ireland and at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig could prove extremely beneficial both to those developing the materials and to the pupils who would benefit from the new ideas that would be generated from such shared experience. We understand that European money from Directorate General XXII is enabling Cànan to begin to build such links with Irish printers. Some of Cànan's staff will shortly go on a visit to Ireland to begin what they and we hope will be a very successful period of co-operation.

The Columba Initiative (Iomairt Cholm Cille)

12. The Columba Initiative was launched on 9th June 1997 to foster closer cultural and linguistic ties between the Gaelic-speaking communities of Scotland and the island of Ireland. On 16th December 1997 a Scottish Co-ordinator for the project was appointed. On our visit to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig we met Mr Donald MacIannan, who works as co-ordinator from a base at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, and his Irish colleague Michelle Ni Chróinín. A third co-ordinator, Maolcholm Scott, works in Belfast. We discussed the work of the Columba Initiative and were given examples of the type of projects funded by the initiative, some of which are set out below. It was stressed to us that the scope of the Columba Initiative goes beyond cultural events to encompass common themes in economic and social development; but such is the potential for strong musical links between the Gaelic-speaking communities in Scotland and Ireland that many of the projects take music and the arts as their foundation.

Seachtain Àrainn Chalum Chille

13. This project was the most ambitious of those carried out by the Columba Initiative to date. A youth parliament for Gaelic speakers was held in tandem with celebrations to open the new campus at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in the week beginning 21st March 1999. The Columba Initiative organised the parliament and concerts which included artists from both sides of the Irish Sea, exhibitions, workshops which varied from drama to song, lectures on history and legends, poetry and prose readings and a live concert which was broadcast to Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Leabhar Mòr na Gaidhlig / the Great Gaelic Book

14. The Columba Initiative is supporting a project to produce a contemporary Book of Kells to which 150 artists from Ireland and Scotland (poets, visual artists, painters and calligraphers) will be invited to contribute. The aim will be to create a major new artwork which will tour extensively as an exhibition, be available as a publication and will eventually go on permanent display in Scotland and Ireland.

Cúrsa Traenála Drámaíochta / Intensive Drama Training Course

15. This intensive drama course is a three-week pilot project for young Gaelic-speaking actors from Ireland and Scotland. It is intended to give young people who

are interested in working professionally as actors a chance to develop their skills in a field where there are sufficient production staff but few trained Gaelic-speaking actors. It is intended that the course will culminate in a performance on the final night and will continue annually if the first year is a success.

An Triantán/Leader and heritage training course for Gaelic youthclubs

16. This project is a tripartite scheme between Connemara, Belfast and Benbecula, whereby Gaelic youth-club leaders will be trained to enable them to encourage and train future leaders in personal development and cultural heritage.

17. The project officers also described projects which they hoped would be developed in the future. Amongst such schemes were a project to twin music summer schools in South Uist and County Clare and a Columba Initiative CD recording. Of particular interest to the Committee following its work on Education and Inter-Community relations were projects described by the project officer for Northern Ireland such as a weekend at Corrymeela and a piping tour which would bring together people from both Protestant and Roman Catholic communities. In words which encapsulated many of the conclusions of Committee D's report, Maolcholm Scott wrote

"The relationship between Ireland and Gaelic Scotland brings with it a vision of a common Gaelic heritage which is greater than divisions between Catholic and Protestant. It has great potential for making Irish language accessible across the community divide."

18. The project officers also expressed the hope, which we share-that with time the Initiative could be broadened to involve other parts of the British Isles. The expectation for such expansion would not always be that the language was spoken but that interest in Gaelic culture could be stimulated in communities in which it had not previously existed.

THE WARRINGTON PROJECT

19. The Warrington Project is a registered charity which is based in office space in Warrington Town Hall. As we noted in our March 1999 Report, the inspiration for the project was the determination of Warrington people to respond constructively to the death of two of the town's young people in the bombing of their town centre in March 1993. Teachers in Warrington explained to us that one of their greatest problems in the days and weeks in the aftermath of the bombing was that children in Warrington schools wanted to know "why?" and "how?" something so devastating to their community could have occurred. Despite the huge amount of press and media attention devoted to Irish matters, the children, their parents and their teachers were unable to explain satisfactorily the historical background to what had happened and to give the children the answers they needed to come to terms with what had occurred. The issues were considered to be so complex and the subject matter so sensitive that teachers did not want to embark on classroom discussions without guidance from reputable sources.

20. From the beginning, therefore, the Project concentrated its work on schools, teachers and young people in compulsory schooling and beyond to the age of 25. It also worked closely with teachers better to equip them with methods of increasing knowledge and understanding of Ireland in Britain. The Committee visited the Project in November 1999 and met with teachers and the project coordinators to see how the school-based work of the project was progressing.

21. The Warrington Project is developing a programme of "Ireland in Schools" in conjunction with the Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool. As the project literature explained, the key to understanding this work of the project is that:

"Ireland in Schools does not attempt to add another subject to a crowded curriculum. Rather it encourages teachers to draw, where appropriate, on Irish examples in their teaching of the main subject areas within the National Curriculum and of existing GCSE and Advanced Level syllabuses."

22. Rather than allowing Irish studies to become compartmentalised in teachers' and children's minds, this approach allows an integration of Irish themes into a broad spectrum of lessons in exactly the same "whole school" approach which was advocated by supporters of Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) during our visits to Belfast in 1998-99. The Committee were given two main examples of the development of this approach: the Literacy Hour in primary schools and "Ireland in schools" in secondary schools.

The Literacy Hour

23. The British Government's introduction of the Literacy Hour in primary schools under the new National Literacy Strategy has made compulsory a time for organised reading to introduce children to ways of exploring a broad spectrum of reading, writing and oral skills. A group of teachers supported by the Warrington Project is conducting a pilot scheme in which themes in Irish Literature are included within the Literacy Hour.

24. The Committee met with Mrs Yvette Blake, Literacy Co-ordinator of Park Road County Primary School in Warrington, one of the schools participating in the pilot scheme. Mrs Blake explained that she and her year 5 and 6 classes were exploring the theme of "mystery and magic" and had begun to work on the books of Alan Garner which were set in nearby Alderley Edge. In comparison to these "British" books they had then read the Giltspur trilogy by Cormac Mac Róis which was set in the mountains of County Wicklow. The children were encouraged to make comparisons of the style of the two authors, of their use of setting and character. Questions such as the power of the magic of the characters allowed teachers to explore themes of "good and "bad" magic and to question what happened when two sides believed that theirs was the exclusively "good" magic. Similarly, they could explore and compare the ways in which women and men were characterized.

25. A younger class (year 3) examined ways in which giants were characterised in British and Irish folk stories and fairy tales. Through using simple themes to discover that not all giants were violent and threatening and that not all of them had beards and dark hair, children were introduced at an early age to stereotypes. They were also encouraged to appreciate how different countries had their own traditional tales, some of which shared similar themes to stories with which the children were already familiar.

26. Teachers participating in the pilot schemes were quick to realise the potential of such comparisons for promoting themes of mutual understanding and the strength of their impact was enhanced by the British-Irish themes. Children in Warrington wrote to the Irish author, Cormac Mac Raois and obtained from him photographs of the area about which he was writing. They also e-mailed and wrote to children at St. Patrick's school in Blackrock, Ireland to swap their impressions of the contrasting books and their settings. Further contact led to the exchange of tape recordings of the stories and advice on pronunciation of Gaelic. On the day that we visited Park Road School, the younger (year 3) children were writing letters to new penfriends at the Blackrock school and exchanging their impressions of other books. Future projects included a school celebration of St Patrick's Day.

Ireland in Schools - Years 7-11 (secondary education)

27. The Committee visited Sir Thomas Boteler High School in Warrington to meet with teachers who were developing Study Units for trial in the Warrington area. We were introduced to Mrs Wendy Kelly and Mr Paul McAleese who taught history and humanities to children in years 7 to 11.

28. The teachers explained that Sir Thomas Boteler had been one of the first schools to introduce the Warrington Project strategy for 11 to 16 year olds. The units were each designed to be incorporated into school lessons as extra dimensions to syllabus work. They were:

- **The Irish Potato Famine:** A teaching resource for British History in the nineteenth century, this unit encouraged students to consider the causes, course and consequences of the last major famine in Western Europe. Teachers at other schools whom the Committee had met on the previous evening had also illustrated how the famine could be used as a starting point for discussions on migration, sense of place and identity. For more junior pupils it could be used as a basis for development of family trees and an introduction to the use of census records and electoral rolls as historical source material.
- **A study in reconciliation: Northern Ireland and Warrington:** Year 10 pupils were encouraged to consider how far the promotion of tolerance and understanding in place of aggression and prejudice had assisted the peace process. We were shown examples of pupils' work in which they were asked to show by means of flow diagrams the steps on the path of reconciliation.

One of the first steps that was frequently cited was "finding out about others" and this theme was not treated with an exclusively Irish emphasis: Ireland stimulated a discussion of why pupils held prejudices about people from other schools or people who supported other football teams. Many of the themes that were discussed in these lessons were later developed by the pupils for use in school assemblies.

- **Conflict in Ireland:** This module was prepared for GCSE historians in year 11 who were working on the part of the curriculum devoted to study of "the modern world". Pupils were encouraged to examine two main themes from modern Irish history over the last 30 years: sending troops to Northern Ireland and the attempts of the provisional IRA to reunite politically the island of Ireland. The unit sought to test the skills of historical analysis demanded at GCSE level by encouraging critical examination of a wide variety of source materials ranging from text books and novels to newspapers and television reports, culminating in the writing of extended essays in which arguments had to be supported by appropriate evidence. The library of the school held many Irish newspapers and newspaper cuttings illustrating the different perspectives from which the news about Ireland was reported.

32. The Committee also met with teachers who were experimenting with extending the exploration of Irish history to Advanced level. It was explained that the A level syllabus and pressure to teach towards subjects on which there would be examination questions did not allow teachers to deviate from core topics to include specific units on Irish history - indeed such an "add on" approach was not the aim of the Warrington Project. However, teachers at A level found that the sensitivity with which pupils and staff approached Irish historical themes, finding them at once familiar on the surface but poorly understood in depth, led to excellent opportunities to discuss in detail the ways in which historians were required to handle source materials in any subject area.

33. Three study units had been designed to assist A level teachers and students wishing to study the Irish aspects of nineteenth century syllabus alternatives. Units on Catholic Emancipation and Gladstone offered British and Irish perspectives on familiar themes and sought to balance examination of the roles of prominent individuals with investigation of the importance of social and economic conditions. The third unit on the conditions of towns and the Irish immigrants encouraged students to examine common myths and opinions surrounding these topics and to use modern data and contemporary perspectives to evaluate debates on the impact of migration. The Warrington Project literature quoted the Chair of Examiners in A level history at the NEAB who welcomed the study units "as a model not only for delivering the NEAB History A level syllabuses but also for studying the history of other migrant and minority groups and their relationship with, and impact upon, Britain."

34. In our March 1999 report, following a meeting in London with members of the Warrington Project, we recommended that the Irish Minister for Education and

Science finance the secondment of a teacher from Ireland to the Warrington project to act as a schools liaison officer. It was envisaged that this teacher would work on the development of themes of Irish literature within the National Literacy Strategy. Following the endorsement of this recommendation at the March 1999 Plenary, the Warrington Project made a formal application to Minister Martin in April 1999. We encourage Minister Woods to review this application. Now that the Committee has visited Warrington to see the excellent work that is being carried out there we are all the more convinced that support from both Governments should be provided to further the work of the project .

35. Project officers told us that since the beginning of the project they had received £10,000 from the Irish Government and £40,000 from the British Government. A total of £50,000 over six years seems to us to be a very small amount of money, given the enormous potential of the Project for contributing towards mutual understanding at an auspicious time in British-Irish relations. We have seen for ourselves the impact that the introduction of Irish literature into primary schools can have on children's perceptions of one another, their neighbours and their fellow children from Ireland. As a result of our visit we have identified key areas in which we suggest to both Governments that small amounts of grant aid would allow the Warrington Project to expand.

36. The Committee were impressed by the way in which children as young as those in year 3 were involved in the Project and that units had been developed to extend this involvement throughout the period of compulsory education and into A level studies. We were, however, concerned that the project relies so heavily on the ingenuity and energy of committed teachers in selected schools that there was no guarantee that a child beginning project work at the age of seven would find Warrington Project themes available at his or her secondary school. The key to the Project's work is that children encounter the messages of mutual understanding and tolerance of difference over as much of their school lives as possible so that thinking in those terms becomes second nature. A break as children entered adolescence could, we suspect, undermine much of the foundation work in early years. The Project needs the resources of paid full-time advisers to be able to build on the work so far. The Warrington project's application to Minister Martin explained that " 'Literature and Literacy' is at present led by Professor Patrick Buckland, an historian, on a voluntary basis. To maintain credibility and momentum, it must now be led full-time by a trained English teacher."

37. Professor Buckland told the Committee:

". . . the main obstacle to the expansion of the Warrington Project is lack of resources, financial and human. We have the vision, enthusiasm, strategy and tactics to make the study of Ireland an integral part of the education system. We have done very well to date on very limited resources. John Donlan administers the Project generally with the help of two part-time secretaries, and the funding for his post expires shortly. I work more than full-time on a voluntary basis, using my own equipment and office at home and am happy to continue to do so. However, the

limit to what I can do has been reached and "Ireland in Schools" will wither unless the Project is able to recruit two professional officers to develop the programme."^[1]

38. Our interest in the work of the project is such that we also believe it should be disseminated more widely in Britain - the opportunities afforded for the furtherance of mutual understanding and tolerance are too great to be missed. At present the Project works in an area centered on Warrington because the inspiration for the work grew from the Warrington bombing and because it does not have the resources to expand. Some of the teachers with whom we met had personal connections to the island of Ireland which enabled them to use examples from their own experiences to encourage children to look beyond news headlines to examine British-Irish history on a more personal level. They also had excellent contacts for the provision of sources which were not readily available in Britain. It was obvious to every member of the Committee that the study units developed were not geographically specific to Warrington: such was the way in which the units had been integrated into the curriculum the skills which they encouraged and examined were universally applicable. However, the success of the project outside Warrington schools will depend to a large extent on the availability of support for "new" Project teachers who do not have the cause of the bombing to inspire them or the personal contacts to kindle their enthusiasm for the project work. Once again, funding for full-time post or posts to promote and co-ordinate the work of the project will be needed if it is to build upon its Warrington successes.

39. Progress is being made but more is clearly needed. Since our November visit to Warrington we have been informed by the Project Officer of two developments which should greatly assist the expansion of the programme. "Ireland in Schools" is being incorporated into initial teacher training programmes and in-service training for teachers, initially in conjunction with the Schools of Education at the Universities of Nottingham and Birmingham (at Key Stages 3-5, AS and A-level); the School of Education at University College, Northampton (Key Stages 1 and 2 and the lower end of Key Stage 3); and Greenwich LEA (Key Stages 1-5). The Project has also formed a working partnership with the British Library to encourage the use of original source material concerning Ireland in schools and to provide appropriate resources based on the Library's collections. Recognition of the Project's work by teachers outside Warrington and by a prestigious institution such as the British Library are a timely boost to the work and profile of the Project. We hope that the expansion of the Project to teacher training colleges will be a relatively swift, institutionalised way of achieving geographical dissemination of the work and values of the Project whilst easing the long-term costs in terms of time, resources and energy which are currently borne by the Project and its "pioneer" teachers in the Warrington area. In the short term, the Project bears the costs of buying out the time of teachers to work with in-service training projects, the provision of substitutes for those teachers and their travelling and subsistence expenses.

40. One additional theme of conversations with members of the Project and with other witnesses to our 1999 report who were involved in applying for government grants was that their projects were not easy for Government departments to

categorise. Because their work extended to exchanges with the island of Ireland they were often directed to the European sections of grant awarding bodies when much of their work was closely linked to the National Curriculum or youth projects in England and Wales. The Committee was concerned that small organisations found the applications procedures so confusing. We therefore recommend that Ministers in Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic examine ways of streamlining the ways in which grant applications concerning work on relations between Britain and the island of Ireland are examined to ensure that applicants receive clear and concise advice on how to put their cases most effectively.

41. The achievements and the potential of the Warrington project for contributing to mutual understanding between people in Britain and Ireland is illustrated by a simple example of students' work taken from the Project's literature. It explains:

"There is a telling difference between the typical response [to the question of which words they most readily associated with "Ireland"] and those given by a visiting German student and by a Warrington student who had taken part in the exchange visit with an Irish family.

Typical student response: War, IRA UFF, Scenic place, Bombing, Killing.

German student response: Separate country, Dublin the capital, A Republic, An island, Irish language, Northern Ireland part of UK.

Exchange student response: Kilbride school, Good friendship, Expensive, Eileen, Exchange, Big place."

42. We urge both Governments to examine the ways by which they can recognise officially the excellent work being carried out by the project coordinators, teachers and pupils in the Warrington area and to encourage the expansion of their work.

Conclusion

43. We wholeheartedly support the aims of the Columba Initiative, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the Warrington Project and hope that this information report to the Body will stimulate other Members' interest in their work.

44. At the **Columba Initiative and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig**, the Committee thanks Norman N Gillies, Director, Lachie Dick, UHI Co-ordinator, John Norman MacLeod, Head of Studies, Dr Morag MacNeill, Leirsinn Research Centre, Donella Beaton, Chief Executive, Cànan, Donnie Munro, New Development Director of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Allan Campbell, Chief Executive, Comunn na Gàidhlig, John Farquhar Munro MSP, Donald A MacLennan, Scottish Project Officer, Columba Initiative and Michelle Ni Chróinín, Irish Officer, Columba Initiative, for giving up their time to meet with the Committee and for their generous hospitality during the visit. We also thank

Maolcholm Scott, Northern Irish Officer, Columba Initiative, for writing to the Committee.

45. At the **Warrington Project** we thank John Donlan, Project Co-ordinator, Professor Patrick Buckland, Trustee and Chairman, "Ireland in Schools" and Mrs Mary Greenslade, Chairman, for organising our visit and accompanying us to meetings at schools. The Committee also thanks Mr Barry Chambers, Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Wendy Kelly and Mr Paul McAleese of the Sir Thomas Boteler High School, Grammar School Road, Latchford, Warrington, Mrs Helen Long, Headteacher, Mrs Yvette Blake, Deputy Headteacher, Miss Suzanne Lewis and Mr. Stewart Stark of Park Road County Primary School, Great Sankey, Warrington, Mr Peter Mulholland, Head of Humanities, Urmston Grammar School, Newton Road, Urmston, Manchester, Mr Tim Kershaw, Calday Grange Grammar School, West Kirby, Wirral and Mrs Sue Banister, Headteacher, St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Warrington for taking the time to meet with the Committee and for allowing the Committee to meet the pupils in their classes who were working on some of the study units developed by the Warrington Project.

Draft Resolution

That the Body takes note of the Report of the Committee on Culture, Education and the Environment on the Columba Initiative, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the Warrington Project, and agrees with the conclusions and recommendations of the Report, which should be forwarded to both Governments for their observations.

1 Letter to the British Clerk to Committee D, 16th December 1999.

APPENDIX MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS RELATING TO THE REPORT:

Members visiting Skye on 6th-7th July 1999:

Ms Jean Corston MP, Mr Brendan McGahon TD, Ms Marian McGennis TD (Vice-Chair), Mr Roger Stott CBE MP (Chairman)

[Adjourned to 24th November 1999.]

Members visiting Warrington on 24-25th November 1999:

Ms Jean Corston MP, Mr Brendan McGahon TD, Ms Marian McGennis TD (Vice-Chair), Mr Kevin McNamara MP

[Adjourned to 1st February 2000.]

Meeting in Dublin on 1st February 2000:

Ms Jean Corston MP, Mr Jimmy Deenihan TD, Mr Conor Lenihan TD, Ms Marian McGennis TD (Vice-Chair), Mr Kevin McNamara MP

Draft Report [Columba Initiative, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the Warrington Project] proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 5 read and agreed to;

Paragraph 6 read, amended and agreed to;

Paragraphs 7 to 27 read and agreed to;

Paragraphs 28 read, amended and agreed to;

Paragraph 29 and 30 agreed to;

Paragraphs 31 read, amended and agreed to;

Paragraphs 32 to 35 read and agreed to;

Paragraph 36 read, amended and agreed to;

Paragraphs 37 to 42 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be made to the Body.