

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE

I have carried out the normal administration of the Association during this period and have been involved in routine liaison with civil servants, Irish Embassy personnel, etc.

MANAGEMENT OF EXPENDITURE

I have located and moved to a new office which achieves the economies projected in office costs.

An interim, half-time contract has been agreed by the Officers and will be put to the Executive for their approval today. The main difficulty concerning this contract is that it is proving difficult to carry out the work which needs to be done within the time laid down.

Cuts in the two chief areas of expenditure give the Association some extra time within which to fundraise. However, fundraising is still a matter of great urgency.

Efforts continue to reduce expenditure on bulk post through earnings from distribution of fliers.

In the interests of managing the Association's finances, it would seem sensible that budgeting be introduced, and that the Treasurer be asked to main areas of Association expenditure and to propose ceilings for all of these.

The auditors have proposed a standard claims form for expenses. Such a form has been devised Treasurer and should be used for claiming expenses.

GOOD NEWS

There are a number of positive developments to report since the last meeting of the Executive.

1 The Association will shortly produce a brochure with endorsements from leading figures in politics, business, scholarship, and the arts. This will be used to enhance the standing of the Association and to assist with fundraising.

2 The discussions and negotiations which have been in progress since the last Executive meeting have led to the identification by the Officers of an enthusiastic team who are prepared to produce a new association magazine to replace the Newsletter and Irish Studies in Britain.

The non-appearance of the Newsletter and Irish Studies in Britain and the continued erratic distribution of the ILS (at the same time as the membership fee was being raised) were factors which were beginning affect retention of membership. The prospect of the regular appearance of a BAIS magazine and a more punctual distribution of the ILS are therefore important developments.

3 Bob Purdie, in addition assisting greatly with the proposal

for a new Association magazine, has located a volunteer willing to assist with the Association's cultural programme: Dr Steve Regan of Ruskin College. Steve met the Officers on 20 September for an exchange of ideas and there will be a proposal to the Executive today that he be asked to undertake the convening of a Cultural Subcommittee.

4 A fourth series of BAIS lectures has taken place at Bath College of Higher Education in conjunction with the Bristol Irish Festival. The theme was "Irish writers". The lectures were well attended and the format added a touch of style to a worthwhile occasion.

5 A brochure on Irish Studies in Higher Education is currently being prepared by George Boyce and David Cairns. It is intended to issue this in the spring. It will be useful both in advertising Irish Studies in higher education and in making friends of BAIS aware of the progress of Irish Studies at this level.

6 I have been negotiating for some time now for a tripartite conference of sixth formers from Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Funding has already been made available for this purpose by the Ireland Fund of Great Britain and the Department of Education in Northern Ireland; and we are approaching the DES and a number of other sources for funding. This conference is likely to increase our capacity to gain funding from these sources. Both Bob Bell and I feel that will also be a useful springboard for other schools-orientated activity.

ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEES

As ever, the situation here is mixed. George Boyce will have a number of items to report on the Higher Education front. The Irish language subcommittee continues to organise successful day-courses for Irish-language teachers in Britain. Kate Thompson is also working on proposals to obtain LINGUA funding for a number of the subcommittee's activities. Bob Bell and Joe Sheeran are still committed to initiating activity on the schools front.

With news of continuing developments in adult education, many of them following the model developed by Nesson Danaher in his autumn course at Soar Valley College, I have suggested to Nesson that it would be useful if the Adult Education Subcommittee were to generalise from the cumulative experience of recent years to produce a document which would assist others in initiating courses.

MEMBERSHIP

The Treasurer and I have begun to implement a series of procedures on membership which we hope will improve the efficiency of the membership procedure.

The facts suggest that we need to give more thought to the retention of members, although some of the lapse in membership is