

B.A.I.S.

Higher Education

We have had a year of what I would regard as mixed fortunes.

The areas of success include:

- 1) A useful meeting between myself, J. O'H, D.C., R.D.E., and Mr. Robert Jackson in June.

- 2) A seminar later in June in which
 - (i) we had a briefing from Dr. Jeremy Jennings on Erasmus.
 - (ii) Robert Jackson spoke about the Government's policy for higher education. This attracted around 25-30 people and was generally considered a success.

However, it is less easy to claim any tangible benefits from these meetings, useful though they are. The Government is still determined to allow Irish Studies (with other academic disciplines and areas of interest) to find their own feet. We can expect no special financial help.

This suggests to me that our best option is still that of regarding ourselves as a 'holding company', offering useful advice, prompting initiatives, or adding the (quite considerable, it seems) weight of our name to academic ~~institutions~~^{INITIATIVES} that are envisaged or are already taking place. To this end we should consider:

- (i) the production of an 'Irish Studies: Where to Study' booklet, on the lines of that inspired by the American Conference for Irish Studies;
- (ii) Suggesting the idea of exchanges between Universities where staff might act as Professor Emrys Evans did at Liverpool for a session - as a kind of 'visiting fellow'.
- (iii) Explaining the possibility of using the British Association for American Studies as our 'role model' - they (I suspect) have little money, but great enthusiasm.

(iv) We should continue to lobby for Government support.

(v) We should try to organize or suggest more 'In-Service Training' days for teachers - especially for the elements in the National Curriculum relating to Ireland.

Finally, the greatest achievement in the field of Higher Education is the advertisement for a Chair in Irish History in Oxford - which has nothing to do with this committee - but owes everything to the dedicated and untiring efforts of our Chair-person!

D.G.B.