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NATIONAL PLAN FOR GAELIC

DEAR PEADAR

My wife, Lillian and I attended a public meeting in her native Dundee (when we visited Scotland last month) to discuss the National Plan for Gaelic. This letter is in response to the request for comments from the public in general as well as from various organizations.

I fell in love with Gaelic music in the middle 1930's when I heard my brother-in-law, Neil MacCormick, the husband of my sister Jenny, sing with the Glasgow Gaelic Choir. Neil's family was from Mull and he spoke the Gaelic.

All my life I have been fascinated by Gaelic music and its haunting beauty. ALThOUGH I emigrated to the USA in 1948 I carried this feeling with me.

In 1987, when I was back in Scotland for six months, I sang with the Greenock Gaelic Choir, which had just won the Mod in Edinburgh. Finlay McNeil was one of the Gaelic speakers who would come to give us the proper Gaelic phonetics. I was very happy singing with this Choir and I was familiar with many of the songs they sang. I was at home.!

I obtained a Gaelic correspondence course through Glasgow University when I returned to the USA and had 24 lessons. My tutor, Mr. McLeod, corrected my written and oral responses. I felt good that I was following my instinct to help perpetuate the Scottish heritage.

Without day to day contact with any Gaelic speakers my progress has not been rapid at all. On the other hand I have written a couple of Gaelic songs and Mr. McLeod translated a children's book I had written into the Gaelic, but Glasgow University, to whom it was submitted, said it was too lengthy and should be reworked. Unfortunately this never happened. I wanted the Scottish boys and girls to read my book!

The reason for outlining my interest in the Gaelic, is to suggest that a very good way to reach people, is through music. This is an obvious suggestion, but I thought my comments might strengthen your thoughts in this matter..

I know I can never be anywhere near fluent in the Gaelic. However, my tattered Gaelic book given to me by my wife, indicates that I have enjoyed going over the language in an endeavor to get even a feel for it.

Some of the things I have noticed about the many publications I have read might be of some interest:-

1. Every instructional Gaelic book, whether dictionary, grammar or other, should include phonetics.
2. An explanation of the subject of which nouns are feminine and which are masculine would be enlightening. I found that this important matter is glossed over with little instruction.
3. Many times I find words used in instructional books that included many words that would never be used in day to day conversation. I believe streamlining instructional books by eliminating seldom used words would accelerate the learning process.

4. None of the Gaelic instructional books I have read made reference to Gaelic music. It might be helpful to stimulate interest by including the music and words (with phonetics) to some of the most haunting and beautiful Gaelic songs.
5. The same could be said for art, and its Gaelic beauty.
6. Grammar is very important. In learning French and GERMAN, BY MEMORIZING THE TENSES, PRESENT PAST AND FUTURE ETC. FORMS OF VERBS, I FOUND TO BE VERY HELPFUL PERHAPS MEMORIZATION OF GAELIC VERBS SHOULD BE STRESSED MORE.
7. THE BIGGEST STUMBLING BLOCK I FOUND, BEING IN THE USA, WAS LACK OF COMMUNICATION. PERHAPS GAELIC "PEN PALS" MIGHT HELP IN THIS REGARD FOR PEOPLE IN THE SAME SITUATION.

MY WIFE LILLIAN FROM DUNDEE HAD A HIELAN' GRANNY IN DELNY NR. INVERGORDON, WHO SANG GAELIC SONGS TO HER AS A BAIWN AND THIS MADE AN IMPACT ON LILLIAN, WHO IS ALSO INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE GAELIC.

WHEN WE ATTENDED THE GAELIC MEETING IN BROUGHTY FERRY LAST MONTH WE WERE VERY IMPRESSED BY THE EFFORTS BEING MADE TO PROMOTE THE GAELIC IN SCOTLAND AND ABROAD. I ATTENDED WOODSIDE SECONDARY SCHOOL IN GLASGOW AND WE ARE PLEASED TO NOTE IT IS NOW A GAELIC SCHOOL!!

WE FEEL THE GAELIC IS A PRECIOUS HEIRITACE THAT MUST BE PASSED ON IN BETTER CONDITION <sup>THAN</sup> WHEN RECEIVED.

WE WISH YOU SUCCESS IN ALL YOUR ENDEAVORS.

SUAS LEIS A' GHAIDHLIG

LILLIAN & BOB POTTER