

07 NOV 2006

4.11.06.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I regret I have not had time to study the Draft National Plan for Gaelic in detail, nor do I have access to a computer.

I write as a non Gaelic speaking Scot, but one who has had a very long interest in, and support for the language. (It began with BBC Scotland Radio lessons around 1950!)

The experience of the Swiss Republic, which has been supporting Swiss for 70 years, is that there is not likely to be a mass return to the language by thousands of English/Scots speakers. The effort of official status there, and equality with English, means the publication in Swiss of masses of official paper which can be read by very few.

More effective are simple things which can be seen by the general public, Gaelic translations of street names, notices, ("AMAC, ISTEAC, FIR, MNA" etc), on bus and rail tickets. Articles in newspapers and magazines should be bi-lingual, as in "COTHROM". There should certainly be Gaelic lessons in primary schools, but not to the point of boredom or confusion. The main cities, (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee) are crucial in this, begin with the street names in Edinburgh, ("SRAID na PRIONNSA"), tourists love them in Dublin.

A start was made in Queen St, Glasgow, years ago, in striking form in the Railway Station there!, but not ~~followed~~ followed up in Central Station. Only a little "Failure" notice appears electronically in Waverley Station. There is no Gaelic in the "Welcome to Scotland" signs along the Border, these things must change. Even if the return to Gaelic is an impossible dream, little things can gradually increase the awareness and interest of the Scottish general public, now seeds in the minds of children, and from such who knows what may yet grow? Do not despise or neglect them.

There is a paradox here, although the "media" is swamped by Anglo-American rubbish, there is probably more Gaelic being broadcast and heard by more people today than any time since 1745! As a child, born and raised in Edinburgh 1933-51, I was only vaguely aware Gaelic even existed, my parents thought it had "died out"!

Clearly we have come a long way since then and, with the support now available as the song said "Things Can Only Get Better"!

Le dealbh dhìreachdan,

J. G. Lyon.