

in leaf 13

*Thank you. I found this useful: it
helps to confirm my view that
and not to be pushed*

Mr Corbett

Mr Corbett
Mr Morrow

From: Mr J A Canavan
CCRU

into anything extensive by way

16 / 11 January 1996

suppose.

JMD/SEC 476/11

To: Mr D J Watkins
US, Cent Sec

Mr. Gressos..

To note a pa

PA

12.

12 JAN 1996
CENT SEC

LINGUISTIC STATUS OF SCOTS AND ULSTER SCOTS

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16 / 1..

1. Your marginal note on the minute of Michael Ancram's meeting with the Ulster Scots delegation asked whether there was an academic basis for regarding Scots and Ulster Scots in the same way, the policy development proposed by the Minister.
2. It is generally accepted that Ulster Scots is an extension or variant of lowland Scots, "Lallans". The European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages recognises Scots as a lesser used language. Though EBLUL once published a European map showing Scots as being spoken in Antrim, Ulster Scots has not been recognised by EBLUL as a lesser used language. The Minister, who has an interest in Scottish cultural issues, attached much importance to the EBLUL designation for Scots and the implications of this for Ulster Scots. He commented on my briefing for the Paisley meeting "Is not the child of the same blood as the parent?".
3. The problem with EBLUL is that its members tend to be enthusiasts rather than objective academics and often go well beyond mainstream academic opinion in asserting claims for linguistic separateness throughout Europe. Language specialists in our local universities do not regard Ulster Scots as a language separate from English.

The Ulster Scots Language Society rely heavily on Professor Gregg of Vancouver for academic credibility. But they also claim that language specialists in this field are located in English Departments and this predisposes them to viewing Ulster Scots as a dialect of English. The USLS will therefore not be convinced by academic arguments. This is why I have regarded the dialect/language debate in relation to Ulster Scots as sterile.

4. The Scottish Office have never had to take a view on whether Scots is a dialect or a language. They point out that the issue is apolitical in Scotland and has not generated any heat. The Scottish Office has modestly funded the Scots Language Resource Centre at Perth and I have asked them for details of any other support for Scots at Central Government or local authority level. What is certain is that they do not regard the position of Scots as equivalent to Gaelic in Scotland, nor do the supporters of Scots claim such an equivalence.

[Signed: JAC]

J A CANAVAN