

# **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Monday 29 November 2004

Session 2

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## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**24<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2004, Session 2**

### **CONVENER**

\*Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD)

### **DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con)

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Ms Wendy Alexander (Paisley North) (Lab)  
Ms Rosemary Byrne (South of Scotland) (SSP)  
\*Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP)  
\*Mr Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
\*Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
\*Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab)  
\*Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab)

### **COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES**

Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con)  
Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
Rosie Kane (Glasgow) (SSP)  
Michael Matheson (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

\*attended

### **THE FOLLOWING GAVE EVIDENCE:**

Màiri Bremner (Comunn na Gàidhlig)  
Professor Norman N Gillies (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig)  
Iain Mac an Tàilleir (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig)  
Donald MacDonald (Comunn na Gàidhlig)  
Dòmhnall Màrtainn (Comunn na Gàidhlig)  
Mairead NicDhonnchaidh (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig)

### **CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Martin Verity

### **SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK**

Mark Roberts

### **ASSISTANT CLERK**

Ian Cowan

### **LOCATION**

Talla Dhonaidh Chaimbeul, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Isle of Skye



## Scottish Parliament

### Education Committee

*Monday 29 November 2004*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:05*]

### Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill

**The Convener (Robert Brown):** Good morning. We are in public session, so I remind everyone to ensure that their mobile phones and pagers are turned off—not just in silent mode, but turned off—in case they interfere with the equipment. *[Laughter.]* I can see that it is going to be one of those mornings. Gardez-vous, as they say.

*The convener continued in Gaelic.*

Madainn mhath. Fàilte dhan choinneimh seo de Chomataidh an Fhoghlaim. Tha e na thoileachas mòr dhuinn a bhith an seo aig Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

*Following is the translation:*

Good morning. Welcome to this meeting of the Education Committee. It is a great pleasure for us to be here at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

*The convener continued in English.*

You will be glad to know that that is as far as I will go, but I thought that it would be courteous to begin with a few attempted words in Gaelic from a non-Gaelic speaker.

I welcome everyone to this meeting of the Scottish Parliament's Education Committee. At our meeting this morning in Skye, we shall hear evidence from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and from Comunn na Gàidhlig, whose representatives are still on the ferry, as far as I am aware, so there might be a slight hold-up with the second group of witnesses—*[Interruption.]* I am told that they are here; that is good.

I begin by introducing Professor Tormod Gillies, Iain Mac an Tàilleir and Mairead Robertson from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, who will give us a few words of introduction before taking questions from the committee. I apologise if I have got anybody's name wrong—this interpretation equipment is doing my head in. I am sorry for the slightly delayed start, but we have had a bit of a technical problem. I am assured that everything is now in order, so I invite the Sabhal Mòr Ostaig representatives to give their evidence.

**Professor Norman N Gillies (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig):** Madainn mhath agus fàilte oirbh uile gu Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, colaiste Ghàidhlig na h-Alba. Tha sinn da-riribh toilichte gu bheil sibh air tadhal oirnn. Is mise Tormod MacGilliosa agus tha mi

nam stiùiriche air a' cholaiste. Tha mi air a bhith aig a' cholaiste bho 1983. Mar sin, chì sibh gu bheil mi 21 am bliadhna.

Còmhla rium an-diugh tha Iain Mac an Tàilleir agus Mairead Robasdan. Tha Iain Mac an Tàilleir mar òraidiche aig a' cholaiste agus tha e anns a' chathair air a' bhuidheann a dhealbh agus a tha anns a' stiùireadh poileasaidh cànan na colaiste. Tha e an dèidh a bhith an sàs an obair leasachaidh na Gàidhlig bhon àm a bha e an toiseach ceangailte ri Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, tràth anns na h-1980an. Tha Mairead Robasdan na h-oileanach air a' cheathramh bliadhna de cùrsa BA cànan is cultar na Gàidhlig. Buinidh cuideachd Mhairead do Shlèite agus tha an nighean aice, Eilidh, a' faighinn a foghlamachadh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann am bun-sgoil Shlèite.

Tha sinn an seo airson barrachd mineachaidh a dhèanamh air a' phàipear a chuir urrasairean Sabhal Mòr Ostaig fa chomhair Comataidh an Fhoghlaim. Ann a bhith a' deasachadh a' phàipeir, ghabh na h-urrasairean a-staigh beachdan gach cuid bhon urras fhèin, bho luchd-obrach agus bho oileanaich na colaiste. Tuigidh sibh nach eil sinn idir nar n-eòlaichean nar n-obair làitheil air breithneachadh air bilean—Gàidhlig no eile. Anns a' bheagan ùine a tha agam, ge-tà, bu toil leam dìreach facal no dhà a ràdh mu dheidhinn obair an t-Sabhail mar ionad nàiseanta airson cànan is cultar nan Gaidheal gus am faic sibh cò às a tha ar cuid beachdan a' tighinn a thaobh Bile na Gàidhlig (Alba).

Bho 1983 tha leasachadh mòr air tighinn air ar cuid obrach. Bho ochd oileanaich làn-ùine an uair sin, tha sinn a-nis le còrr is 100 clàraichte air trì ceumannan fa leth agus tha sinn ag obair mar phàirt de Oilthigh na Gaidhealtachd is nan Eilean, no UHI. Airson luchd-tòiseachaidh, dhealbh sinn cùrsa-inntrigidh a bheir cothrom do dhaoine Gàidhlig ionnsachadh ge bith càite a bheil iad stèidhichte. Tha 200 clàraichte air a' chùrsa sin agus tha còrr is 900 a' frithealadh nan cùrsaichean goirid againn gach bliadhna.

Tha 69 a' faighinn cosnadh anns a' cholaiste. Tha dà ionad-rannsachaidh againn agus tha sinn aithnichte mar ionad far a bheil deagh ghnè fhollaiseach anns na tha sinn a' dèanamh. Tha sinn an sàs ann an teagasg is ionnsachadh is rannsachadh, agus tha sinn ag obair gu cruaidh gus cultar nan Gaidheal a thaisbeanadh dhan mhòr-shluaigh. Tha ùidh againn cuideachd ann an leasachadh eaconomach agus tha sinn air ath-bheòthachadh fhaicinn a' tighinn air an sgìre seo anns an 20 bliadhna a dh'fhalbh.

Ciamar a rinn sinn an gnothach a h-uile sion a thoir chun na h-ìre seo? Tha an fhreagairt simplidh: le duilgheadas. Tha Sabhal Mòr Ostaig na shamhla air na bheirear gu buil le lèirsinn, dealas agus uile dhìcheall dhaoine aig a bheil de

shùim na bheir dòchas beò. Tha sinne mar cholaiste ag iarraidh gu dùrachdach barrachd a dhèanamh—tha na planaichean deiseil againn—airson Gàidhlig a chumail beò.

Chan àbhaist dhomh a bhith a' tarraing bho òraidean a' Phrionnsa Teàrlach, ach an uair a thadhail e oirnn o chionn dà mhìos air ais labhair e na briathran iomchaidh, cumhachdach seo:

"Tha iomadach uallach air Alba an-dràsta gun ghuth air cothroman mòra. Chan eil mòran uallaichean cho mòr ris na tha an lùib cùram air cànan is cultar; gu h-àraidh nuair nach eil iad sin ach ann an aon dùthaich a-mhàin. Ma gheibh Gàidhlig bàs ann an Alba, bidh i marbh air feadh an domhain. Ma thig piseach oirre ann an Alba, bheir sin misneachd is dòchas do dhaoine eile air a bheil an aon chùram is uallach. Sin an dùbhlán 's an cothrom."

Tha sinne aig Sabhal Mòr Ostaig a' faicinn Bile na Gàidhlig (Alba) mar chothrom air suidheachadh na Gàidhlig a neartachadh ann an Alba gu buannachd a' mhòr-shluaigh. Gun tèid gu math le Comataidh an Fhoghlaim agus Pàrlamaid na h-Alba ann a bhith a' toirt a' bhile air adhart. Mòran taing.

*Following is the translation:*

Good morning and welcome to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Scotland's Gaelic college. We are delighted that you have come to visit us. I am Norman Gillies, director of the college. I have been at the college since 1983, so you can see that I am 21 this year.

With me today are Iain Mac an Tàilleir and Mairead Robertson. Iain Mac an Tàilleir is a lecturer at the college and he chairs the group that drew up and now oversees the college's Gaelic policy. He has been working in Gaelic development since he was first involved with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in the early 1980s. Mairead Robertson's family is from Sleat and she has a daughter, Eilidh, who is being educated through the medium of Gaelic at Sleat Primary School.

We are here to explain more fully the paper that the trustees of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig submitted to the Education Committee. In preparing the paper, the trustees took account of views from the trust itself and from the employees and students of the college. You will understand that we are not, in our everyday lives, experts at judging bills—Gaelic or otherwise. In the short time that I have, however, I would like just to say a word or two about the work of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig as a national centre for Gaelic language and culture, so that you can see where our views are coming from in respect of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill.

Since 1983, our work has developed considerably. From eight full-time students at that time, we now have more than 100 students enrolled on three separate degree courses and we are working as part of the UHI Millennium Institute.

We have designed an access course for beginners that gives people an opportunity to learn Gaelic wherever they are based, on which some 200 people are enrolled, and more than 900 people attend our short courses every year.

About 69 people are employed in the college. We have two research centres and we are recognised as an establishment whose work is well respected. We are involved in teaching, learning and research and we work hard to showcase Gaelic culture to the public. We are also interested in economic development; we have seen revitalisation in this area over the past 20 years.

How did we manage to get everything to this stage? The answer is simple: with difficulty. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is an example of what can be achieved with vision, enthusiasm and every possible effort on the part of people who care about bringing their hopes alive. The college earnestly wants to do more—our plans are ready—to keep Gaelic alive.

I do not usually quote from the speeches of Prince Charles, but when he visited us two months ago he said these fitting and powerful words:

"Scotland at present faces many new responsibilities as well as great opportunities. There are few responsibilities more absolute than those which flow from custodianship of a language and culture; especially when these exist to such an extent in only one country. If Gaelic dies in Scotland, it dies in the world. If it flourishes in Scotland, then it sends out a message of inspiration and optimism to others who face similar challenges and adversities. Therein lie both the challenge and the opportunity."

We at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig see the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill as a chance to strengthen the position of Gaelic in Scotland for the benefit of the people, so we wish the Education Committee and the Scottish Parliament well in taking the bill forward. Thank you very much.

**The Convener:** I detected the poetry of Gaelic coming through in some of those comments.

The committee has the job of reporting on the general principles of the bill. Subject to the amendments that you have suggested, do you support those principles?

**Professor Gillies:** In general, we support the principles. As our evidence states, the trustees are happy with what has happened in the period since the consultation. However, we have made recommendations, some of which are small and minute points. We suggested the amendments in order to make the bill as good as possible.

**The Convener:** Behind the bill, there is a tension between the practical advances, of which the college is a good example, and the more theoretical issues such as secure status for the

language, which we will discuss later in more detail. Do you have any views on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages' impact on, or relevance to, our approach? The United Kingdom Government has signed up to that charter, which mentions Gaelic specifically. Do you draw implications from the charter, either in your practical work or in your thoughts on how we should approach the bill?

**Professor Gillies:** Tha e iomchaidh dhuinn a bhith a' toirt aire dha na tha a' tachairt ann an suidheachadh mion-chànain ann an àiteachan eile. Mar sin, tha sinn a' cur taic ris na chaidh a chur air adhart le Comhairle na h-Eòrpa. Minichidh Iain Mac an Tàilleir beagan a bharrachd air mar a tha sinn a' coimhead air sin.

*Following is the translation:*

It is appropriate for us to pay attention to what is happening with regard to minority languages in other places. We therefore support what has been done by the Council of Europe. Iain Mac an Tàilleir will explain a little more about how we see that.

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig):** Tha mi a' creidsinn gun robh a h-uile duine a tha ag obair ann an saoghal na Gàidhlig uabhasach toilichte nuair a chuir Breatainn, mu dheireadh, ainm ri Cairt Eòrpach nam Mion-chànan.

Bha sibh a' faighneachd dè tha sin a' ciallachadh. Aig ìre feallsanachd, tha mi a' smaoinachadh gum bu chòir dhuinn coimhead air suidheachadh mion-chànanan chan ann a-mhàin san Roinn Eòrpa ach san t-saoghail san fharsaingeachd. Ma dh'fhaodas mi dealbh nas fharsaing a thoirt dhuibh, tha eòlaichean cànan den bheachd gu bheil eadar 6,000 agus 7,000 cànan san t-saoghal. A-mach asta sin, thathar an dùil gum bi an dàrna leth dhiubh marbh an ceann 100 bliadhna. Is e call eagalach agus uabhasach a tha sin. Anns an aon dòigh 's a tha bith-iomadachd a' crìonadh ann an raointean eile—eadar planntais, craobhan is creutairean beò—tha cànanan a' bàsachadh aig astar eagalach. Tha eòlaichean cànan mar Michael Krauss ann an Alaska den bheachd gum bàsaich naoi cànaichean a-mach às gach 10 a thathas a' bruidhinn an-dràsta.

Anns an t-suidheachadh sin, tha e ionmholta gun do chuir Riaghaltas Bhreatainn ainm ris a' chairt. Ma tha mise ga thuigsinn ceart, chan eil Breatainn air gabhail ris a h-uile moladh sa chairt, mar a rinn cuid de dhùthchannan eile, ach is e toiseach tòiseachaidh a tha ann. Ann an dòigh, feumaidh sinn a bhith comasach air coiseachd mus dèan sinn ruith agus tha e na dheagh thoiseach tòiseachaidh. Ma gheibh luchd na Gàidhlig ceartas mu dheireadh—as bith dè tha ceartas a' ciallachadh—is dòcha gur e sin an rud as fheàrr a thig a-mach às a' chairt.

Tha mi an dòchas gun do fhreagair sin a' cheist.

*Following is the translation:*

I believe that everyone working in the Gaelic world is delighted that Britain has, at last, signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. You will wonder what that means. At a philosophical level, I think that we ought to consider the position of minority languages not only in the European Union, but in the world in general.

10:15

If I may draw you a wider picture, language experts are of the opinion that there are between 6,000 and 7,000 languages in the world and it is expected that half of those will be dead within 100 years, which is a terrible and terrifying loss. In the same way that biodiversity—plants, trees and living creatures—is diminishing in other domains, languages are dying at a terrifying rate. Linguistics experts, such as Michael Krauss in Alaska, take the view that nine out of 10 languages that are currently spoken will die out. In such a situation, it is laudable that the British Government has signed the charter. If I understand the situation correctly, Britain has not agreed to every recommendation in the charter, as some other countries have done, but it is a start. In a way, we have to be able to walk before we run, so signing the charter is a good start. If Gaelic speakers get justice at last—whatever justice means—perhaps that is the best thing that will come out of the charter.

I hope that that answers the question.

**The Convener:** Fiona Hyslop wants to pursue the question of rights.

**Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP):** One of the key issues is the right to education, or the absence of such a right, in the bill. You do not refer to the need for a statutory right to education in your submission. Is that because you do not agree with a statutory right to education or is it because you do not agree with it being in this bill at this time?

**Professor Gillies:** Tha sinn a' gabhail ris gur e còir a tha ann an foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Mar a tha sinn a' coimhead air, tha am bile a' stèidheachadh Bòrd na Gàidhlig, aig am bi dleastanas plana a chur an cèill. Bidh e air a dhealbh taobh a-staigh a' phlana sin ciar a bhios daoine a' dèiligeadh ri siostam an fhoghlaim. Tha sinn an dòchas gum bi còraichean a thaobh foghlaim tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig do dhuine sam bith a tha ga iarraidh, far a bheil sin reusanta agus pragtaigeach. Chan eil fhios agam a bheil Mairead ag iarraidh càil a bharrachd a chur ri sin.

*Following is the translation:*

We accept that Gaelic-medium education is a right. As we see it, the bill will establish Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which will have responsibility for implementing a plan. How people will deal with the education system will be set out in that plan. We hope that anyone who wants it will have the right to Gaelic-medium education, where that is reasonable and practicable. I do not know whether Mairead Robertson wants to say more about that.

**Mairead NicDhonnchaidh (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig):** Chanainn aon rud. Tha mise a' smaointinn gu bheil àite anns a' bhile airson còir airson foghlaim tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Ma tha piseach a' dol a thighinn air a' chànan, agus ma tha cothrom gu bhith aig daoine ann, tha e gu math riatanach gu bheil foghlam a' tighinn an sàs anns a' bhile.

*Following is the translation:*

I will say one thing. I think that there is a place in the bill for a right to Gaelic-medium education. If there is to be progress for the language, and if people are to have opportunities, it is essential that education be included in the bill.

**Fiona Hyslop:** There is a difference between the bill's enabling Gaelic education through the Bòrd and through plans, and its containing a statutory right. That is an area of contention, and the majority of the submissions that have come in have asked for something in the bill. I can understand that, for tactical reasons if for no other reason, those who believe in a statutory right are not necessarily saying that such a right should be included in the bill. I gather from your response that you are saying that it is the place of the Bòrd, through the plans, to enable real and practical rights as opposed to the legislative rights that would be in the bill. Is that correct?

**Professor Gillies:** Tha mi a' smaoin eachadh gu bheil sin ceart. Bheir Iain Mac an Tàilleir freagair dhan cheist.

*Following is the translation:*

I think that that is right. Iain Mac an Tàilleir will answer the question.

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Dh'aontaichinn leis na thuirt Tormod MacGilliosa. Mar a tha nàdar a' bhile—bidh sinn ag ràdh Bile na Gàidhlig (Alba) ris, ach ann an dòigh is e bile Bòrd na Gàidhlig a tha ann—tha mi a' creidsinn gur ann nuair a thig am Bòrd gu bith gun tig barrachd fiosrachaidh mu dheidhinn chòraichean air foghlam agus mar sin air adhart. Cha robh sinn buileach cinnteach an e am bile an t-àite air son sin, leis mar a tha nàdar a' bhile.

*Following is the translation:*

I agree with Norman Gillies. The nature of the bill—we call it the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill,

but in a way it is the Bòrd na Gàidhlig bill—is such that I believe that once the Bòrd is established there will be more information about rights to education and so on. We are not quite certain whether the bill is the place for that, given the sort of bill that it is.

**Professor Gillies:** Ach chan eil sin ag ràdh idir gu bheil sinn a' cumail a-mach nach bu chòir còraichean a bhith againn a thaobh foghlaim.

*Following is the translation:*

That is not to say that we maintain that we should not have rights with regard to education.

**Fiona Hyslop:** In that context, you made a useful point in your submission, where you referred to section 9 of the bill, which provides for guidance on Gaelic education and focuses on the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000. You suggest that the bill should indicate that education is about all education, rather than just school education. It might be possible to do that by removing references to school education. Are you considering Gaelic education in a wider context when you suggest that section 9(1) be amended to refer to "all Gaelic education"?

**Professor Gillies:** Bhon taobh agamsa, tha mi a' smaoin eachadh gun robh sinn dìreach ag iarraidh dèanamh cinnteach gun robh sinn a' bruidhinn air foghlam uile. Air a' chiad leughadh dhen bhile, dh'fhaodadh duine smaoin eachadh nach robh sinn a' bruidhinn ach air foghlam sgoile. Tha sinn ag iarraidh a' phuuing a dhèanamh gu bheil foghlam nas fharsainghe na sin, a' toirt a-steach foghlam sgoile, foghlam aig an treas ìre agus foghlam fad-beatha. Tha na còraichean sin ann, bho phàiste a tha a' tòiseachadh ann an sgoil-àraich gu cuideigin a tha a' dèanamh foghlam aig aois sam bith.

*Following is the translation:*

From my point of view, we just want to be certain that we are talking about all education. One might think, on first reading the bill, that we are talking only about school education. We want to make the point that education is wider than that and includes school education, tertiary education and lifelong learning. People have rights to those things, from the child who is just starting nursery school to people studying at any age.

**Fiona Hyslop:** If the provision were to be amended as the submission suggests, the bill would need to define "all Gaelic education". Perhaps that is a legislative issue for the committee and the Executive.

**The Convener:** There is a lot of talk about bilingualism, secure status, official status, equal validity and so on in connection with the bill. Such terms can cast more confusion than light on the matter unless we drill down to find out what they



mean. Do the witnesses have views on that? You seem to be taking a practical approach that accepts an incremental advance in the status of Gaelic, rather than saying, "Let's concentrate on where we want to end up."

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Bhiodh e na chunnart nan leanamaid eisimpleir Poblachd na h-Èireann—no Saor-stàit na h-Èireann, nuair a chaidh ceann a deas na h-Èireann a bhonntachadh bho chionn 80 bliadhna—a dh'fheuch ri cus a dhèanamh mus robh na comasan ann. Chaidh le siostam an fhoghlaim ann an Èirinn glè mhath gu ìre, ach cha tàinig às an rud a bha san amharc, gum biodh Gaeilge fhileanta aig a h-uile duine. Cha bhiodh e math nan leanamaid ann an Alba an t-eisimpleir sin. Bhiodh e na b' fheàrr a chur clach air a' chàrn beag air bheag a' neartachadh nan comasan a tha againn.

A' tilleadh gu dè dh'fhaodadh inbhe thèarainte no co-ionannachd a bhith a' ciallachadh, tha mi a' creidsinn nach eil duine beò an dùil gum bi sanasan-sràide dà-chànanach ann an teismheadhan Dhùn Phris no rudan mar sin. Carson a dh'iarraim sin? Aig an aon àm, leis mar a tha luchd na Gàidhlig a' fàs air taobh a-muigh na Gaidhealtachd agus a' crìonadh anns na sgìreachdan tradiseanta—tha 45 às a' cheud de luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig a' fuireach taobh a-muigh sgìreachdan tradiseanta—tha e ceart gum bi cothrom na Fèinne aig na daoine a tha a' fuireach aig deas no mun ear air na h-aon seirbheisean 's a gheibheadh Gaidheil a tha a' fuireach ann an Uibhist no anns na Hearadh no an seo anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Leis mar a tha na figearan a' dol anns a h-uile cunntas-sluaigh, tha na h-àireamhan a' fàs aig deas is mun ear agus a' dol nas ìsle air a' Ghaidhealtachd.

A bharrachd air sin, is dòcha gu bheil na daoine le Gàidhlig a tha a' fuireach mu dheas anns na bailtean mòra no mun ear nas fheumaiche air cuideachadh fon lagh na iadsan a tha a' fuireach anns na h-eileanan, far a bheil coimhearsnachd Ghàidhlig ceithir thimcheall orra. Ann an dòigh pragtaigeach, chan eil comhairlean mar Chomhairle nan Crichean a' dol a dhol fodha le iarrtasan bho dhaoine airson aonadan Gàidhlig an siud agus rudan Gàidhlig an seo. Chan eil sin a' dol a thachairt.

Ach, a' tilleadh gu ceist an fhoghlaim an toiseach, ghabhadh na comhairlean ceumannan reusanta a dhèanamh ann a bhith a' leigeil le teaghlachan an cuid chloinne a chur tro fhoghlam Gàidhlig, ma tha gu leòr dhiubh ann. Chan eil duine sam bith a' moladh gum faigheadh aon phàiste ann an Newtown St Boswells bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig dha fhèin no dhi fhèin. Air adhbharan foghlaim a-mhàin, chan e rud math a bhiodh sin. Tha sinn den bheachd gum bu chòir do dhaoine a bhith a' sùileachadh gum faigh iad

seirbheis de sheòrsa air choreigin tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig mar chòir, as bith càite a bheil iad a' fuireach. Beag air bheag, ma shoirbhicheas le sin, is dòcha gun neartaichear cothroman agus còirichean dhaoine.

*Following is the translation:*

It would be dangerous to follow the example of the Republic of Ireland—or the Irish Free State, as the south of Ireland was established 80 years ago—which tried to do too much before it was possible. The education system in Ireland worked very well to a certain extent, but it did not produce the intended result, which was that everyone would speak Irish fluently. It would not be good if we in Scotland were to follow that example. It would be better to build up the cairn little by little and to build on our strengths.

On what secure status or equality might mean, I do not believe that there is a living soul who expects that there should be bilingual road signs in the middle of Dumfries or anything like that. Why would we want that? At the same time, as the number of Gaelic speakers living outside the Highlands and Islands grows while the number who live in the traditionally Gaelic-speaking areas declines—45 per cent of Gaelic speakers live outside the traditional areas—it is right that people who live in the south or east should have a fair chance of having the same services as have Gaels who live in Uist, Harris or the Isle of Skye. Given how the figures are going in every census, the numbers of Gaelic speakers are growing in the south and east and diminishing in the Highlands and Islands.

In addition, it could be the case that Gaelic speakers who live in cities in the south or the east have a greater need for help under the law than have people who live in the islands, where the Gaelic community is all around them. From a practical point of view, councils such as Scottish Borders Council are not going to be inundated with requests from people for Gaelic units here and other Gaelic services there: that is not going to happen.

To return to education, councils could take reasonable steps to allow families to send their children to Gaelic-medium education schools if there were enough such families. Nobody is suggesting that one child in Newtown St Boswells should have a Gaelic primary school all to himself or herself. For educational reasons alone, that would not be a good thing. We think that people ought to consider whether they will get, as a right, some kind of Gaelic-medium service regardless of where they live. Little by little, if that is successful, people's opportunities and rights could be strengthened.

**Professor Gillies:** Chuirinn aon phuing bheag ri sin. Tha mi a' smaoin eachadh gu bheil feadhainn ann a tha a' gabhail eagal a thaobh dè thachras ma thèid am bile troimhe agus gun cosg e fortan do chuideigin. Ach chan urrainn a h-uile càil tachairt a-màireach. Anns a' chiad dol-a-mach, feumaidh sinn bun-structair ceart a thogail airson a bhith a' leasachadh a' chàin, agus chan eil sin againn. Chan urrainn dhuinn foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a thoirt dhan a h-uile duine a-màireach. Is dòcha gum feum sinn a bhith a' smaoin eachadh ann an earrannan de 20 bliadhna. An àite planaichean àbhaisteach a' coimhead air trì bliadhna, ma tha sinn a' bruidhinn air cànan tha sinn a' bruidhinn air 20 bliadhna.

Cuideachd, tha an saoghal ag atharrachadh gu math luath agus tha na sgìrean ag atharrachadh. Is dòcha nach eil Gàidhlig làidir ann an sgìre an-dràsta, ach an ceann 20 bliadhna, le gluasad sluagh, dh'fhaodadh gum biodh barrachd a' tachairt ann an sgìrean eadar-dhealaichte a thaobh na Gàidhlig. Tha a h-uile càil a tha sin ann. Ach chan eil brag mhòr gu bhith ann, agus chan eil Gàidhlig gu bhith aig a h-uile duine a-màireach, no an-earar.

*Following is the translation:*

I would add one brief point to that. I think that there are people who are afraid of what will happen if the bill goes through and who think that it will cost somebody a fortune. However, not everything can happen tomorrow. In the first place, we have to build the right infrastructure for developing the language, which we do not have. We cannot provide Gaelic-medium education for everyone tomorrow. Perhaps we should be thinking in 20-year periods. Instead of ordinary plans that look three years ahead, we might talk about blocks of 20 years for developing the language.

Also, the world is changing rapidly; areas are changing. Perhaps Gaelic is not strong in certain areas at the moment, but there could in 20 years, with population movement, be more happening in those areas as regards Gaelic. All such factors must be considered. There will not be a big bang—everybody will not be speaking Gaelic tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow.

**Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** Thank you. I declare an interest in that my father is chair of the board of trustees of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Much of the evidence that we have heard, including your evidence, emphasises the importance of Gaelic-medium education in particular. I am glad that the Executive has amended the bill since its initial draft. However, you also highlight the lack of reference to an effective Gaelic-teacher education strategy. Will you expand on that and comment on the importance of increasing the number of Gaelic-

medium teachers and how that might be addressed, either in the bill or otherwise by Executive policy?

**Professor Gillies:** Nuair a thàinig an dreachd bhile a-mach, chuir e iongnadh air daoine nach robh foghlam Gàidhlig air ainmeachadh ann. Anns na freagairtean a chaidh air ais—còrr is 3,000 dhiubh—bha a' mhòr chuid a' coimhead airson chòraichean a thaobh foghlaim.

Anns an fhaisg air 20 bliadhna a dh'fhalbh, tha mi a' smaoin eachadh gur e foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig an rud as fheàrr a thachair dhan chànan. Tha sinn air leasachaidhean mòra fhaicinn. Cha mhòr nach eil sinn a' ruighinn na h-ìre far a bheil a' chlann òg a' cumail an àireimh a thaobh an cuid Gàidhlig. Is e foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig anns a' bhun-sgoil a tha air sin adhbharachadh.

Tha bacadh air leasachadh, ge-tà, a chionn 's nach eil tidsearan gu leòr anns an t-siostam aig an ìre seo. Tha rudan math air tachairt o chionn ghoirid, mar an co-luadar eadar UHI agus Oilthigh Shrath Chluaidh agus an obair a tha Oilthigh Obar Dheathain a' dèanamh le bhith a' tabhann foghlam sùbailte pàirt-ùine air astar do dhaoine a tha airson foghlam thidsearan ionnsachadh. Ach tha tòrr ann a dh'fheumas a bhith air a dhèanamh ma tha sinn ri chumail an leasachaidh a' dol aig an aon ìre.

Chan eil aon fhreagairt simplidh ann; feumaidh tòrr rudan a bhith a' gluasad aig an aon àm. Tha feum againn air barrachd a thaobh cànan taobh a-staigh foghlam thidsearan. Tha barrachd ri ionnsachadh air an suidheachadh anns a bheil na tidsearan sin anns na sgoiltean, far a bheil iad a' teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig gu daoine aig a bheil Gàidhlig mar an dara cànan aca. Tha feum air rudan a dhèanamh do thidsearan a tha taobh a-staigh an siostam mar-thà. Tha feum air cùrsaichean dhaibhsan aig a bheil a' Ghàidhlig mar-thà airson an cuid cànan a dhìon agus air cùrsaichean dhaibhsan a tha às aonais Gàidhlig airson an cànan a thoirt dhaibh, airson gun urrainn dhaibh, ma tha iad ag iarraidh, a dhol a teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Tha tòrr rudan ann a ghabhadh a dhèanamh. Is e aon dhe na rudan as cudthromaiche a bhith a' faighinn cuidhteas dhen bhacadh as motha a tha air leasachadh na Gàidhlig an-dràsta. Tha foghlam cudthromach agus trèanadh thidsearan dha-riribh cudthromach.

A bheil Mairead airson a chòrr a chur ri sin?

*Following is the translation:*

When the bill was published, people were surprised that Gaelic education was not mentioned. In the responses that came back—more than 3,000 of them—most people were looking for rights with regard to education.

In almost 20 years, Gaelic-medium education is the most important thing that has happened to the language—we have seen great developments. We have almost reached the stage at which the number of young children who speak Gaelic is holding steady. Gaelic-medium primary education has brought that about.

Development is held back, however, because there are not enough teachers in the system at the moment. Good things have happened recently, such as the collaboration between the university of the Highlands and Islands and the University of Strathclyde, and the work that the University of Aberdeen is doing in offering flexible part-time learning to people who want to do teacher training. However, much must be done if we are to keep up that development.

There is no one simple answer; many things have to move at the same time. We need more language-related teacher education and we need to learn more about the current position of teachers in schools where they are teaching in the medium of Gaelic people for whom Gaelic is a second language. We need to do things for teachers who are already in the system. There is a need for courses to help those who already speak Gaelic to boost their language skills, and we need courses for those who do not speak Gaelic to teach them the language so that they can, if they want to, teach through the medium of Gaelic. Many things could be done. One of the most important things would be to get rid of the greatest handicap on Gaelic development at the moment—education is important and teacher training is exceptionally important.

Perhaps Mairead would like to add to that?

10:30

**Mairead NicDhonnchaidh:** Tha mi a' dol leis a h-uile rud a thuirt Tormod MacGilliosa ach chanainn nach eil e gu leòr gum bi tidsearan gu leòr againn. Tha e riatanach gu bheil tidsearan math againn. Aig an ìre sa, chan urrainn dhòmhsa a ràdh gu bheil a h-uile tidsear a tha a' teagasg Gàidhlig ann am bun-sgoil math. Mar Ghaidheil, tha sinn buailteach a bhith beagan—mar a chanas iad ann am Beurla—complacent mu dheidhinn sin. [*Briseadh a-steach.*] An cum mi orm?

Tha còir aig ar clann agus againn fhìn a bhith a' faighinn deagh fhoghlam. Tha fhios agam gu bheil sinn a' faighinn deagh fhoghlam an seo, ach chan eil sin ri fhaotainn anns a h-uile àite an latha an-diugh. Mus tòisich sinn smaoineachadh air freagairtean, feumaidh sinn a bhith a' coimhead gu cruaidh air na duilgheadasan a tha againn. Chan eil gu leòr taic air a thoirt do thidsearan sa bhun-sgoil a thaobh trèanadh agus leasachadh proifeiseanta.

*Following is the translation:*

I agree with everything that Norman Gillies said, but it is not enough for us to have plenty of teachers—it is also essential that we have good teachers. At this stage, I cannot say that every teacher who is teaching Gaelic in a primary school is good. As Gaels, we tend to be a little complacent—as they say in English—about that. [*Interruption.*] Shall I continue?

We and our children have a right to good education. I know that we get a good education here in Skye, but that is not available everywhere these days. Before we begin to think about answers, we must take a hard look at the problems that we face; for example, there is not enough support for teachers in primary schools with regard to training and professional development.

**The Convener:** We are having a problem with the interpretation.

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Dh'fhaodadh rud no dhà pragtaigeach a bhith air an dèanamh. Dh'ainmich Tormod MacGilliosa na cùrsaichean a tha a' dol eadar Oilthigh Shrath Chluaidh is colaistean eile is Oilthigh Obar Dheathain, ach dh'fhaodamaid coimhead air sgeamaichean foghlaim air astar. Tha cùrsaichean pàirt-ùine a' gabhail àite an-dràsta agus tha feadhainn anns an sgìre seo a' gabhail pàirt annta. Airson daoine a tha fuireach an àiteachan caran iomallach, ma dh'fhaoidte gum faodaiste coimhead air teagasg bhideo agus an leithid—mar cho-labhairtean bhideo agus clasaichean air astar anns na dachaighean aca—mar aon de na dòighean air a' ghainneadh thidsearan a lùghdachadh.

*Following is the translation:*

One or two practical things could be done. Norman Gillies mentioned the courses that are run jointly between the University of Strathclyde and other colleges and by the University of Aberdeen, but we could look at distance-learning schemes. There is a part-time course at the moment, in which some people from this area are taking part. For people who live in quite remote areas, perhaps video teaching and similar things—such as videoconferencing and remote-learning classes in people's homes—could be considered among the ways in which to resolve the problem of the shortage of teachers.

**Professor Gillies:** Feumaidh sinn cuideachd a bhith a' gabhail a-staigh gu bheil sinn a' gluasad ann an saoghal ùr. Tha rudan a' tachairt anns a' bhun-sgoil an-dràsta, ach chan eil uiread a' tachairt anns an àrd-sgoil. Tha againn ri sin a chur ceart, agus chan eil sinn a' dol a dhèanamh sin anns na seann dòighean, oir chan urrainn dhuinn. Chan eil goireasan gu leòr againn agus chan eil daoine gu leòr againn. Mar sin, feumaidh sinn

coimhead air modhan obrach ùra, agus tha sin a' bualadh cuideachd air trèanadh tidsearan.

Feumaidh sinn a bhith deiseil airson sin. Feumaidh sinn cùrsaichean a dhealbh ann an dòighean eadar-dhealaichte agus feumaidh sinn na cùrsaichean sin a libhrigeadh ann an dòigh eadar-dhealaichte. Mar sin, tha tòrr ri dhèanamh, ach chan eil e idir do-dhèanta. Chan eil a dhìth ach, mar gum biodh, sùil nàiseanta a thoirt air an t-suidheachadh agus co-dhùnaidhean a dhèanamh. Chan eil draoidheachd sam bith a dhìth. Is e rud gu math simplidh a chur an cèill, ma tha meadhan ann rudeigin a dhèanamh.

*Following is the translation:*

We must also bear it in mind that we are moving in a new world. Things are happening in primary schools at the moment, but not much is happening in secondary schools. We have to put that right, but we will not do that using the old methods—we cannot. We do not have enough facilities or enough people, so we must consider new ways of working. That will also affect teacher training.

We must be ready for that and we must design courses and deliver those courses in different ways. Therefore, there is much to do, but it is not impossible. All that is needed is a national overview, as it were, of the situation and some decision making. No wizardry is required. It will be a simple thing to implement, if a way is found of doing it.

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Bha an rud a thachair ann an Hawaii glè inntinneach, an uair a bha muinntir dùthchasach Hawaii airson Hawaiianais a thoirt a-steach dha na sgoiltean a-rithist—rud nach robh ann fad iomadach bliadhna. A rèir lagh na stàite Hawaii, dh'fheumadh teisteanas-teagaisg deimhinnte a bhith aig duine mus fhaigheadh e a-staigh gu sgoil, agus tha sin glè cheart. Bhathas mothachail nach robh gu leòr de luchd-bruidhinn Hawaiianais aig an robh teisteanas-teagaisg agus, mar sin, dh'atharraich Riaghaltas Hawaii na riaghailtean airson a' chuspair Hawaiianais. Leis a' ghainnead de thidsearan a tha oirnn ann an Alba, ma dh'fhaoidte gum feumamaid coimhead ri sin anns a' gheàrr uine mar fhuasgladh air a' cheist.

*Following is the translation:*

What happened in Hawaii was very interesting when the native people of Hawaii wanted to bring Hawaiian back into schools, which had not been done for many years. According to the law of the state of Hawaii, anyone who wanted to teach in school had to have an accredited teaching qualification, which was quite right. It was noted that not enough Hawaiian speakers had teaching qualifications, so the Government of Hawaii changed the rules in respect of Hawaiian speakers. With the shortage of teachers that we

have in Scotland, perhaps we could look at such a solution to resolve the problem in the short term.

**Mr Macintosh:** Norman Gillies touched on the fact that although Gaelic-medium education has transformed the Gaelic scene and community in the past 20 years, it is fair to say that a huge drop-off occurs at secondary school level. Gaelic-medium primary education is relatively successful, but when the children go to secondary school, little support is given to them. Will you say more about that for the committee's benefit, so that we are aware of the picture? We have fantastic facilities here in Sabhal Mòr, and we have Gaelic primaries, but we do not know the Gaelic secondary situation, in which there may be a gap.

**Professor Gillies:** Tha e eadar-dhealaichte ann an diofar sgìrean. An taobh a-staigh Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, tha barrachd a' tachairt anns an àrd-sgoil. Chì sibh feasgar an-diugh Àrd-sgoil Phort Rìgh, far a bheil e comasach, tha mi a' smaoinneachadh, ceithir cuspairean a ghabhail tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Ach tha sin cuideachd an urra ri cuine a gheibhear tidsear. Chan eil cus a bharrachd ann. Mar eisimpleir, chan eil tidsear Gàidhlig ann an Àrd-sgoil Mhalaig an-dràsta. Tha an siostam cho lag an-dràsta 's ma dh'fhalbhas tidsear falbhaidh foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Feumaidh rudeigin tachairt an sin. Mar a thuirt mi na bu tràithe, cha ghabh a dhèanamh anns an t-seann dòigh. Chan urrainn dhuinn gu leòr tidsearan a thrèanadh airson an cur air beulaibh clas. Feumaidh sinn a bhith a' faighinn thairis air na duilgheadasan sin le dòighean eile, mar cho-labhairt bhideo, cùrsaichean air-loidhne is rudan dhen t-seòrsa sin. Tha tòrr ri dhèanamh airson an suidheachadh a chur ceart.

*Following is the translation:*

The situation is different in different areas. In the Western Isles Council area, more is happening in the secondary schools. This afternoon, the committee will visit Portree High School, where it is possible—I believe—to study four subjects through the medium of Gaelic, although that depends on when teachers are available; there are not too many around. For example, there is no Gaelic teacher at Mallaig High School at the moment. The system is so weak at the moment that, if a teacher leaves a school, Gaelic-medium education leaves. As I said, things cannot be done in the old way. We cannot train enough teachers to put in front of classes, so we have to get over those problems in other ways, such as through videoconferencing, online courses and so on. A lot has to be done to put the situation right.

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Rachainn leis na thuirt Tormod MacGilliosa a thaobh nuair a dh'fhalbhas tidsear falbhaidh foghlam. Tha an suidheachadh air leth cugallach. Feumaidh sinn coimhead air mar a dh'fhaodamaid cinnt air choreigin a thoirt do

phàrantan agus dhan chloinn gum bi am foghlam a gheibh iad leantainneach agus nach bi e an urra ri dìreach aon neach.

Mus do theagaisg mi ann an sgoil ann an Uibhist, seach gun robh an dà chànan agam shaoil mi gum biodh e furasta gu leòr stuthan Beurla a chleachdadh ach bruidhinn ann an Gàidhlig, ach tha e anabarrach duilich. Chan eil e an còmhnaidh furasta a bhith ag eadar-theangachadh mar siud. Mar sin dheth, math is gu bheil na goireasan anns na sgoiltean an-dràsta agus math is gu bheil an obair a tha Stòrlann Nàiseanta a' dèanamh ann an Leòdhas, tha fhathast cruaidh fheum air barrachd ghoireasan, eadar leabhraichean, CDs is DVDs. Tha feum air goireasan dhen a h-uile seòrsa.

*Following is the translation:*

I agree with Norman Gillies about Gaelic-medium education leaving when a teacher leaves. The situation is extremely precarious and we have to consider how we can give parents and children some certainty that the education that they are getting will continue and that it will not depend on one individual.

When I taught in a school in Uist, I thought that because I spoke both languages it would be easy for me to use English materials but to speak in Gaelic. However, that is exceptionally difficult to do because it is not always easy to translate spontaneously. Therefore, as good as the resources that schools currently have may be, and as good as the work may be that Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig is doing in Lewis, there is still a desperate need for more resources such as books, compact disks and DVDs. Resources of all kinds are needed.

**Professor Gillies:** Tha mi a' gabhail ris gu bheil feadhainn a' smaoinichadh gum bi daoine a tha a' dol tro foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann am bun-sgoil fileanta nuair a thig iad a-mach às, agus mar sin nach leig e leas an còrr tachairt dhaibh a thaobh an cuid cànan. Feumaidh mi ràdh gur e beachd caran amaideach sin. Feumaidh daoine a bhith ag ionnsachadh cànan fad am beatha.

*Following is the translation:*

I accept that some people think that if people who go through Gaelic-medium education in primary school are fluent when they come out, there is therefore no need for anything else to happen with regard to their language skills. I have to say that that is a pretty foolish opinion: people have to learn language all their lives.

**Mr Macintosh:** In your submission, you comment on the use of Gaelic in the law courts and you mention the

"absence of a reference to the Judiciary"

from the bill. I believe that there are different practices in different courts. How important a development would the use of Gaelic in courts be? Can Bòrd na Gàidhlig pursue the matter through Gaelic language plans or do we need to include a provision in the bill that establishes the right of a Gael to use their native language when they appear in a court of law?

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Tha mi fhìn a' faicinn trioblaid ann a bhith ga fhàgail aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Tha mi a' smaointinn gum biodh e na b' fheàrr ainmeachadh anns a' bhile. Chan eil fhios agam carson—is dòcha gu bheil mi ceàrr—ach tha mi a' smaointinn gum biodh e doirbh a bhith a' toirt air brithemhan agus cùirtean-lagha a bhith a' gabhail ri plana bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig. Dhomh fhìn dheth, tha mi a' smaointinn gum biodh e na b' fheàrr nam biodh rudeigin air ainmeachadh anns a' bhile fhèin.

Is dòcha nach eil coltas uabhasach cudthromach air a' phuuing seo, ach tha e air leth cudthromach. Ma tha neach anns a' chùirt, tha cumhachd na stàite an sin mu choinneimh. Mura h-eil e comasach dha no dhi bruidhinn ann an Gàidhlig, ged an robh e no i fileanta ann am Beurla, is dòcha gum biodh iad a' faireachdainn nas comhfhurtail agus nas cinntich asta fhèin a bhith bruidhinn ann an Gàidhlig. Cuideachd, is dòcha nach eil am briathrachas aig duine—an teirm-eòlaidheachd—airson i fhèin no e fhèin a chur an cèill ann an dòigh sìubhlach, pungail. Tha mi a' smaointinn gum biodh e na b' fheàrr nan robh sin air ainmeachadh anns a' bhile.

*Following is the translation:*

I see a difficulty in leaving the matter to Bòrd na Gàidhlig. I think that it would be better to mention it in the bill. I do not know why—perhaps I am wrong—but I think that it would be difficult to make judges and courts of law agree to a plan from Bòrd na Gàidhlig. For my own part, I think that it would be better if something were mentioned in the bill itself.

It may not appear so, but this point is extremely important. If someone is in court, they are up against the power of the state. Even if they are fluent in English, perhaps they would feel more comfortable and more sure of themselves if they were speaking Gaelic. Also, a person might not have the right words—the terminology—to make themselves understood in a precise and articulate way. I think that it would be better if that were mentioned in the bill.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con):** I will ask a few questions about guidance. You will be aware that the Executive issued draft guidance for consultation in September 2004. What is your reaction to the draft guidance? I refer to the guidance on Gaelic education. The

witnesses will be aware of it, because a consultation document was sent out in September 2004. It is expected that the board will take over responsibility for the guidance in due course. Do you have any strong views on the subject?

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Tha e cuideachail gu bheil gnothach aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig ri ceist nan tidsearan, ach feumaidh mi a ràdh nach eil beachdan uabhasach làidir sam bith agam air.

*Following is the translation:*

It is helpful that Bòrd na Gàidhlig is to be involved in the matter of teachers, but I have to say that I do not have a strong view about that.

**Professor Gillies:** Uaireannan, tha daoine ro dheiseil Gàidhlig a chur an dara taobh agus a sgaradh bho na rudan a tha a' tachairt gu h-àbhaisteach ann an foghlam. Mar sin, tha mi smaoineachadh nach biodh e cuideachail nam biodh sin a' tachairt.

*Following is the translation:*

People are sometimes too willing to put Gaelic to one side and to separate it from things that normally happen in education. I think, therefore, that it would not be helpful if that were to happen.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Would it be fair to suggest that appropriate, well-thought-out guidance might make it easier to ensure that, in practice, there was adequate Gaelic-medium provision?

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Tha mi smaoineachadh gu bheil sin ceart.

*Following is the translation:*

I think so.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Who might be best placed to define what a reasonable demand for Gaelic-medium education might be? What should trigger a response?

**Professor Gillies:** Tha mi a' smaoineachadh gur e sin ceist a bhios air a fàgail aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig airson cur air adhart anns a' phlana a bhithear a' deasachadh. Tha eisimpleirean gu leòr ann an-dràsta far a bheil comhairlean fa-leth, leithid Comhairle na Gaidhealtachd a tha ag ràdh gu bheil ceathrar cloinne gach bliadhna airson leithid a bhliadhnaichean a' sealltainn iartas airson aonad Gàidhlig. Mar sin, is e sin iartas reusanta dhaibhsan agus tha mi smaoineachadh gu bheil sin ceart gu leòr.

*Following is the translation:*

I think that that question will be left to Bòrd na Gàidhlig to take forward in the plan that will be drawn up. There are plenty of examples at the moment of individual councils, such as the Highland Council, saying that four children each

year over a certain period constitutes demand for a Gaelic unit. That is reasonable for them and I think that that is quite right.

10:45

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** I want to ask about a subject that you have already mentioned—namely, long-distance learning and videoconferencing.

If there is a very small number of pupils—perhaps only one, two or three—in a school in the Borders, for example, who want to learn Gaelic but have no Gaelic teacher, could videoconferencing come in as a facility that could enable long-distance learning in Gaelic in a way that has not been experienced in the past and which would be of assistance?

Before you answer, I should say that the minister gave us a positive answer on that point. He said that work was going on in the Administration to develop the use of high technology in a way that would be helpful, and the Executive is currently looking at that issue. Would you be sympathetic to that theme being pursued?

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Bhithinn gu dearbh. Tha a' cholaiste air co-labhairtean bhideo a chumail le àrd-sgoil Gheàrrloch agus dh'obraich sin glè mhath. Tha e uabhasach math dha na sgoilearan a tha anns na h-àiteachan iomallach, oir tha iad a' faicinn aodannan ùra agus a' cluinntinn ghuthan ùra agus a' cur eòlas air daoine. [*Briseadh a-steach.*] Chan eil fhios agam an cuala sibh na thuirt mi mu àrd-sgoil Gheàrrloch.

*Following is the translation:*

Indeed I would. The college has held videoconferences with Gairloch High School and that worked very well. It is very good for students in remote areas, because they see new faces, hear new voices and get to know people. [*Interruption.*] I am not sure whether the committee heard what I said about Gairloch High School.

**The Convener:** We seem to have lost the interpretation again. I am very sorry.

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Aig ìre phearsanta agus shòisealta, tha e math dhan chloinn a bhith a' cur eòlas air daoine ann an àiteachan eadar-dhealaichte a bharrachd air a bhith dìreach a' faighinn foghlam leis fhèin. Tha mi a' smaointinn gum biodh sinn uile an seo uabhasach taiceil dha na goireasan agus na leasachaidhean ùra gu mòr.

*Following is the translation:*

At a personal and social level, it is good for the children to get to know people in other areas as well as just getting education by itself. I think that we are all fully supportive of those facilities and of the new developments.

**Professor Gillies:** Chuirinn mo thaic ri sin. Tha feum air measgachadh de theicneòlas ùr. Cha chuirinn mo dhòchas uile ann an co-labhairt bhideo, mar eisimpleir. Tha mi smaoinichadh gu bheil feum air ann an co-bhann le rudan eile, mar foghlam air-loidhne, a tha sinn a' cleachdadh mar-thà. Feumaidh sin tachairt ma tha sinn a' dol a dh'fhaighinn foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig anns an àrd-sgoil.

*Following is the translation:*

I support that. We need a mix of new technologies. I would not pin all my hopes on videoconferencing, for example. I think that we need to use it in conjunction with other things, such as online education, which we already use. That has to happen if we are going to get Gaelic-medium education in secondary schools.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Am I correct in thinking that the college could help to work up proposals on the best use of high technology to promote the teaching of Gaelic?

**Professor Gillies:** Bhiodh a' cholaiste ro-thoilichte cuideachadh sam bith as urrainn dhuinn a thoirt seachad airson leasachaidhean a thoirt air adhart ann an foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig.

*Following is the translation:*

The college would be only too willing to help in any way we can to take forward developments in Gaelic-medium education.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** You sent us a list of proposals. Would you be prepared to try to work them up in the form of amendments so that we can see exactly what they would look like in relation to the wording of the bill and give them detailed consideration at a later stage?

**Professor Gillies:** Tha sinn toilichte sin a dhèanamh.

*Following is the translation:*

We are happy to do that.

**The Convener:** I would like to clarify two things before we leave the question of teaching. First, the consultation period on the guidance document itself runs until 17 December, but it was issued only recently, in October. Do you want to come back to us with any detailed points that might affect our consideration of the bill?

Secondly, on the supply of teachers, I think that you said earlier that you did not believe that it was possible to resolve the crisis in teaching supply to provide more teachers for various reasons, and that we would therefore have to go down the information technology route. Is it the case that more things can be done than are currently being done to provide more Gaelic-speaking teachers of

maths and other subjects to help out in that regard? It is obviously a central issue.

**Professor Gillies:** Tha mi a' smaoinichadh gu bheil sin comasach. Chan eil mi ag iarraidh a chur fa ur comhair nach urrainn càil a bhith air a dhèanamh a thaobh na tha a dhith oirnn de thidsearan agus gum feum sinn a dhol sìos taobh teicneòlais. Tha feum againn air an dà chuid.

Tha feum air rudan beaga pragtaigeach a bhith a' tachairt a thaobh foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. B' àbhaist dha na h-ùghdarrasan ionadail a bhith a' coimhead air adhart bliadhnaichean agus ag ràdh cia mheud tidsearan Gàidhlig a bhiodh a dhith. Tha mi a' tuigsinn gu bheil an suidheachadh a-nis air atharrachadh agus gu bheil daoine a' coimhead air dìreach dè thachair anns a' bhliadhna a dh'fhalbh. Chan eil sin gu bhith cuideachail a thaobh foghlaim tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig oir tha e a' sìor-leasachadh.

Mar a thuirt mi na bu tràithe, is e am bacadh as motha nach eil gu leòr tidsearan air an trèanadh. Cuideachd, tha bacadh beag ann gum feum obair teagaisg a bhith nas tarraingiche airson gum bi sinn a' faighinn daoine òga gu leòr a-steach dhan t-siostam. Anns a' cholaiste seo, tha sinn an dèidh a bhith fortanach gu bheil tòrr dhen fheadhainn a tha a' ceumanachadh a' dol a-staigh airson teagaisg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Anns a' bhliadhna a dh'fhalbh, tha mi a' smaointinn gun deach co-dhiù ceathrar no còignear airson a bhith air an trèanadh a thaobh teagaisg.

*Following is the translation:*

I think that that is possible. I do not want to make you think that we can do nothing about our lack of teachers and that we have to go down the technological route. We need to use both approaches.

We need little practical things to happen for Gaelic-medium education. Local authorities used to look years ahead and say how many Gaelic teachers would be needed. I understand that the situation has changed and that people now look only at what happened in the past year. That will not help Gaelic-medium education, because it is developing quickly.

As I said earlier, the greatest handicap is that there are not enough trained teachers, and a small handicap is that a teaching career must be made more attractive if we are to get enough young people into the system. In the college, we have been fortunate that many of those who graduate go into Gaelic-medium teaching. In the past year, I think that at least four or five wanted to do teacher training.

**Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab):** I would like to ask about your criticism of the bill's approach. The bill requires consideration of

“the extent to which the Gaelic language is used”.

You state that you would prefer a

“reference to the potential that the work of particular Public Bodies has to support the development of Gaelic.”

I have two questions about that. First, is your preference not more vague than the terms of the bill? How would you determine

“the potential that the work of particular Public Bodies has to support the development of Gaelic”?

Secondly, would that not place more onus on local authorities or health boards, for example, in areas where Gaelic is not spoken? Arguably, there is a greater potential for the development of Gaelic in such areas in comparison with areas where Gaelic is widely spoken. According to your suggestion, the responsibilities could almost be reversed in relation to how the bill is drafted.

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Is e an t-eagal a tha ormsa gun tig rudeigin coltach ri ghetto gu ìre agus gum bi a h-uile càil thall ann an Leòdhas gun sìon ri fhaotainn air tìr-mòr mun ear no mu dheas. Chan eil mi a’ smaoineachadh gu bheil seo “vague” mar a thuirt sibh. Nam bheachd pearsanta, ma tha rud ceart anns na Hearadh, tha e ceart ann an àite sam bith. Mar eisimpleir, nuair a thàinig reachdas gràin-chinnidh a-steach, bha còraichean aig daoine dubha ann an Ceann Loch Biorbhaidh a cheart cho math ‘s a bha aca ann an leithid Ghlaschu. Tha seo coltach ris an aon cheist. Is e ceist mu dheidhinn cothroman is còraichean air seirbheisean agus daoine a bhith a’ faireachdainn gu bheil còraichean aca a tha co-ionann às bith càite a bheil iad ann an Alba.

Tha ceist agam airson na comataidh—chan eil fhios agam an e seo an t-àite airson a thogail—às mo leth fhèin agus às leth na colaiste, mu dheidhinn an sgaraidh eadar buidhnean poblach Breatannach agus buidhnean poblach an Alba. Tha mi a’ tuigsinn gu bheil buidhnean Breatannach ann mar an roinn le uallach airson tèarainteachd shòisealta ach bha mi a’ wonderigeadh am biodh cothrom aig Pàrlamaid na h-Alba cuideam a chur air Pàrlamaid Bhreatainn airson toirt air na buidhnean Breatannach rudeigin a dhèanamh airson luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig. Ma tha uallaich gu bhith air buidhnean poblach Albannach, bhiodh e cothromach gum biodh na h-aon uallaich air buidhnean Breatannach. Am biodh e iomchaidh do Phàrlamaid na h-Alba iarraidh air Pàrlamaid Bhreatainn rudeigin a dhèanamh?

*Following is the translation:*

I fear that there could be some kind of ghetto and that everything would be over in Lewis without anything being available on the mainland or in the east or south. I do not think that that is vague, as you suggested. In my personal opinion, if something is right in Harris, it is right anywhere.

For example, when legislation on racism was introduced, black people had just as many rights in Kinlochbervie as they had in places such as Glasgow. This question is similar, as it is a question about opportunities and rights to services and about people feeling that they have equal rights wherever they are in Scotland.

On my own behalf and on behalf of the college, I have a question for the committee—I do not know whether this is the place to raise it—about the distinction between British public authorities and public authorities in Scotland. I understand that there are British bodies such as the department responsible for social security, but I was wondering whether the Scottish Parliament would put pressure on the British Parliament to compel British bodies to do something for Gaelic speakers. If there are to be duties on Scottish public authorities, it would be fair if the same duties were imposed on British public authorities. Would it be appropriate for the Scottish Parliament to ask the British Parliament to do something?

**The Convener:** It would certainly be possible for us to do that. It has been done previously. Fiona Hyslop will remember the stock transfer report from the previous Social Justice Committee, in which we made certain representations about United Kingdom legislation. I have asked the clerks to give us guidance on the extent to which it is competent for the Scottish Parliament to give orders to UK departments in areas where there is devolved responsibility. It is important that we find out where we stand on that. We will take account of all that in the representations that we will make in the committee’s stage 1 report for the Parliament’s stage 1 debate on the bill.

**Dr Murray:** I want to press Professor Gillies a little bit more on the issue of the creation of demand. You used an analogy that referred to people who are native Gaelic speakers or who speak Gaelic to an extent. However, if your criterion is the creation of demand, it could be argued that you should consider creating demand in places such as Dumfries and Galloway and the Borders, where few people speak Gaelic. That does not seem to be what you were saying just now, but in terms of creating demand you could put particular emphasis on those parts of Scotland where there is no Gaelic tradition and where few people speak Gaelic.

**Professor Gillies:** Tha mi a’ smaoineachadh gur e sin aonan dhe na rudan anns na briathran a’ bhile a dh’fhaodadh a bhith air a chleachdadh mar bhacadh air leasachadh na Gàidhlig, oir dh’fheumadh a leithid seo de luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig a bhith ann mus tachradh càil.

A’ dol air ais chun na puinge a rinn sibh, chanainn gur dòcha gu bheil ùghdarras ionadail a-muigh an sin a tha ag iarraidh rudan a dhèanamh



às leth na Gàidhlig aig nach eil luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig aig an ìre sin. Cuideachd, feumaidh sinn a bhith deis airson mar a tha an sluagh a' gluasad anns na bliadhnaichean a tha romhainn. Ma dh'fhaoidte gum bi àite nach eil làidir an-dràsta a thaobh luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig air thoiseach ann a bhith a' cur air adhart leasachadh na Gàidhlig anns na bliadhnaichean a tha romhainn. Tha an t-eagal oirnn gur e slat-tomhais a dh'fhaodadh bacadh a chur air cùisean mura robh ùghdarras ionadail ag iarraidh rudeigin a dhèanamh.

*Following is the translation:*

I think that that is one of the things in the wording of the bill that could be used to hinder Gaelic development, because there would have to be a certain number of Gaelic speakers before anything could happen.

Going back to the point that you made, there could be a local authority out there that wants to do something for Gaelic but which does not have any Gaelic speakers at the moment. We must also be ready for how the population is going to move in the years to come. There could be a place that is not strong at the moment with regard to Gaelic speakers but which is ahead of other places in promoting Gaelic in years to come. We are afraid that that is a yardstick that could hinder matters if a local authority did not want to do anything.

**Dr Murray:** On the issue of local authorities that may be resistant, some public bodies are unfortunately a bit resistant to the idea of having to have a Gaelic plan. Certainly, some of the representations that we have had so far suggest that that is the case. On dispute resolution, it would be for ministers to make the final judgment if there was a dispute between a public body and the board. What is your view of the best mechanism for resolving disputes when they arise?

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Cha robh sinn idir airson cumhachdan a thoirt air falbh bho mhinistearan. Is iadsan na daoine a chaidh a thaghadh ann an dòigh deamocratach. Bhiodh rudeigin mar choimiseanair cànan no ombudsman cànan glè mhath, mar a tha ann am Poblachd na h-Èireann is an Canada. Nam biodh trioblaidean ag èirigh eadar na buidhnean poblach agus Bòrd na Gàidhlig, an àite ministearan a bhith air am bodraigeadh leis na rudan sin, bhiodh siostam breithneachaidh neo-eisimeileach ann a dh'fhaodadh dèiligeadh riutha. Nam b' e aig deireadh an latha nach tigeadh fuasgladh air a' cheist, is dòcha gum faodadh rudan a dhol chun nam ministearan an uair sin. An àite a bhith a' bodraigeadh mhinistearan le ceistean a dh'fhaodadh a bhith gu math suarach, ma dh'fhaoidte gum biodh siostam neo-eisimeileach na bu fhreagarraiche agus na bu chuideachaile.

*Following is the translation:*

We did not want to withhold powers from ministers. They are the people who were democratically elected. A language commissioner or ombudsman of some kind, such as exist in the Republic of Ireland and in Canada, would be very good. Instead of ministers being bothered if problems arose between public bodies and Bòrd na Gàidhlig, an independent adjudication system could deal with those problems. If, at the end of the day, no resolution could be reached, perhaps the matter could go to the minister at that stage. Instead of bothering ministers with questions that could be quite trivial, perhaps an independent system would be more appropriate and more helpful.

**Professor Gillies:** Bha sinn dìreach ag ràdh—cha robh sinn a' tighinn a-nuas cruaidh air sin—gur dòcha gum bu chòir Pàrlamaid na h-Alba coimhead air dè tha air tachairt as ùr ann an Èirinn agus dè tha air a bhith a' dol o chionn bhliadhnaichean ann an Canada.

*Following is the translation:*

We were just saying—we did not come down hard on this—that the Scottish Parliament ought perhaps to consider what has happened recently in Ireland and what has been going on for years in Canada.

**Dr Murray:** Could the Scottish public services ombudsman take on that role, or do you think that there would have to be a separate languages ombudsman, if we went down that route?

**Professor Gillies:** Tha mi a' smaointeachadh gu bheil fear ann airson a' chànan fhèin ann an Èirinn, ach chan eil sinn ag iarraidh cur ris an t-siostam biurocratach idir ann an dòigh sam bith.

*Following is the translation:*

I think that there is an ombudsman for the language in Ireland, but we do not want to add to the bureaucracy of the system in any way.

11:00

**Ms Wendy Alexander (Paisley North) (Lab):** I want to ask two questions about funding. As you will know, the bill provides £1.75 million of additional moneys, £350,000 of which is intended for Bòrd na Gàidhlig and £1.4 million of which is for assisting public authorities with the implementation of their plans. My first question is about what action should be expected as a result of the development of a Gaelic plan. The bòrd will have significant resources. What sort of action should we be encouraging the plans to throw up?

**Professor Gillies:** Tha eisimpleirean matha ann mar-thà, mar Chomhairle nan Eilean Siar agus Comhairle na Gaidhealtachd, a tha air

smaoineachadh air na planaichean sin. Chan eil iad dìreach a' bruidhinn air planaichean Gàidhlig ach air ciamar a tha Gàidhlig am measg a h-uile sion eile a tha iad a' dèanamh. Tha mi a' smaoineachadh gur e sin an dòigh air adhart. Chan eil sinn ag iarraidh gum bi plana ann airson Gàidhlig nach eil a' buntainn ri rud sam bith eile a tha a' tachairt ann an raointean eile ris a bheil ùghdarrasan ionadail a' dèiligeadh, mar shlàinte is foghlam is a h-uile sion eile.

Mar sin, tha argamaid ann gum bi e caran coltach ris a h-uile raon obrach eile a tha sinn an sàs ann. Ma tha thu a' faicinn deagh eisimpleir, tha e math a bhith a' leantainn an deagh eisimpleir sin. Cha leig a h-uile duine a leas tòiseachadh as ùr anns a h-uile ùghdarras ionadail no buidheann poblach ann an Alba. Bidh frèam ann agus faodaidh iad obrachadh taobh a-staigh sin. Chan eil mi a' faicinn gum biodh e uabhasach cosgail sin a chur air adhart. Tha feum air deagh ghean bho na buidhnean poblach Albannach agus, mar a thuirt mi, tha feadhainn dhiubh mar-thà air gluasad agus tha feadhainn eile a' gluasad airson rudan a dhèanamh dhan Ghàidhlig gun duine a' faighneachd dhaibh sin a dhèanamh. Mar eisimpleir, tha na comhairlean maoineachaidh foghlam na h-Alba a' cur Gàidhlig air na litrichean aca—chan eil mi ag ràdh gu bheil iad a' toirt barrachd airgead dhuinne, ach is e comharradh math a tha sin gu bheil iad a' cur Gàidhlig air na litrichean aca—agus cha do dh'iarr duine orra sin a dhèanamh. Is iad fhèin a tha ag iarraidh a dhèanamh. Tha mi a' smaoineachadh gum bi buidhnean a' miannachadh rudan a dhèanamh a thaobh na Gàidhlig, airson gu bheil iad a' creidsinn ann an Gàidhlig mar phàirt de chultar nàiseanta na h-Alba. Canaidh Iain Mac an Tàilleir barrachd mu dheidhinn sin.

*Following is the translation:*

There are already good examples, such as Western Isles Council and the Highland Council, which are thinking about such plans. They are not talking only about Gaelic plans but about how Gaelic fits in with everything else that they do. I think that that is the way forward. We do not want there to be a Gaelic plan that does not touch on anything else that is happening in other areas that local authorities deal with, such as health and education and so on.

There is an argument that it is a bit like every other area of work that we are involved in. If you see a good example, it is good to follow that example. Nobody needs to start from scratch in every local authority or public body in Scotland. There will be a framework that they can work within. I do not think that it will be terribly expensive to do that. The good will of Scottish public authorities will be needed and, as I said, some of them have already moved, and some are

moving, to do things for Gaelic without anyone asking them to do so. For example, the funding councils put Gaelic on their letterheads—I am not saying that they are giving us more money but that it is a good sign that they put Gaelic on their letterheads—and nobody asked them to do that; they themselves want to do it. I think that organisations will want to do things with regard to Gaelic because they believe that Gaelic is part of Scotland's national culture. Iain Mac an Tàilleir will say more about that.

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Mar a thuirt Tormod MacGilliosa, bhiodh cosgais a bharrachd air buidhnean nam biodh aca, can, ri Gàidhlig a chur air na litrichean aca, ach is e cosgais aon trup a bhiodh sin. Tha dòighean ann chan ann air airgead a shàbhaladh ach gun a bhith a' cosg uimhir 's a shaoileadh tu aig a' chiad shealladh air a' bhile. Mar eisimpleir, tha mi a' creidsinn nach bi an t-uabhas iarraidh air seirbheisean tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann an Crichean na h-Alba. An àite a bhith a' fastadh cuideigin mar oifigear Gàidhlig, anns a' chiad àite dh'fhaodadh oifigear chothroman co-ionann na comhairle obair na Gàidhlig a thoirt a-steach. Fiù 's nam biodh cuideigin aig an robh a' Ghàidhlig ag obair a dh'aon ghnòthach dhan chomhairle, tha Beurla aig an duine sin cuideachd agus rachadh aige air an obair a dhèanamh dhan chomhairle co-dhiù.

Tha mi a' tuigsinn carson a tha ùghdarrasan ionadail agus buidhnean poblach iomagaineach mu dheidhinn chosgaisean, ach tha mi a' smaointinn nach ruigeadh iad an leas. Nuair a thàinig tuarastal co-ionann a-steach airson bhoireannach agus fireannaich, tha mi cinnteach gun robh buidhnean poblach agus ionadail a' gladhraich is a' rànail mu dheidhinn sin. Chan eil mi smaoinichadh gun tig cosgaisean anabarrach orra, gu h-àraid anns na h-àiteachan far nach biodh daoine ag iarraidh nan seirbheisean. Mura h-eil duine gan iarraidh, cha bhi cosgais ann gan cur an gnìomh.

*Following is the translation:*

As Norman Gillies said, there would be an additional cost for organisations if they had to put Gaelic on their letterheads, for example, but that would be a one-off cost. There are ways not of saving money but of spending less than you might think would be needed at first sight of the bill. For example, I do not think that an awful lot of people would ask for services through the medium of Gaelic in the Scottish Borders. Instead of hiring someone as a Gaelic officer, the council's equal opportunities officer could take on the Gaelic work. Even if there was somebody who spoke Gaelic who worked for the council in that specific capacity, that person would also speak English and could do the work for the council in any case.

I understand why local authorities and public bodies are anxious about costs, but I think that they need not be. When equal pay for women and men was introduced, I am certain that public bodies and local authorities screamed and shouted about that. I do not think that they will face exceptional costs, especially in places where people do not demand the services. If people do not want services, there will be no cost in making them available.

**Ms Alexander:** In the evidence that we have had so far, witnesses have not expressed great concern about funding the implementation of the plans. A degree of comfort is emerging on that, but what the implications are for other funding streams—I am thinking of the Gaelic-specific grant—and, perhaps, for teacher supply is still an unanswered question. The hope is that the existence of the plans will reveal suppressed demand and perhaps stimulate demand, but many of the authorities that are in receipt of Gaelic-specific grants have not yet found themselves in a position to establish Gaelic-medium units. What are your thoughts on the bill's implications for other funding streams, principally the Gaelic-specific grant, and the supply of Gaelic-medium teachers? How might we think about the financial implications of that?

**Professor Gillies:** Is ceist mhòr sin ann an dòigh. Tha an t-airgead a' dol gu na h-ùghdarrasan ionadail an-dràsta, ach anns na làithean ri teachd thèid an t-airgead sin gu Bòrd na Gàidhlig airson a sgaoileadh a-mach gu na h-ùghdarrasan ionadail. Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' deasachadh a' phlana ris a dh'aontaicheas am ministear às leth Riaghaltas na h-Alba. Mar sin, tha mi a' gabhail ris gum bu chòir an t-ionmhas a bhith a' leantainn a' phlana gu ìre. A bheil sin a' freagairt na ceiste?

*Following is the translation:*

In a way, that is a big question. The money goes to local authorities at the moment, but in days to come that money will go to Bòrd na Gàidhlig to distribute to the local authorities. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is preparing a plan to which the minister will agree on behalf of the Scottish Executive. I accept, therefore, that the funding should follow the plan to some extent. Does that answer the question?

**Ms Alexander:** Thank you.

**Mr Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP):** The witnesses started off by saying that the bill focuses on the establishment of the board and its new functions—drawing up language plans, for example. You also point out in your submission:

"It is a weakness in the Bill that it is not required of Bòrd members to have a communicative knowledge of Gaelic."

For the record, will you outline why that will not be helpful?

**Professor Gillies:** Nuair a bha sinn a' dol tron bhile, bha sinn a' faireachadh nach robh e ann an àite sam bith gum feumadh Gàidhlig a bhith aig buill a' bhùird. Tha sinn a' smaoinichadh gum biodh sin riatanach oir tha sinn a' tuigsinn gum bi coinneamhan a' bhùird a' tachairt tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Bhiodh e feumail nam biodh eòlas air a' chànan aig an fheadhainn a tha an sàs anns a' bhòrd airson cùisean a dhèanamh nas èifeachdaich. Cuideachd, tha sinn a' ceangail ri tuigse a' chànan tuigse mu dheidhinn na tha a' crochadh ri sin. Is dòcha gur e puing bheag a tha ann, ach tha eisimpleirean ann far an robh rudan air an cur beagan trulainn le bhith a' cur nan daoine ceàrr a-staigh do bhuidheann dhen t-seòrsa sin. Thachair a leithid de rud ann an Èirinn, ach bha adhbharan poileataigeach an sàs ann an sin.

*Following is the translation:*

When we were going through the bill, we felt that it was not stated anywhere that members of the board had to speak Gaelic. We think that that would be essential because we understand that board meetings are to be conducted in Gaelic. It would be useful if those involved with the board knew the language so that they could do things effectively. We also link an understanding of the language with an understanding of all that depends on the language. That may be a small point, but there are examples where things have been thrown somewhat topsy-turvy because the wrong people have been brought into such organisations. Something of that kind happened in Ireland, but political reasons were involved in that.

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Ann an Èirinn, nuair a bha Bòrd na Gaeilge ann mus robh an siostam ùr ann, chuir aon de na pàrtaidhean anns an Riaghaltas—an Riaghaltas ris an cainte an "rainbow Government"—duine air Bòrd na Gaeilge aig nach robh Gaeilge. Chanadh luchd Bòrd na Gaeilge gun deach an obair aca air ais gu ìre mhòr air sàillibh 's gun fheumadh iad a h-uile càil a dhèanamh tro mheadhan na Beurla a chionn 's nach robh innealan-eadar-theangachaidh aca mar a tha aig a' chomataidh seo an-diugh. Chaidh uimhir a thìde a chosg a' mineachadh rudan beaga biodach dhan bhall sin 's gun d' fhuair am bòrd ann am boglach agus cha tàinig piseach cho mòr air an obair ris an robhar an dùil. Air an adhbhar sin, chan ann airson daoine a chumail a-mach a tha am moladh seo ach dìreach airson dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil a h-uile duine air an aon ràmh agus a' dol gu ceann-uidhe cruinn còmhla.

*Following is the translation:*

In Ireland, the Irish language board was in existence before the new system was established.

One of the parties in the Government—the Government known as the “rainbow Government”—put a person on the Irish language board who did not speak Irish. The people at the Irish language board said that their work was held back considerably because they had to do everything through the medium of English and because they did not have translation equipment such as the committee is using today. So much time was spent explaining little details to that member that the board got bogged down and less progress was made in its work than had been expected. That recommendation is intended not to exclude people but simply to ensure that everyone is on the same wavelength and heading in the same direction.

**Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston)**

**(Lab):** Another issue is how you can develop and sustain the language in the transition stage through adolescence and the late teens, in the context of the pressures on young people, particularly through the commercialisation and globalisation of entertainment and communication. While that is not mentioned in the submissions, how can you encourage the use of the language when there are those pressures? How do you relate that to broadcasting responsibilities in Scotland and the UK? Finally, what are your views on the developing debate around the Cultural Commission, which should report in June?

**Professor Gillies:** I will start off and then pass on to Iain and Mairead, because there was quite a lot to unpack in those questions.

We welcome people who want to learn Gaelic, irrespective of where they come from. Some of our student body are sitting behind us, so I cannot see who is there, but I know that they will be from all airts and pairts. We are talking not just about the UK; we are talking about America, Canada and a variety of European countries.

We realise that Gaelic will depend on learners of the language. There will be much more of an interchange of ideas between different young people in terms of their own cultural backgrounds, which is healthy, because language and culture cannot be static; they have to move on. The sort of global media phenomenon—I have just realised that I am speaking in English. It is because I usually speak to Frank McAveety in English. Co-dhiù, co-dhiù.

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Chan eil càil a chuimhne agam air an rud a bha mi a’ dol a ràdh. Tha cuimhne agam: b’ ann mu dheidhinn daoine òga agus deugairean. Tha sibh glè cheart gu bheil e garbh duilich. Le dlùth-chruinneas agus le saoghal MTV agus an leithid, tha e anabarrach duilich a bhith a’ toirt air daoine òga Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn. Fiù ’s ann an dùthchannan mar an t-Suain agus an Òlaind, tha daoine a’ fàs iomagaineach leis na tha

a’ dol de Bheurla. Bheir mi eisimpleir leis an sgeulachd seo. Bho chionn beagan mhiosan, bha banacharaid agam aig fèis bàrdachd ann am Berlin agus bha i air a h-uabhasachadh leis na chunnaic is na chuala i timcheall oirre de Bheurla. Cha b’ urrainn dhi a chreidsinn gun tachradh sin ann an cultar cho làidir ’s a tha Gearmailtis.

A’ tilleadh dhan Ghàidhlig agus an rud a thuit sibh mu dheidhinn craolaidh, tha mi a’ smaointinn gu bheil craoladh agus rudan gleansach mar sin air leth cudthromach. Ma dh’fhaoidte gun nochd seo caran faoin, ach tha eòlaichean cànan mar David Crystal anns a’ Chuimrigh a’ creidsinn gu mòr gu bheil rudan mar telebhisean, an t-eadar-lìon, diosgachan is a h-uile càil dhe na tha sin anabarrach cudthromach airson aire dhaoine òga a tharraing. Mura h-eil an cànan aca ri fhaotainn anns na meadhanan sin, thèid an cànan an neo-shuim aca. Chan eil fhios agam dè am fuasgladh airson na ceiste. Tha fios agam gu bheil craoladh a’ tighinn fo sgèith Riaghaltas Bhreatainn agus gur dòcha nach bi an gnothach aig Pàrlamaid na h-Alba, ach bhiodh sianal telebhisein—agus fear le prògraman inntinneach air—glè mhath.

*Following is the translation:*

I cannot remember at all what I was going to say. I remember: it was about young people and teenagers. You are quite right that it is a tough job. With globalisation, MTV and the like, it is exceptionally difficult to make young people speak Gaelic. Even in countries such as Sweden and the Netherlands, people are becoming concerned about how much English is being used. This story provides an example. A few months ago, a friend of mine was at a poetry festival in Berlin and she was horrified by how much English she saw and heard around her. She could not believe that that would happen in a culture as strong as the German one.

Returning to Gaelic and to what you said about broadcasting, I think that broadcasting and attractive things like that are extremely important. This may sound rather silly, but linguistics experts such as David Crystal in Wales believe very much that things such as television, the internet, compact discs and all that kind of thing are exceptionally important for getting young people’s attention. If their language is not available in those media, they will lose respect for the language. I do not know what the solution to the problem is. I know that broadcasting comes under the authority of the British Government and that perhaps the Scottish Parliament will have no say in the matter, but a television channel—with interesting programmes on it—would be very good.

11:15

**Professor Gillies:** Dhaingnichinn an rud a thuit Iain a thaobh cho cudthromach ’s a tha na

meadhanan ann a bhith a' cumail cànan beò. Chan urrainn dhut cànan a chur ann am bocsa beag agus a ràdh, "Sin agad e." Ma tha foghlam againn, tha sin ceart gu leòr, ach feumaidh coimhearsnachd cheart a bhith againn.

Air a' phuing mun Choimisean Chultarail, tha ùidh againn ann oir tha sinn a' faicinn gu bheil e a' bualadh oirnn gu mòr. Tha sinn a' faighinn a-mach, gu h-àraid anns a' cholaiste seo, gu bheil e a' toirt misneachd do dhaoine nach robh aca roimhe nuair a tha barrachd eòlais aca air an cuid cànan is an eachdraidh is an cultar a tha còmhla ris. Tha sin follaiseach anns na rudan a tha daoine a' feuchainn ri dhèanamh às dèidh a bhith nan oileanaich an seo. Tha sealladh ùr dhaibh air an t-saoghal. Is rud math mu dheidhinn a' Choimisein Chultarail gu bheil e a' coimhead chan ann air a' gheàrr ùine ach fada rompa. Feumaidh sinn a bhith a' dèanamh an aon rud a thaobh Gàidhlig. Feumaidh sealladh lèirsinneach a bhith againn.

*Following is the translation:*

I confirm what Iain said about how important the media are in keeping languages alive. You cannot put a language in a box and say, "There you are." If we have education, that is all very well, but we need to have a proper community.

On the point about the Cultural Commission, we are interested in it because we see that it might have a great impact on us. We are finding out, especially in this college, that it gives people a confidence that they did not have before when they know more about their language and about the history and culture that go with it. That is evident in the things that people try to do after they have been students here. They have a new outlook on the world. A good thing about the Cultural Commission is that it is not looking only at the short term, but far ahead. We have to do the same for Gaelic. We must have a far-sighted vision.

**Mairead NicDhonnchaidh:** A' togail air a' phuing a rinn Iain Mac an Tàilleir, tha mise ag aontachadh gu bheil e doirbh a bhith a' cumail clann ri Gàidhlig ann an dòigh cunbhalach tron bhun-sgoil, tron àrd-sgoil is às dèidh na sgoile. Gu pearsanta, tha mi a' smaoinachadh nach bi am bile a' cuideachadh anns an dòigh sin. Tha e a' toirt dhuinn samhla de chleachdadh na Gàidhlig, ach chan eil e ag obrachadh ann an dòigh cruaidh agus cha chuidich e anns an dòigh cudthromach. Tha e a' toirt aire—agus airgead cuideachd—air falbh bho na rudan a tha cudthromach agus tha e a' toirt dhuinn samhla nan àite. Chan eil sin a' dol a chumail a' chlann againn ri Gàidhlig.

*Following is the translation:*

To add to the point that Iain Mac an Tàilleir made, I agree that it is difficult to keep children speaking Gaelic consistently through primary

school, through secondary school and after school. Personally, I think that the bill will not help in that way. It makes it seem as if Gaelic is being used, but it does not really work and it will not help in any important way. It draws people's attention—and money—away from the things that are important and it gives us a semblance of that in their place. That is not going to keep children speaking Gaelic.

**Professor Gillies:** Is e an rud a tha sinn ag iarraidh gum bi saoghal na Gàidhlig a cheart cho tarraingeach ri saoghal sam bith eile anns a bheil sinn an sàs. Chan eil sin ag ràdh nach eil ùidhean sam bith againn taobh a-mach a' chànan agus ar cultar fhèin. Tha sinn ag iarraidh a bhith ceangailte ri cultar dhaoine eile agus tha sinn ag iarraidh a bhith cho farsaing 's as urrainn dhuinn a bhith ann an bhith a' leudachadh a-mach air na tha sinn an sàs ann.

*Following is the translation:*

What we want is for the Gaelic world to be just as attractive as any other world that we are involved in. We are not saying that we have no other interests beyond the language and our own culture. We want to be connected with other people's cultures and we want to be as wide-ranging as we can be in developing what we are involved in.

**Iain Mac an Tàilleir:** Ma dh'fhaodas mi cur ris na thuirt Tormod MacGilliosa, tha mi a' smaoinachadh gur glè thrìc a tha daoine a' coimhead air Gàidhlig mar chur-seachad no rud anns a bheil ùidh agad. Gu dearbh, tha daoine ann aig a bheil ùidh ann an cànaichean ach—dhòmhsa co-dhiù—chan eil ann an Gàidhlig ach meadhan conaltraidh tron a bheil na rudan anns a bheil ùidh agam air an cur an cèill. Glè thrìc, cluinnear rudan mu dheidhinn "the Gaelic sector", mar a tha an abairt Bheurla a' dol. Chan eil mise a' tuigsinn sin. Chan eil English sector ann. Tha mi a' smaointinn gu bheil e buailteach do dhaoine a bhith a' coimhead air Gàidhlig mar aon rud anns a bheil ùidh aig daoine agus, mar a thuirt Tormod MacGilliosa, a tha glaiste air falbh bhon t-saoghal mhòr. Ach chan ann idir mar sin a tha i.

*Following is the translation:*

If I may add to what Norman Gillies said, I think that people often look at Gaelic as a pastime or interest. Indeed, there are people who are interested in languages but—to me, at any rate—Gaelic is just a medium of communication through which I can express the things that interest me. Often, you hear things about "the Gaelic sector", as the English expression goes. I do not understand that. There is no English sector. I think that people tend to look at Gaelic as one thing that people are interested in and, as Norman Gillies said, as something that is locked away from the wider world. That is not at all what it is like.

**Mr McAveety:** That covers most of the philosophical debate. After all, this issue is more about something that is part of people's very essence and being than it is about an activity or pastime that people simply happen to do.

Although we have been exploring the issues that the bill raises, we have an opportunity not only to address the grey area around broadcasting, which will continue to be debated by parties and individuals, but to discuss new broadcasting technologies such as digital technology. Someone mentioned a 20-year vision. If we sat round the table now and worked with key players, such as the main television companies, we might be able to open up a debate about how, instead of putting out token programmes at 12.30 or 1 o'clock in the morning, we can tie more interesting and diverse programmes into existing mainstream programming that people all over Scotland—no matter whether they are new to the language, have Gaelic in their family background and want to explore it further or are fluent in it—can key into when appropriate. Perhaps we can explore that in more detail with some of the major agencies.

**The Convener:** I am very conscious of time, but I think that members have a few clear-up questions.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** On the use of Gaelic in courts, I am aware that, in civil proceedings, documents and evidence in Gaelic can be admissible where the number of residents justifies the measure. If you wish to extend that use, will you consider the matter and let the committee know how that might be defined? I feel sure that the courts would want a clear definition that would facilitate the use of Gaelic in a way that everyone could understand.

**Professor Gillies:** Nì sinn sin.

*Following is the translation:*

We shall do that.

**The Convener:** I think that the Gaelic experience, particularly Gaelic-medium education, can teach us broader lessons. For example, its approach, which ensures that the language is taught at an early stage, has many implications for teaching and learning other European languages. I am sure that, in such ways, we can build more widely on that experience.

I thank the witnesses for attending this very useful and interesting evidence session. You are leaving with some homework, and we would be very grateful if you could come back to us on issues that have been raised this morning, such as further input.

**Professor Gillies:** Tapadh leibhse. Tha e math seann chàirdean fhaicinn agus càirdean ùra a dhèanamh. Mòran taing.

*Following is the translation:*

Thank you. It is good to see old friends and make new ones. Many thanks.

11:23

*Meeting suspended.*

11:29

*On resuming—*

**The Convener:** I had hoped to have a seamless transition, but that did not work out. However, I welcome to the meeting the representatives from Commun na Gàidhlig. We have Màiri Bremner, the chairperson, Donald MacDonald, a member of the board of directors, and Dòmhnall Màrtainn, the chief executive. Màiri Bremner wants to make an introductory speech, so I invite her to give us her spiel on matters.

11:30

**Màiri Bremner (Comunn na Gàidhlig):** Mòran taing agus fàilte oirbh uile. Tha mi toilichte fhaicinn uibhir agaibh mu thimcheall a' bhùird a choinnich mi riutha mar-thà. Mar sin, tha mi a' faireachdainn gu bheil mi an lùib chàirdean agus is e deagh rud a tha sin ann an suidheachadh mar seo.

Tha sinne cuideachd a' cur fàilte air Bile na Gàidhlig (Alba). Tha sinn toilichte a dh'fhaicinn gu bheil e nas treasa na bha e an toiseach, ach tha sinn a' faireachdainn gu bheil pìos aige ri dhol fhathast. Cha ruig mi leas innse dhuibh na thachair dhan Ghàidhlig fad iomadach bliadhna agus mar a bhathar ga dubhadh às. Gu dearbh, mar neach air an deach iarraidh iomadach uair gun a' Ghàidhlig a chleachdadh—chan b' ann idir an suidheachadh foirmeil ach an suidheachadh far an robh mi a' bruidhinn ri cuideigin gu nàdarra—a thaobh 's gur e Gàidhlig a bha ann, tuigidh mise dè tha e a' ciallachadh do luchd na Gàidhlig, agus don fheadhainn a dh'fheuchas ri a h-ionnsachadh anns na bliadhnaichean ri tighinn, gu bheil bile ann a bheir cothrom às leth na Gàidhlig.

Mar a chuala sibh bhon bhuidheann ro làimh, chan eil sinn ag iarraidh a h-uile dad anns a' chiad dol-a-mach. Tha sinn ag iarraidh a bhith ciallach mu thimcheall sin agus tha sinn ag iarraidh ceumannan a ghabhail beag air bheag gus am faigh sinn an rud a tha sinn a' faireachdainn gu math làidir—co-ionannachd a bhith againn leis a' Bheurla. Tha mi a' smaoinichadh gu bheil e riatanach gum bi co-ionannachd againn. Cuiridh mi nur cuimhne a-rithist gu bheil feadhainn anns a' choimhearsnachd againn nach eil cho buileach deiseil 's a bha mise a bhith a' seasamh air an casan fhèin nuair a thèid iarraidh orra gun a' Ghàidhlig a chleachdadh. Mar sin, tuigidh sibh ciamar a bha iomagain is dragh air daoine.

Tha fios agam gu bheil luchd na Gàidhlig a' sùileachadh gu bheil cothrom ann—tha feadhainn aca a' faicinn, is dòcha, gur e seo an cothrom mu dheireadh aice—an cànan ath-nuadhachadh agus a neartachadh agus na cothroman fhaighinn a chaidh a bhacadh orra fad iomadach bliadhna. Tha fios agam gu bheil iad uabhasach taingeil airson an iomadach rud a tha air tachairt às leth na Gàidhlig anns na bliadhnaichean a chaidh seachad, agus tha iad a' toirt taing mhòr dhan Riaghaltas airson na rinn e às leth na Gàidhlig. Ach, mar a tha a h-uile sion, mar as motha a gheibh tu is ann as motha a bhios tu ag iarraidh. Mar sin, tha mi a' smaoinèachadh gur mar sin a bhios sinn ag iarraidh an-diugh. Tha e a cheart cho math dhomh a bhith onarach.

Mar a thuirt an neach-gairm, còmhla rium tha Dòmhnall Màrtainn, a tha na cheannard aig Comunn na Gàidhlig, agus tha òraid ghoirid aige ri thoirt dhuibh. Tha mi mothachail gu bheil an ùine a' ruith oirnn, ach tha e a' dol a bhruidhinn ribh mun chùmhnaidh Eòrpach, mu bhuidhnean poblach agus àite na Gàidhlig ann am buidhnean poblach, agus bheir e dhuibh beagan bheachdan air craoladh cuideachd.

Cuideachd còmhla rium tha Dòmhnall eile—bidh mi ag ràdh riutha Dòmhnall CNAG agus Dòmhnall Àros—as e Dòmhnall Dòmhnallach. Tha esan air ceann an ionad riochdail a tha shìos ann am Port Rìgh. Tha mi an dòchas gum faigh sibh cothrom tadhal air agus gum faic sibh dhuibh fhèin cho adhartach 's a tha an t-àite a tha aige. Tha Dòmhnall Dòmhnallach a' dol a bhruidhinn air gnìomhachas agus air foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Tha clann aig Dòmhnall a' dol tron fhoghlam agus tha fiosrachadh farsaing aige air sin. Nuair a bhios sin seachad—bidh sinn cho sgiobalta 's is urrainn dhuinn—freagraidh sinn na ceistean agaibh.

*Following is the translation:*

Thank you, Robert, and welcome to all of you. I am happy to see so many people around the table whom I have already met. It feels as if I am among friends, and that is a good thing in a situation such as this.

We also welcome the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill. We are pleased to see that the bill is stronger than it was at first, but we also believe that it still has some way to go. I do not need to tell you what happened to Gaelic over many years and how it was stamped out. Indeed, as someone who was asked many times not to use Gaelic—not in formal situations, but in situations where I was speaking naturally to someone—simply because it was Gaelic, I understand what it means to Gaelic speakers, and to those who will try to learn Gaelic in years to come, that the bill exists and that it gives us an opportunity for Gaelic.

As you heard from the previous panel, we do not want everything immediately. We want to be sensible about it and take things one step at a time until we get what we feel so strongly about—equality with English. I believe that it is essential that we have equality. I remind you again that there are some people in our community who are not quite as prepared as I was to stand up for themselves if they are asked not to use Gaelic. You will understand, therefore, why people have been anxious and worried.

I know that Gaelic speakers see this as a chance—some perhaps see it as the last chance—to revitalise and strengthen the language and to get the opportunities that were denied them for many years. I also know that they are extremely grateful for the many things that have been done for Gaelic in past years, and they thank the Government for what it has done for Gaelic. As is always the case, however, the more you get the more you want, and I think that that is what we want today. It is just as well for me to be honest.

As the convener said, I have with me Comunn na Gàidhlig's chief executive, Dòmhnall Màrtainn, who will make a short speech. I know that time is against us, but he will speak about the European charter and about public bodies and the role of Gaelic in public bodies. He will also give some views on broadcasting.

The other Donald who is with me—I call them Donald CNAG and Donald Àros—is Donald MacDonald. He is in charge of the splendid centre up in Portree; I that hope members will get a chance to visit and see for themselves how advanced it is. Donald MacDonald will speak about business and about Gaelic-medium education. Donald's children are going through school, so he has wide knowledge of the subject. When that is finished—we shall be as quick as we can—we shall answer your questions.

#### **Dòmhnall Màrtainn (Comunn na Gàidhlig):**

Tha mi cuideachd toilichte a bhith an seo, agus tha sinn uabhasach taingeil gu bheil sibh a' toirt cothrom dhuinn ar còraichean a chleachdadh ann a bhith a' cleachdadh a' chàin a tha sinn fhìn airson a thaghadh. Tha sinn fada nur comain. Tha fhios agam nach eil e furasta a bhith ag èisteachd ri eadar-theangachadh, ach tha sinn mothachail gu bheil sibh uabhasach fhèin foighidneach, agus mòran taing dhuibh airson sin. Nuair a gheibh sinn achd airson inbhe thèarainte, tha sinn an dòchas gum bi barrachd agus barrachd de cothroman den t-seòrsa seo againn ann a bhith a' cleachdadh a' chàin ann an suidheachadh oifigeil, oir tha sin a' togail ìomhaigh a' chàin ann an dòigh a lùigeadh sinn fhaicinn.

Mar a tha an aithisg againn ag ràdh, tha sinn a' cur fàilte air an iris seo den bhile. Chan eil teagamh nach eil na h-atharrachaidhean a chaidh

a dhèanamh leis an Riaghaltas—an dèidh dhaibh beachdan fhaighinn bho choimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig agus bho dhaoine a sgrìobh gu pearsanta—air buaidh mhòr a thoirt air an iris seo. Tha prionnsabalan a' bhile air gluasad air adhart agus tha am bile nas fheàrr, nar beachd-ne, na bha am pàipear-comhairleachaidh a thàinig a-mach an-uiridh.

Ach is dòcha gum bu chòir dhan chomataidh beachdachadh gu mionaideach air a bheil na prionnsabalan a tha anns a' bhile aig an ìre seo a' toirt a-staigh na prionnsabalan agus na gealltanasan ris an do dh'aontaich an Riaghaltas anns a' chùmhnannt Eòrpach. Chan eil sinn a' smaoineachadh gu bheil, agus bheir mi dhuibh eisimpleir no dhà carson. Bhiodh e uabhasach mì-fhortanach nam biodh sinn ann an suidheachadh as t-samhradh sa tighinn far am biodh a' Phàrlamaid ag aontachadh ri achd Ghàidhlig agus pàirt den achd sin cus nas laige na na gealltanasan a chaidh a thoirt seachad anns a' chùmhnannt Eòrpach.

Anns a' chiad earrainn, tha an cùmhnannt Eòrpach ag ràdh gum bu chòir dha na rìoghachdan a bhith a' stèidheachadh nam poileasaidhean, riaghailtean agus achdan aca a thaobh mion-chànanan air na prionnsabalan ris a bheil iad air gabhail. Gu dearbh, thog an luchd-eòlais Comhairle na h-Eòrpa a' phuing sin nuair a chomharraich iad a-mach, mar eisimpleir, suidheachadh an fhoghlaim. Tha an Riaghaltas air aontachadh gum bu chòir foghlam aig gach ìre—fo aois sgoile, bun-sgoil agus àrd-sgoil—a bhith air a thoirt seachad anns na mion-chànanan, far a bheil sin freagarrach. Anns an t-suidheachadh seo, tha sin a' ciallachadh foghlam Gàidhlig. Thuirt an luchd-eòlais nach eil an Riaghaltas air sin a chur an cèill agus gum biodh e iomchaidh nan deigheadh beachdachadh air sin agus air na puingeann eile ris an do dh'aontaich an Riaghaltas nuair a chuir iad làmh-sgrìobhaidh ris a' chùmhnannt, còmhla ris na molaidhean a rinn an luchd-eòlais aig an àm.

Tha an fhreagairt a thug an Riaghaltas seachad ag ràdh gu bheil an Riaghaltas mothachail gu bheil ceist ann a thaobh suidheachadh a' chùmhnannt ann an lagh. Tha an fhreagairt a' toirt iomradh air na còmhraidhean agus na conaltraidhean a tha air a bhith a' dol air adhart le Bile na Gàidhlig (Alba), mar eisimpleir. Thathar ag ràdh gum faodadh achd Ghàidhlig gabhail os làimh na gealltanasan a chaidh aontachadh anns a' chùmhnannt Eòrpach, airson dèanamh cinnteach gum bi na geallaidhean sin air an cur an cèill aig gach ìre den Riaghaltas—tha sin a' ciallachadh an Riaghaltas agus roinnean ann an Sasainn, an Riaghaltas ann an Alba, na h-ùghdarrasan ionadail agus mar sin air adhart.

Mar a chuala sinn mar-thà, tha duilgheadas ann a thaobh suidheachadh nam buidhnean poblach a

tha stèidhichte ann an Lunnainn no aig a bheil roinnean ann an Lunnainn ach a tha a' toirt seachad seirbheisean poblach ann an Alba. Aig an ìre seo, chan eil na buidhnean sin a' tighinn fo smachd a' bhile. Cha ghabh sin dèanamh, tha e coltach, air sgàth 's nach eil cumhachd aig Pàrlamaid na h-Alba air an dòigh anns a bheil na buidhnean sin ag obair. Tha sinn a' smaoineachadh gu bheil e uabhasach cudthromach gum bu chòir dòigh air choreigin a bhith ann airson dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil na h-uallaich a bhios air na buidhnean poblach ann an Alba fon bhile a' leantainn agus gum biodh an t-aon uallach air na buidhnean a tha stèidhichte ann an Sasainn ach aig a bheil meuran ann an Alba.

Chan e a-mhàin roinnean an Riaghaltais a tha a' cur dragh oirnn, ach buidhnean poblach mar am Post Rìoghail. Bha Comunn na Gàidhlig a' feuchainn ri cead fhaighinn bhon Phost Rìoghail stampaichean dà-chànanach a chleachdadh—chan e idir an fheadhainn oifigeil ach an fheadhainn a tha sinn fhèin ag ullachadh airson a chleachdadh air na cèisean a tha a' dol a-mach. Thuirt am Post Rìoghail rinn nach eil e ceadachte sin a chleachdadh anns a' Ghàidhlig agus anns a' Bheurla air sgàth atharrachaidhean an lagha a thàinig a-steach bho thoiseach na Samhna. Cha chosgadh sin càil dhan Phost Rìoghail, ach chaidh innse dhuinn gun robhar ga dhiùltadh air sgàth 's nach e, anns a' chiad àite, rìoghachd dà-chànanach a tha ann an Alba, mar a tha anns a' Chuimrigh, agus anns an dara h-àite, nach eil inbhe sam bith aig a' Ghàidhlig. Tha e gu math follaiseach gu bheil am Post Rìoghail den bheachd, air sgàth 's nach eil inbhe aig a' Ghàidhlig agus nach eil i air a h-ainmeachadh ann an achd sam bith mar chànan oifigeil mar ann an Achd na Cuimris 1993, nach eil e mar fhiachaibh orrasan coilionadh an iarrtais againn a bhith a' cleachdadh stampaichean anns an dà chànan.

Tha buidhnean eile den Riaghaltas a tha air a bhith a' diùltadh a bhith a' toirt agus a' cur an cèill còraichean. Mar eisimpleir, bha feadhainn ag iarraidh cead dràibhidh anns a' Ghàidhlig, ach tha a' bhuidheann sin—a tha anns a' Chuimrigh—air sin a dhiùltadh, a-rithist air sgàth 's nach eil an aon inbhe aig a' Ghàidhlig 's a tha aig a' Chuimris. Air sgàth 's gun do dh'aontaich an Riaghaltas gum bu chòir a' Ghàidhlig agus a' Chuimris a bhith aig an aon ìre fon chùmhnannt—tha iad air gealltanasan a thoirt fo pàirt 3 den chùmhnannt—tha sinn a' creidsinn gu bheil e iomchaidh gum faigh sinn an aon ìre de chumhachd oifigeil ann an achd airson na Gàidhlig 's a tha ann airson na Cuimris. Mar sin, nuair a tha sinn a' beachdachadh air suidheachadh co-ionannachd agus air dleastanasan nam buidhnean poblach, tha sinn den bheachd gur e an rud a thachair anns a' Chuimrigh an rud as ciallaiche, agus gum bu chòir dhuinn a bhith a' feuchainn ri faighinn dhan aon



suidheachadh a thaobh na Gàidhlig a tha a air obrachadh anns a' Chuimrigh.

Chan eil sin idir a' ciallachadh gum biodh sinn a' sùileachadh gum biodh an aon ìre de sheirbheisean gan toirt seachad ann an ceann a deas Alba 's a gheibheadh anns na h-Eileanan an Iar agus a' Ghaidhealtachd. Chan e sin idir an rud a tha sinn a' moladh. Tha sinn a' moladh gum bu chòir dhuinn tòiseachadh aig ìre far a bheil an cànan an-dràsta ri chluinntinn agus ga bhruidhinn agus mar phàirt den choimhearsnachd. Feumaidh planaichean na bu làidire a bhith aig na buidhnean poblach anns na sgìrean sin. Shìos ann an àiteachan eile den rìoghachd, is dòcha gur e glè bheag a dh'fheumadh na buidhnean poblach a dhèanamh anns a' chiad dol a-mach gus am biodh barrachd iarrtasan ann airson nan seirbheisean a tha na buidhnean sin a' coilionadh.

A thaobh craolaidh, tha duilgheadasan sònraichte ann. Mar a bhios sibh gu math mothachail, tha dìleasanais aig Pàrlamaid Lunnainn airson riaghailtean agus lagh craolaidh, a' toirt a-staigh craoladh Gàidhlig, ach is ann aig Riaghaltas Dhùn Èideann aig a bheil an t-uallach airson maoinachadh nan seirbheisean Gàidhlig. Chan eil teagamh sam bith gun robh craoladh air ainmeachadh anns a' chùmhnaidh Eòrpach. Bha an Riaghaltas airson gluasad chun na h-ìre far am biodh sianal sònraichte ann airson Gàidhlig. Tha a' chuid mhòr de dhaoine ag aontachadh gur e sin an t-slighe air adhart, an àite an t-suidheachaidh an-dràsta far am feum daoine cadal a chall ma tha iad a' dol a choimhead air prògraman Gàidhlig air an telebhisean. Tha sin a' ciallachadh gum feumar maoinachadh a chur an aghaidh sin, ach tha an duilgheadas ann nach eil e uabhasach soilleir cò às a tha an t-airgead sin a' dol a thighinn.

Nam biodh na tha anns a' chùmhnaidh Eòrpach air a thoirt a-staigh a Bhile na Gàidhlig, bhiodh sin ga dhèanamh nas treasa agus nas fhasa. Bhiodh e cuideachd a' cur an cèill nam briathran a tha am Prìomh Mhinistear agus ministearan eile anns an Riaghaltas air a bhith a' cleachdadh—gu bheil iad airson gum bi a' Ghàidhlig a' maireachdainn, gum biodh i fallain agus gum biodh i mar phàirt chudthromach do dhualchas Alba airson luchd-fuirich Alba.

*Following is the translation:*

I am also pleased to be here, and we are extremely grateful that you are giving us the opportunity to exercise our rights by speaking the language of our choice. We are much obliged to you. I know that it is not easy to listen to an interpretation, so thank you for that. When we get an act for secure status, I hope that we will have more and more opportunities of this kind to use the language in official situations, because that raises the profile of the language in a way that we want.

As our submission says, we welcome the latest version of the bill. There is no doubt that the amendments that the Executive has made—after it received the views of Gaelic communities and of people who wrote in personally—have made a great impact on this version. The bill's principles have moved forward and the bill is better, in our opinion, than the consultation document that came out last year.

However, the committee perhaps ought to consider more closely whether the principles of the bill as it stands comply with the principles and promises to which the Government agreed in the European charter. We do not believe that they do, and I shall give you one or two examples why that is the case. It would be unfortunate if we were to find ourselves in a situation next summer whereby the Parliament was agreeing to a Gaelic bill, part of which was much weaker than the promises that were made in the European charter.

Part 1 of the European charter says that states ought to base their policies, regulations and acts on minority languages on the charter principles—to which they have agreed. Indeed, the Council of Europe experts raised that point when they singled out, for example, the situation with regard to education. The Government has agreed that education in minority languages ought to be provided at every level—pre-school, primary school and secondary school—where that is appropriate. In this situation, that means Gaelic education. The experts said that the Executive has not fulfilled that promise and that it would be appropriate if consideration were given to that and to the other points to which the Government agreed when it signed the charter, as well as to the experts' recommendations.

In its response, the Executive said that it is aware that there is an issue with regard to the situation of the charter in law, and it makes reference to the discussions and consultations that have been taking place on, for example, the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill. It said that a Gaelic act could ensure that the promises that were agreed to in the European charter were fulfilled at every level of government—the Government and departments in England, the Scottish Executive, local government and so on.

We have already heard that there is a problem with regard to public authorities—the public bodies that are based in London or that have departments in London but which deliver public services in Scotland. At this stage, those bodies do not fall within the scope of the bill. That cannot be done, apparently, because the Scottish Parliament has no power over the way in which those bodies work. We think that it is extremely important that there should be some way of ensuring that the duties on public authorities in Scotland under the

bill will continue and that the same duty will be placed on bodies that are based in London but have branches in Scotland.

It is not only Government departments that concern us, but public authorities such as the Royal Mail. Comunn na Gàidhlig tried to get permission from the Royal Mail to use bilingual stamps—not the official ones, but those that we use on envelopes that we send out. However, the Royal Mail told us that it is not permitted to use such stamps in Gaelic and in English because of a change in the law from the beginning of November. There would be no cost to the Royal Mail, but it said that it was refusing our request, first, because Scotland is not a bilingual country, as Wales is, and secondly, because Gaelic has no status. Clearly, the Royal Mail believes that it is not incumbent on it to fulfil our request to use bilingual stamps because Gaelic has no status and is not named in any act as an official language, as happens with Welsh under the Welsh Language Act 1993.

Other Government bodies have also refused to give or provide for rights. For example, some people wanted a driving licence in Gaelic, but the organisation responsible—which is in Wales—refused, again because Gaelic does not have the same status as Welsh has. Because the Government agreed that Gaelic and Welsh should be at the same level under the charter—the promises were made under part 3 of the charter—we feel that it is appropriate that we should get the same degree of official power in a Gaelic act as is the case in Wales. Therefore, in considering the question of equality and the duties on public bodies, we think that what was done in Wales is the most sensible thing. We ought to try to achieve the same situation with regard to Gaelic as has worked for Welsh in Wales.

That does not mean that we envisage the same level of service delivery in the south of Scotland as in the Western Isles and the Highlands. That is not at all what we propose. We suggest that we should begin where the language is now heard and spoken and is part of the community, so public authorities in those areas should have stronger plans. Public authorities in other parts of the country might have very little to do at first until greater demands were made for the services that those bodies provide.

There are specific problems with regard to broadcasting. As members will be well aware, the London Parliament has responsibility for regulating and legislating on broadcasting, including Gaelic broadcasting, but the Scottish Executive in Edinburgh has responsibility for the funding of Gaelic broadcasting. There is no doubt that broadcasting is mentioned in the European charter. The Government wanted to move towards

a position where there would be a special channel for Gaelic. We know that a majority of people agree that that is the way forward, rather than the present situation whereby people have to lose sleep if they want to watch Gaelic television programmes. Funding is needed to support that, but it is not terribly clear where that money will come from.

It would be easier if the agreements under the European charter were brought into the bill, and that would make the bill stronger. It would also give effect to the words used by the First Minister and by other ministers, who have said that they want Gaelic to survive, to be healthy and to be an important part of Scotland's heritage for the people of Scotland.

**The Convener:** I am happy to raise your points about bilingual stamps and the driver and vehicle licensing agency, regardless of the issues in the bill, to see whether we can find out the position of the bodies concerned. I undertake to do that, with the committee's permission, as the information will be useful. It might be helpful if you could let us have any correspondence or briefing materials that you have on those matters so that we know exactly what the issue is and the state of play.

On the more general point about the tension between the current status of Gaelic and the lack of teachers on the one hand and the aspiration on the other, a lot of the equal status-type things are, arguably, difficult to deliver given the present state of resources. What is your position? Are you in favour of the general principles of the bill? That is something that we have to report to the Parliament. Perhaps you could deal with that question first.

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Tha sinn riarachta leis na prionnsabalan gu ìre, agus nam biodh aon phrionnsabal beag eile ann, a' gabhail a-staigh na gheall an Riaghaltas fon chùmhnannt Eòrpach, bhiodh sinn anabarrach toilichte an uair sin.

*Following is the translation:*

We are satisfied with the principles to some extent. If one more little principle were also included, by including what the Government promised under the European charter, we would be absolutely delighted.

**The Convener:** In a sense, that is my second point. The bill talks about a view being taken to secure the status of the Gaelic language. That is an aspiration for the way in which the Gaelic board should go about its business. However, as you rightly point out, the bill does not say that Gaelic should have equal status with English or use the various other phraseologies that are used to describe that. Do you think that it is practicable, either now or in the immediate future, for such aspirations to become a reality against the

background of the limitation of resources? Does there not have to be a two-stage process, whereby the resource problem is dealt with first, by ensuring that there are more teachers and more Gaelic-medium education, and the longer-term status of the language is addressed later, when the resources are in place to make that a reality?

11:45

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Nuair a gheibhear aonta leis a' bhile an dèidh dha a' dol tron Phàrlamaid, bidh e riatanach gum bi an achd sin ag ràdh gu math soilleir dè an inbhe a bhithear a' toirt dhan chànan. Bidh sinn a' coimhead air dè tha sin a' ciallachadh a thaobh maoinachaidh. Chan eil teagamh sam bith gum feum airgead a bhith ann airson rud sam bith a tha sinn a' dol a dh'adhartachadh, no ag iarraidh adhartachadh, leis a' chànan. Cha bhiodh e uabhasach ciallach cumail a-mach nach biodh airgead a dhìth.

Nuair a bheachdaicheas sinn air mar a thachair le sgeama nan tabhartasan sònraichte, chì sinn mar a tha rudan air atharrachadh bho chionn 20 bliadhna air ais. Nam biodh sinn nar suidhe an seo bho chionn 20 bliadhna—nam biodh an togalach air a bhith ann—agus sinn a' beachdachadh air tabhartasan sònraichte, tha mi a' creidsinn nach biodh mòran a' creidsinn gum biodh na tabhartasan sònraichte air fàs bho £200,000 suas gu faisg air £3 millean, a thathar a' faighinn an-dràsta. Cha do thachair sin thairis air oidhche no seachdain ach thairis air 20 bliadhna. Thachair e air sgàth 's gun robh iartasan ann bho na comhairlean ionadail.

Bho chionn 20 bliadhna air ais, cha bhiodh sinn a' creidsinn gum biodh 21 dhe na comhairlean ionadail ann an Alba a' gabhail com-pàirt anns na tabhartasan sònraichte. Tha sin a dhà a-mach às a trì comhairlean. Chan eil teagamh nach eil comhairlean air feum mhòr a dhèanamh dhe na tabhartasan sònraichte. Ged nach eil a h-uile comhairle dhe na 21 sin a' toirt foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, tha iad air na tabhartasan sònraichte a chleachdadh ann an dòighean eile, leithid a' cur air adhart clasaichean oidhche airson inbhich. Tha mi a' smaoineachadh gur e sin an seòrsa rud a tha sinn a' faicinn gum bi planaichean Gàidhlig nam buidhnean poblach a' toirt dhuinn. Bidh iad a' toirt dhuinn na feumalachdan anns gach sgìre agus bidh iad a' comharrachadh dè tha a dhìth a thaobh maoinachaidh airson sin.

*Following is the translation:*

When the bill that is going through Parliament at the moment is agreed to, it is essential that the resulting act says clearly what status is being given to the language. We will then need to look at what that means in terms of funding. There is no

doubt that money will be needed for any advances that we make, or want to make, with the language. It would not make much sense to maintain that money would not be needed.

When we consider what has happened with the Gaelic-specific grants scheme, we see how things have changed since 20 years ago. If we had sat here discussing specific grants 20 years ago—if this building had been in existence then—many would not have believed that the specific grants would grow from £200,000 to the nearly £3 million that is available now. That happened not overnight, or in the space of a week, but over 20 years, and it happened because there was demand from local authorities.

Another thing that we would not have believed 20 years ago is that 21 local authorities—two out of three councils in Scotland—would be taking part in the specific grants scheme. There is no doubt that councils have made great use of the grants. Not all 21 councils provide Gaelic-medium education, but they use the grants in other ways, such as by providing evening classes for adults. That is the sort of thing that we envisage the public authorities' language plans will give us. They will give us what is needed in each area, and then stipulate what funding is needed for that.

**Màiri Bremner:** Am faod mi dìreach puing bheag ghoirid a chur ri sin? Mura bi inbhe thèarainte aig a' chànan co-ionann ris a' Bheurla, tha mi a' smaoineachadh gur e sin aon de na h-adhbharan as motha a tha air a bhith againn airson dìth misneachd. Mar eisimpleir, a chionn 's gu bheil luchd-teagaisg agus iomadh duine eile a' faicinn nach eil e sàbhailte aig a' cheann mu dheireadh, tha dìth misneachd air daoine a dhol air adhart. Tha e uabhasach riatanach aig an ìre seo gum bi inbhe thèarainte agus co-ionannachd aig a' Ghàidhlig leis a' Bheurla.

Tha mi cuideachd a' dol leis a h-uile puing a rinn Dòmhnall Màrtainn a thaobh an ionmhais. Chan fheumar an t-ionmhas a-màireach idir, mar a thuirt mi, ach tha mi a' smaointinn nam biodh e againn gun toireadh e tòrr mòr misneachd agus brosnachadh dha na daoine againn, a chionn 's gur e a' cheist a thathar a' togail daonnan, "Dè is fhiach dhòmhsa a bhith a' strì agus gam chur sìos aig gach ceum?"

*Following is the translation:*

Could I make just a brief point about that? I believe that the lack of secure status and equality with English is one of the greatest reasons for lack of confidence. For example, because teachers and many others see that the language is not secure, people lack the confidence to go on. It is absolutely essential at this point that Gaelic has secure status and equality with English.

I also agree with the point that Dòmhnall Màrtainn made about funding. We will not need the funding tomorrow, as I said, but I believe that if we had funding it would give far greater confidence and encouragement to our people. The question that people always ask is, "What is the point in me struggling if I am being put down at every step?"

**Fiona Hyslop:** I want to ask about rights in education. Perhaps Donald MacDonald can answer my questions.

You have said that you want small steps to be taken and that you want what you are asking for to be reasonable, but the quote to which you refer on page 5 of your written evidence, on rights under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, is fairly fundamental. It says:

"Furthermore, these must be made available without condition"—

"without condition" is a powerful phrase—

"to all who request it throughout the territory in which the language is used".

You believe that the bill is still weak because it does not include a right to Gaelic-medium education; however, one cannot have proportionate rights—rights tend to be absolute, and on day one of the bill's being passed, people either will have or will not have the right to Gaelic-medium education. How do you square that fundamental request with your view that you are content with small steps and reasonable progression? You cannot necessarily have both. Are you asking for the right although you do not expect to get it? Why is that right not included in the bill?

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Anns a' chiad àite, chaidh na briathran sin a sgrìobhadh le comataidh eòlaichean Comhairle na h-Eòrpa. Bha iadsan a' beachdachadh air mar a bha iad a' faicinn an t-suidheachaidh a thaobh na dh'aontaich an Riaghaltas a thaobh foghlaim. Thuirt iad gun do dh'aontaich an Riaghaltas ri foghlam aig an ìre seo agus gu bheil sin a' ciallachadh, nam biodh an Riaghaltas a' cur an cèill na gheall iad, gum bu chòir an t-seirbheis sin a bhith ga thoirt seachad gun chùmhnannt sam bith. Sin an rud a thuirt an comataidh Eòrpach.

*Following is the translation:*

First of all, those are the words of the Council of Europe's committee of experts, which was considering the situation with regard to what the Government agreed about education. The experts said that the Government had agreed to education at that level so, if the Government were to implement what it promised, it should provide that level of service without any charter.

**Fiona Hyslop:** Throughout Scotland? Scotland is the territory that is defined here.

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Tha sin ceart. Tha fios gun robh fhios aig an Riaghaltas dè a' bhuaidh a bha gu bhith aig a' mholadh sin mus do dh'aontaich an Riaghaltas ris. Is e an Riaghaltas fhèin a thagh an ìre anns a' chùmhnannt. Bha e comasach dha ìre eile a thaghadh, ach cha do thagh e e.

*Following is the translation:*

That is right. We know that the Government knew what impact that proposal would have when it agreed to it. The Government itself chose that level in the charter. It could have chosen other levels, but it did not do so.

**Fiona Hyslop:** So, that is your main argument for the right to be included in the bill. Do you accept the fact that the legal right might not necessarily provide the practical right to Gaelic-medium education throughout Scotland? Are you willing to compromise? Can you think why the Executive has failed to respond to the majority of consultation responses, which say that that right should be there? Why do you think the Executive is still refusing to take a rights-based approach?

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Is dòcha gu bheil dà adhbhar nach eil an Riaghaltas air leantainn air adhart le sin. Ged a bhiodh an Riaghaltas a' tighinn a-staigh a-màireach agus ag ràdh gun aontaicheadh iad ri seo, agus ged a thigeadh iarrtas a-staigh bho phàrantan air feadh Alba, tha sinn mothachail nach b' urrainn dhan Riaghaltas an gealltanais a choilionadh anns a' bhad air sgàth gainnead luchd-teagaisg.

Tha sin a' dol air ais gu rud eile a thog sinn anns an aithisg. Ma tha sinn a' dol a dhèanamh adhartas sam bith ann am foghlam Gàidhlig, feumar sùil a thoirt air ro-innleachd ann am foghlam Gàidhlig agus air poileasaidh nàiseanta air foghlam Gàidhlig, a' toirt a-staigh nan duilgheadasan a dh'ainmich sinn na bu tràithe, le luchd-teagaisg, le cùrsaichean trèanaidh, le càite am bi na h-aonadan Gàidhlig agus càite a bheil na comhairlean, aig deireadh an latha, a' dol a chruthachadh nan aonadan Gàidhlig nuair a tha iarrtasan a' tighinn a-staigh bho phàrantan.

Ged a tha sin mar amas anns a' chùmhnannt—amas a bu chòir dhuinn a bhith a' coimhead—chan eil e a' ciallachadh gun tachair e a-màireach. Mar a chunnaic sinn le foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, nuair a chì pàrantan mar a tha foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ag obair ann an aon àite tha iad buailteach an uair sin iarraidh anns an àite aca fhèin airson na cloinne aca fhèin. Chan eil teagamh sam bith mu dheidhinn sin.

*Following is the translation:*

There are perhaps two reasons why the Executive has not taken such an approach. First, even if the Executive came along tomorrow and said that it agreed to such a right, and even if there was demand from parents throughout

Scotland, the Executive could not fulfil the promise because of the shortage of teachers. That takes us back to another point that we raised in our submission, which is that if we are to make any progress in Gaelic education, consideration must be given to a strategy and national policy on Gaelic education to deal with the problems that we have mentioned, which are to do with teacher numbers, training courses, the location of Gaelic units and, at the end of the day, how councils create Gaelic units when requests are made by parents.

Although that level of provision is an aim of the charter—one that we should fulfil—that does not mean that it will happen tomorrow. However, when parents see how Gaelic-medium education works in one area, they are likely to ask for it in their own area for their own children. There is no doubt about that.

**The Convener:** Over what time scale could the available resources be brought up to a reasonable level that would allow a wider expression of your desires in that regard? Could that be done in five or 10 years? Does your organisation have a feeling about that?

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Tha e gu mòr an urra ri dè cho sgiobalta 's a gheibhear an luchd-trèanaidh is an luchd-teagaisg a tha a dhith oirnn. Tha sin a' togail iomadach ceist mu dheidhinn dè seòrsa chùrsaichean a bu chòir a bhith air an toirt seachad. Tha tòrr air a dhèanamh an-dràsta le comhairlean is le oilthighean is colaistean ann a bhith a' deasachadh chùrsaichean a tha nas fhreagarraiche do mhàthraichean, mar eisimpleir, aig nach eil an comas a bhith air falbh bho àiteachan leithid na h-Eileanan agus a' Ghaidhealtachd a dh'fhuireach an Glaschu no an Obar Dheathain airson bliadhna no dà bhliadhna. Thathar a' dèanamh tòrr aig astar, agus tha mi làn chinnteach nach toir e cho fada a-nis leis na dòighean ùra's a bhiodh e air a thoirt nam biodh sinn air beachdachadh air a' chùis o chionn còig no 10 bliadhna. Tha gu leòr an urra ri dè cho sgiobalta 's a gheibhear air daoine a thrèanadh airson foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a thoirt seachad. Chan ann a-mhàin anns a' bhun-sgoil a bu chòir dhuinn a bhith a' beachdachadh air, ach anns an àrd-sgoil cuideachd.

*Following is the translation:*

To a great extent, it depends on how quickly we can get the trainers and teachers that we need. That raises lots of questions about the sort of courses that should be provided. Much is being done at the moment by councils and by universities and colleges to design courses that are more appropriate, for example for mothers who are not able to leave the Highlands and Islands to live in Glasgow or Aberdeen for a year or two years. Much is being done with distance

learning and, given new methods like that, I am certain that it will not take as long now as it might have done had we been thinking about this five or 10 years ago. A lot depends on how quickly people can be trained for teaching through the medium of Gaelic not only in primary schools but in secondary schools as well.

**Mr Macintosh:** I will continue on that theme, but first I want to check whether Mr MacDonald had any introductory remarks to make, because he was cut off.

**Màiri Bremner:** A bheil sibh ag iarraidh Dòmhnall Dòmhnallach a chluinntinn an toiseach, no a bheil sibh ag iarraidh ceistean a chur air dè a thuirt Dòmhnall Màrtainn?

*Following is a translation:*

Would you like to hear Donald MacDonald first, or do you want to ask questions about what Donald Martin said?

**Mr Macintosh:** No, I would like to hear from Donald MacDonald.

**Donald MacDonald (Comunn na Gàidhlig):** An toiseach, bu thoil leam beagan ceangal a dhèanamh eadar foghlam is coimhearsnachd agus cuideachd eadar foghlam is gnìomhachas. Tha feum air coimhearsnachd is gnìomhachas a bhith a' toirt taic gu foghlam, ris a bheil iad a' coimhead airson luchd-obrach airson nam bliadhnaichean ri tighinn agus airson daoine a tha deasaichte airson a' mhargaidh.

Ceithir bliadhna deug air ais, bha caraidean agus mi fhìn a' toirt fianais dha bòrd Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd is nan Eilean mu dheidhinn cur air adhart pròiseact turasachd cultarail. Aig an àm sin, cha b' urrainnear pròiseact turasachd cultarail a thuigsinn—gu dearbh, tha mi a' creidsinn gum b' e sin a' chiad àm a chualadh sin air ainmeachadh. Bha HIE eòlach air turasachd stèidhte air eachdraidh, agus às dèidh mòran deasbaid leig iad leinn ionad a thogail anns an Eilean Sgitheanach a bha a' dèiligeadh ri eachdraidh, ach cha b' urrainnear ceangal idir fhaighinn ris a' chultar. Cha robh an tuigse ann.

B' e Àros ann am Port Rìgh an t-ionad sin. Nuair a thog sinn a' cheist a-rithist còig bliadhna às dèidh sin, bha bòrd Iomairt an Eilein Sgitheanaich is Loch Aillse air a stèidheachadh, agus fhuair sinn taic. Tha mi a' dèanamh na puing gun do ghluais gnothaichean air adhart ann an ùine leth-char goirid a thaobh turasachd agus tuigse turasachd Gàidhlig. An-diugh, tha am pròiseact Àros a' toirt a-steach barrachd is £1 millean gu eaconomaidh an eilein. Tha e a' toirt obair do faisg air 30 duine agus—is dòcha an rud as cudthromaiche—tha barrachd is 260,000 duine a' tighinn a-staigh gu Àros gach bliadhna. Tha sin a' sealltainn na h-ùidhe a tha aig daoine ann an rudan a thaobh ar cultar is ar cànan.

Is e na prìomh rudan a tha a' ceangal a' ghnìomhachais seo ri chèile Gàidhlig, ceòl Gàidhlig, cultar an eilein agus eachdraidh. O chionn trì seachdainean air ais, bha mi ag èisteachd ris a' Phrìomh Mhinistear aig cuirm nam prìomh dhuaisean airson turasachd—the thistle awards—ann an Dùn Èideann. Am measg rudan eile, bha e a' cur a-mach air dè cho cudthromach 's a bha turasachd airson Alba. An toiseach, dh'èist e ri clann aonad Gàidhlig Tollcross, a dh'fhosgail an oidhche le bhith a' gabhail dà òran Gàidhlig. Mar sin, bha daoine a' tuigsinn a' phàirt a tha Gàidhlig a' gabhail ann an turasachd Alba anns an latha an-diugh.

Tha Gàidhlig cudthromach do dh'eaconomaidh an eilein seo. Tha barrachd is 80 duine a' faighinn obair tro Sabhal Mòr Ostaig agus na gnìomhachasan a tha ceangailte ris. Anns an Ath Leathainn, tha Media nan Eilean ag ullachadh phrògraman Gàidhlig. Ann an Slèite, ann an Eilean Iarmain, tha companaidh uisge-beatha ann agus oighreachd le taigh-òsta far a bheil Gàidhlig mar phrìomh chànan. Tha luchd-teagaisg Gàidhlig anns na sgoiltean agus tha luchd-obrach a' dèiligeadh ri Gàidhlig anns a' chomhairle agus, mar a thuirt mi, tha Àros ann am Port Rìgh. Tha sin ri fhaicinn chan ann a-mhàin anns an eilean seo, ach air feadh na Gàidhealtachd.

Ach dh'fhaodadh gnothaichean a bhith na b'fheàrr na tha iad. Aig deireadh na seachdaine, bha mi anns a' cheàrn seo den eilean aig cuirm, far an d'fhuair mi fiosrachadh gun robh Oilthigh Shruighlea air beagan rannsachaidh a dhèanamh—fo pròiseact CADISPA, the conservation and development in sparsely populated areas project—air dè bha daoine a' faicinn a bu chòir a bhith air a dhèanamh airson sgìre Shlèite a thoirt air adhart. B' e am prìomh rud a dh'iarr iad gun coimheadadh daoine air turasachd cultarach.

A' tionndadh gu sgiobalta gu foghlam, bu thoil leam eisimpleir uabhasach sìmplidh a thoirt air suidheachadh foghlaim mar a chì mise e. Tha dithis chloinne agam de sia agus naoi bliadhna a dh'aois anns a' bhun-sgoil. Bha iad le chèile fileanta ann an Gàidhlig nuair a chaidh iad dhan sgoil, ach chaidh an cànan aca air ais goirid às dèidh tòiseachadh agus thòisich iad a' bruidhinn Beurla aig an dachaigh. Le beagan iongnaidh, chuir mi a' cheist orra carson a bha sin a' tachairt agus thuirt iad rium gun robh iad a' cleachdadh Beurla mar an cànan cluiche aca.

Thàinig sin air sgàth 's gu bheil iad ann an sgoil dhà-chànanach far a bheil iad, taobh a-muigh a' chlas, am measg chloinne a tha a' bruidhinn Beurla a-mhàin. Tha iad a' faicinn na Beurla cho làidir is cho tarraingeach an taic ris an cànan fhèin. Chan eil prògraman telebhisean no leabhraichean freagarrach aca agus chan eil

bhideothan no DVDs no PlayStation no càil den t-seòrsa sin aca. Tha an suidheachadh cho dona 's gu bheil a' chlann agam a' cleachdadh leabhraichean a chaidh an clò ann am Beurla le faclan Gàidhlig air an cur os cionn na Beurla agus na h-aon dealbhan 's a bha anns an leabhar bho thùs.

Chan eil gu leòr airgid ann an-dràsta airson foghlam Gàidhlig. Nam bheachd-sa, tha feum air barrachd airgid agus barrachd sheirbheisean foghlaim cho luath 's a ghabhas. Tha an cànan Beurla cho làidir 's gu bheil smachd aige air a h-uile cànan eile. Ma dh'fheumas an Fhraing mìltean de euros a chosg airson an cànan a ghleidheadh bhon Bheurla, dè an cothrom a tha againn leis a' Ghàidhlig? Saoilidh mise gu bheil againn ri coimhead gu math sgiobalta air na gnothaichean seo a chur air dòigh. Cha bu thoil leam idir gum b' e an dileab againne, mar bhuidhnean a tha an sàs ann an saoghal na Gàidhlig no ann an Riaghaltas an latha an-diugh, gum fàgadh sinn gnothaichean ro fhada. Tapadh leibh.

*Following is the translation:*

I begin by making a link between education and community and also between education and business. Community and business need to support education, which is where they look for people who are ready for the market and for workers for the years to come.

Fourteen years ago, I and some friends were giving evidence to the board of Highlands and Islands Enterprise about setting up a cultural tourism project. At that time, HIE could not understand what a cultural tourism project was—indeed, I believe that it was the first time that such a thing had been mentioned. HIE knew about tourism based on history, and after much debate it allowed us to set up a centre on the Isle of Skye that would deal with history, but it could not make the link with culture. There was no understanding about that.

That centre was Àros in Portree. When we raised the question again five years later, the board of Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise had been established, and we got support. I am making the point that the understanding of Gaelic tourism moved forward in quite a short time. Today, the Àros project brings in more than £1 million to the economy of the island. It employs almost 30 people and—perhaps most important—more than 260,000 people come to Àros every year. We see the interest that people have in our culture and our language.

The main things that link the business together are Gaelic, Gaelic music, the island's culture and history. Three weeks ago, I was listening to the First Minister at the top tourism award ceremony—the thistle awards—in Edinburgh. Among other

things, he said how important tourism was for Scotland. To begin with, he had listened to children from the Tollcross Gaelic unit, who opened the evening by singing a Gaelic song. Thereby, people were able to understand the part that Gaelic plays in Scottish tourism today.

Gaelic is important to the economy of this island. More than 80 people are employed by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the businesses connected with it. In Broadford, Media nan Eilean produces Gaelic programmes. In Isleornsay in Sleat, there is a whisky company and an estate with a hotel where Gaelic is the first language. There are Gaelic teachers in the schools and there are staff who deal with Gaelic both in the council and, as I said, at Àros in Portree. That can be seen not only on this island but throughout the Highlands.

However, things could be better than they are. At the weekend, I was at a reception in this part of the island, at which I found out that the University of Stirling has done some research—under the conservation and development in sparsely populated areas project, or CADISPA—on what people think ought to be done to develop the Sleat area. The main thing they said was for people to consider cultural tourism.

On education, I will give you a simple example to illustrate the situation as I see it. I have two children, of six and nine years of age. They were both fluent in Gaelic when they went to primary school, but their language regressed shortly after they started, and they began to speak English at home. With some surprise, I asked them why that was happening and they said that they used English as their language of play.

That came about because they are at a bilingual school and, when they are outside the classroom, they are among children who speak only English. They see English as so strong and attractive in comparison with their own language. They have no television programmes or suitable books and there are no videos, DVDs, PlayStation games or anything of that kind. The situation is so bad that my children are using books printed in English with Gaelic words pasted on top of the English, with the same pictures as were in the book originally.

There is not enough money for Gaelic education. In my opinion, more money and more education services are needed as soon as possible. The English language is so strong that it dominates every other language. If France has to spend thousands of euros to protect its language from English, what chance do we have with Gaelic? We must consider getting such things under way immediately. As a group that is involved in the Gaelic world, or if I were the Government of the day, I certainly would not want our legacy to be that we left things too late. Thank you.

12:00

**The Convener:** Thank you. I am sorry; I must have cut you off at the beginning. Anyway, we will get on with the questions.

**Mr Macintosh:** It is good to hear of success stories such as Àros. One of the strongest pieces of evidence that we will take away from our visit is the experience of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig itself and the effect that the existence of a Gaelic community has on other aspects, including the economy. Last night, we met people who are obviously successful at running Gaelic businesses because of the existence and expansion of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

I was also interested to hear the comments on Gaelic services and about the need for more Gaelic textbooks and so on. I am trying to resist buying my five-year-old a PlayStation for Christmas. I am not sure how many parents would thank us if we introduced Gaelic PlayStations and bankrupted the whole of the Western Isles and Skye for this Christmas and next. However, the point about having a confident community that supports Gaelic in everyday experience is essential and obviously the bill does not go all the way.

Donald MacDonald referred to one of the things that the bill does not do, which is to mention teacher training. No matter how many rights we create, if there are no teachers, we cannot meet the demand. What should the bill do or what action should the Executive take to address the lack of supply of teachers? Dòmhnall Màrtainn might want to address that.

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Nuair a bha gainnead luchd-teagaisg ann an cuspairean roimhe seo, tha an Riaghaltas air a bhith a' toirt seachad airgead a bharrachd agus rudan a tha a' tàladh dhaoine chun nan cùrsaichean sin. Tha luchd-teagaisg againn a tha a' teagaisg chuspairean, ach chan ann tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Tha mi a' smaoinèachadh gum biodh iad gu math deònach beachdachadh air a dhol a thrèanadh airson a bhith comasach air teagasg tron Ghàidhlig nam biodh, is dòcha, beagan a bharrachd aca às.

Bha mi a' bruidhinn ri duine no dithis oileanach òga a rinn trèanadh anns na colaistean agus a bha air a bhith an dùil teagasg Gàidhlig a dhèanamh. Dh'atharraich iad an inntinn, ge-tà, nuair a bha iad a' dol dha na h-aonadan Gàidhlig mar phàirt den trèanadh aca. Thàinig iad dhan cho-dhùnadh gun robh an obair, na dleastanasan agus an t-uallach a bha air luchd-teagaisg na Gàidhlig cus na bu mhotha na bha air an fheadhainn a' teagasg Beurla an ath-doras. Is e an t-adhbhar airson sin—agus thog Dòmhnall Dòmhnallach air—gu bheil an t-uabhas ullachadh ri dhèanamh ma tha thu a' teagasg ann an Gàidhlig, air sgàth 's nach eil an stuth ann, agus

tha tòrr den stuth aig an luchd-teagaisg ri dheasachadh às ùr. Thàinig iad dhan cho-dhùnadh, air sgàth 's gum faigheadh iad an aon tuarastal airson a bhith a' teagasg an ath-dhoras tron Bheurla, nach b' fhiach dhaibh teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig.

Dh'fhaodadh an Riaghaltas sùil a thoirt air sin, gu sònraichte am faigheadh daoine airgead a bharrachd ma tha iad deònach a dhol a theagasg Gàidhlig anns na sgoiltean.

*Following is the translation:*

When there has been a shortage of teachers for subjects in the past, the Government has provided additional money and so on to attract people to those courses. We have teachers who are teaching subjects, but not through the medium of Gaelic. I think that they would be willing to think about training to be able to teach through the medium of Gaelic if there was more in it for them.

I was speaking to a couple of young people who did teacher training at college and who had been hoping to teach Gaelic but changed their minds because, when they went to the Gaelic units as part of their training course, they came to the conclusion that the job and the responsibilities and work load for Gaelic teachers are far greater than for those who were teaching English next door. The reason for that—Donald MacDonald alluded to this—is that there is an awful lot of preparation to do if you are teaching in Gaelic medium, because the materials do not exist and teachers have to prepare much of the material from scratch. They came to the conclusion that, because they would get the same salary as they would for teaching next door through the medium of English, it was not worth while for them to teach through the medium of Gaelic.

The Executive could consider that issue, especially whether extra money might be given to those who are willing to go and teach Gaelic in the schools.

**Donald MacDonald:** Tha mi a' smaoinichadh gu bheil cothrom ann dhuinn daoine a dh'fhàg dreuchd foghlaim a thàladh air ais, gu h-àraid boireannaich a dh'fhàg air sgàth 's gun robh clann aca. Bu chòir dhuinn na cothroman sin a thoirt dhaibh. Tha rudan a' tachairt mar-thà a thaobh a bhith a' toirt foghlam air astar do dhaoine gus nach bi aca ri sgìrean fhàgail agus a dhol gu Oilthigh Shrath Chluaidh, mar eisimpleir, airson bliadhna a dhèanamh ag ionnsachadh a bhith a' tidseadh. Tha sin feumail. Feumaidh sinn cuideachd co-ionannachd fhaighinn a thaobh stuth ionnsachaidh airson thidsearan Gàidhlig, gus nach bi e nas doirbhe dhaibh a bhith a' dèiligeadh ri clas na tha e airson thidsearan Beurla.

*Following is the translation:*

There is an opportunity for us to attract back people who have left a teaching career, particularly women who left to have children. We should give them the opportunity. Things are already happening, such as providing distance learning for people so that they do not have to leave their area to go to the University of Strathclyde to do a year learning how to teach. That is useful. We also need to get equality in learning materials for Gaelic teachers, so that it is not more difficult for them to deal with a class than it is for English teachers.

**Mr Macintosh:** I welcome what you have said; you have made a number of practical suggestions about things that we could do to meet the needs of teachers.

Who should be in charge? At the moment, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has been given that role. Is that the way forward? Do we want a Gaelic plan for teacher training to be drawn up as part of a national programme or strategy?

**Màiri Bremner:** Tha mi a' smaoinichadh gum feum sin a bhith againn. Nan toireadh Bòrd na Gàidhlig sùil mhionaideach air a' chùis, agus cuideachd air na beachdan a tha a' tighinn a-staigh agus na puingeann a chaidh a thogail a thaobh luchd-teagaisg, bhiodh sinn a' faicinn gu bheil na puingeann sin fìor. Bha mi fhìn a' teagasg aig aon àm, agus airson teagasg tro mheadhan an Gàidhlig bha agad ris a h-uile rud a bha ann eadar-theangachadh. Nam biodh co-ionannachd againn ris a' Bheurla bhiodh na stuthan againn, ach chan eil iad againn. Nan toirte an cothrom do Bhòrd na Gàidhlig an-dràsta, dh'fhaodadh iad sùil a thoirt air sin, ach dh'fheumadh iad airgead a bharrachd airson a h-uile eisimpleir a tha ann, agus tha beachdan a' tighinn bho na daoine fhèin airson cuideachadh le teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Tha cothroman eile ann cuideachd, le bhith a' toirt luchd-cuideachaidh a tha fileanta anns a' chànan a-staigh dha na sgoiltean againn. Ghabhadh dòighean mar sin faighinn mu thimcheall gainnead luchd-teagaisg gus am faigh sinn seachad air an sin.

*Following is the translation:*

I think that we need that. If Bòrd na Gàidhlig were to examine the matter carefully, including the opinions that have been received and the points that have been made about teachers, it would see that those points are true. I myself was a teacher at one time, and if you are teaching through the medium of Gaelic you have to translate everything. If we had equality with English we would have the materials that we do not have now. If the opportunity were given to Bòrd na Gàidhlig now, it could consider the issue, but it would need more money to do everything that has been mentioned. Teachers themselves have expressed the view that they want help with Gaelic-medium



teaching. There are other opportunities too, involving bringing into our schools classroom assistants who are fluent in the language. Methods such as those could get around the lack of teachers until we have overcome that difficulty.

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Bu chòir dhuinn a bhith mothachail nach dèan Bòrd na Gàidhlig fhèin sin. Bhiodh uallach sònraichte aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig airson an rud a cho-òrdanachadh, ach tha buidhnean eile ann mar na h-oilthighean, na colaistean, Comhairle Teagaisg Choitcheann na h-Alba, agus buidheann maoineachaidh nan colaistean agus nan oilthighean.

*Following is the translation:*

We should be aware that Bòrd na Gàidhlig itself cannot do all that. Bòrd na Gàidhlig would have a specific responsibility for co-ordinating matters, but there are other bodies such as the universities, the colleges, the General Teaching Council for Scotland and the further and higher education funding council.

**Màiri Bremner:** Dh'fheumadh na buidhnean sin uile a bhith a-staigh air, còmhla ri còmhraidh sam bith a bhiodh aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Cha bhiodh Bòrd na Gàidhlig ach a' co-òrdanachadh na feadhainn aig a bheil an t-eòlas air dè tha a' tachairt ann an saoghal foghlaim.

*Following is the translation:*

All those bodies would have to be involved, as well as discussions taking place with Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Bòrd na Gàidhlig would co-ordinate only those who have the knowledge about what is happening in the education world.

**Mr Macintosh:** I have a question for Donald MacDonald. You have children who are aged six and nine. What will happen when they move on to secondary school? What sort of support will there be? Do your children have a view on their Gaelic education future?

**Donald MacDonald:** Faodaidh mi eisimpleir a thoirt seachad air sin. Direach an t-seachdain a chaidh, bha mi a' bruidhinn ri cuideigin a ghluais dhan eilean à Manchester trì bliadhna air ais. Dh'ionnsaich i Gàidhlig agus tha i fileanta. Tha dithis chloinne aice, agus tha an tè as sine a' dol a dh'Àrd-sgoil Phort Rìgh. Rinn iad co-dhùnadh, an aghaidh an toil, gun dèanadh an leanabh seo Beurla an àite Gàidhlig, airson nach robh an suidheachadh uabhasach fallain a thaobh stuthan ionnsachaidh agus a thaobh luchd-teagaisg ann am Port Rìgh.

Tha mise eagalach nach bi ann am Port Rìgh na goireasan a bu chòir a bhith ann, mar a bhithinn an dùil, nuair a thig a' chlann agamsa chun na h-aoise sin. Tha mi an dòchas gum bi e diofar. Is e pàirt den adhbhar a tha mise a' suidhe air a' bhòrd gu bheil mi airson feuchainn air na rudan sin

atharrachadh agus gum bi iad ann airson ar cuid chloinne.

*Following is the translation:*

I can give you an example of that. Only last week, I was speaking to someone who came to the island from Manchester three years ago. She learnt Gaelic and is fluent in the language. She has two children, the elder of which attends Portree High School. They decided, despite what they wanted, that the child should do English instead of Gaelic, because the situation was not very healthy with regard to teaching materials and teachers in Portree.

I fear that the facilities that ought to be available, and which I would expect, will not be available in Portree when my children reach that age. I hope that things will be different. Part of the reason that I sit on the board of CNAG is to try to change things so that such things are available for our children.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** You have made a large number of points and it would be extremely helpful if you were able to frame amendments before we reach the stage at which we can improve the bill, if you have time to do so.

You have heard evidence about the use of high technology and videoconferencing for distance learning. Do you, too, regard such technology as a useful means of promoting and advancing the cause of Gaelic in areas where only a few people aspire to learn the language and where there may be a dearth of teachers? Can you give the committee and the minister any useful advice on that?

**Màiri Bremner:** Leis a h-uile cinnt, feumaidh sinn teicneòlas ùr a chleachdadh. Leis a' bheagan a thathar a' dèanamh mar-thà, tha Gàidhlig a' dol air feadh an t-saoghail agus tha cothrom aig feadhainn a tha fada agus farsaing air feadh an t-saoghail èisteachd ri Gàidhlig. Mar as motha a nì sinn feum dhen teicneòlas sin, is ann as fheàrr a tha e. Nì e cuideachadh mòr.

*Following is the translation:*

We must certainly use the new technology. With the little that is already being done, Gaelic can travel all round the world and people from far and wide the world over have the chance to listen to Gaelic. The more we make use of that technology, the better. It will prove a great help.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Have you any comments on the draft guidance that has been issued? What constitutes "reasonable demand" for Gaelic?

**Màiri Bremner:** Tha mi fhìn a' faireachdainn, agus tha mi a' smaoineachadh gu bheil an còrr a' dol leam, gum biodh còignear reusanta. Bha sinne

a' beachdachadh air iarrtas far am biodh còignear chloinne, ach tha mi a' tuigsinn gu bheil Comhairle na Gaidhealtachd air a dhol sìos bho sin agus gu bheil iadsan a' toirt seachad foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig far a bheil iarrtas ann le ceathrar chloinne. Tha fios agam air aon aonad a dh'fhosgail anns na h-Eileanan an Iar air a' bhliadhna a chaidh seachad le aon phàiste.

*Following is the translation:*

I personally feel, and I think that the others agree with me, that five people is reasonable. We were thinking about demand from five children, but I understand that Highland Council has lowered that number and is providing Gaelic-medium education where there is demand from four children. I know of one unit that opened in the Western Isles last year with one child.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** I want to ask you a question that I asked other witnesses earlier. How would you like the use of Gaelic to be extended in the courts of Scotland? Your answer would help us in our deliberations, although I appreciate that you might require some time to consider in what circumstances the use of Gaelic in the courts would be most appropriate.

**Màiri Bremner:** Mar-thà, tha cothrom againn Gàidhlig a chleachdadh mas ann mar sin a tha sinn ag iarraidh anns a' chùirt ann an Loch nam Madadh, ann an Leòdhas agus ann am Port Rìgh. Bu mhath leinn gum biodh an cothrom sin air a thoirt ann, ach dh'fheumaist obair mhòr a dhèanamh a thaobh sin. Mar cuideigin a bha a' suidhe air being nam brìtheamhan, chunnaic mise dè cho riatanach 's a tha Gàidhlig, a chionn 's gu math tric tha daoine a tha anns a' chùirt gagach agus tha an t-eagal orra. Ma gheibheadh iad cothrom bruidhinn nan cànan fhèin, bhiodh e a' dèanamh feum mhòr dhaibh. Iarraidh mi air Dòmhnall Màrtainn beagan eile a chur ri sin.

*Following is the translation:*

Already we have the opportunity to use Gaelic, if that is what we want, in court in Lochmaddy, in Lewis and in Portree. I would like that opportunity to be included in the bill, but a lot of work would have to be done on that. As someone who sat as a magistrate, I saw just how essential Gaelic can be, because often people who are in court are hesitant and frightened. If they got the chance to speak in their own language, that would be a great help to them. Dòmhnall Màrtainn will say a little more on that.

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Bheir sinn dhuibh am fiosrachadh sin. Chanainn dìreach aon rud. Chan eil sinn a' faicinn gum biodh iarrtas mòr sam bith airson sin; tha luchd na Gàidhlig cho modhail co-dhiù nach ann tric a bhiodh iad anns na cùirtean. Ach tha e uabhasach cudthromach gu bheil an cothrom ann do dhuine sam bith a tha a' dol mu

choinneimh a' bhrithheimh—mar Mhàiri Bremner no duine sam bith eile—no siorram, an cànan a tha iad fhèin air a shon a chleachdadh.

*Following is the translation:*

We shall send that information to you. I would say only that we do not see there being a great demand for that; Gaelic speakers are so well-behaved that they would not often have to appear in the courts. However, it is really important that there should be an opportunity for any person who is going before a magistrate—such as Màiri Bremner or anyone else—or a sheriff, to use the language of their own choosing.

**The Convener:** You are a law-abiding lot in the first place.

**Dr Murray:** In your written evidence, you suggest that the criteria in section 3(3) should be replaced by the need to

“take account of the extent to which”

the functions of public bodies

“should support the development of the Gaelic language and culture within their areas of operation”,

although you qualify that comment by saying that

“individual language plans will be drawn up which are appropriate to the authority's circumstances and location.”

How do you see that working in practice? Your suggestion is more vague—would that not make it easier for bodies to argue against fulfilling their responsibilities?

12:15

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Airson mìneachadh dhuibh an dòigh air an robh sinn a' faicinn an t-suidheachaidh, gabhaidh mi eisimpleir na Pàrlamaid. Dh'aontaich a' Phàrlamaid—agus tha i ri moladh gun do dh'aontaich i—gum biodh poileasaidh Gàidhlig aca, agus mar sin tha e comasach dhuinn a bhith a' cleachdadh na Gàidhlig an seo an-diugh. Nam biodh aig a' Phàrlamaid ri tomhas a dhèanamh taobh a-staigh an stiùiridh a tha anns a' bhile an-dràsta, ma dh'fhaoitidh nach biodh an suidheachadh a tha aig a' Phàrlamaid cho làidir. Chan eil sinn a' smaoinichadh gum biodh iad a' tighinn dhan cho-dhùnadh sin, agus tha sinn a' smaoinichadh nach leigeadh iad a leas poileasaidh Gàidhlig a bhith aca.

Air sgàth 's gu bheil na briathran a tha sinn a' moladh a' ceangal nan amasan aig a' bhuidhinn—mar na seirbheisean a tha a' bhuidheann a' toirt seachad—ri dè cho cudthromach 's a tha e dhaibhsan a bhith a' gabhail uallach an cànan a bhrosnachadh, tha sin a' toirt a-staigh barrachd bhuidhnean agus ga dhèanamh nas fhasa do bhuidhnean gabhail ri planaichean Gàidhlig a bhith aca.

Bheir mi eisimpleir eile. A rèir nam briathran a tha anns a' bhile, dh'fhaodadh e a bhith gum biodh Bòrd Turasachd nan Eilean Siar, mar eisimpleir, a' tighinn gu co-dhùnadh nach leigeadh iad a leas plana Gàidhlig a bhith aca, air sgàth 's nach e luchd na Gàidhlig a tha anns a' chuid mhòr a tha a' dèiligeadh ri Bòrd Turasachd nan Eilean Siar, ach daoine a tha a' tighinn à Sasainn agus àiteachan eile ann an Alba, anns an Roinn Eòrpa agus air feadh an t-saoghail, aig nach eil Gàidhlig.

*Following is the translation:*

To explain to you how we see the situation, I shall give the example of the Parliament. The Parliament agreed—it is to be commended for agreeing—that it would have a Gaelic policy, and that is why we are able to use Gaelic here today. We do not believe that if the Parliament had to make an assessment within the guidelines that are in the bill at the moment, its position would be so strong. We do not think that it would come to that conclusion and we think that it would not have to bother having a Gaelic policy.

Because the wording that we recommend links a body's functions—such as the services that it provides—with how important it is for the body to take responsibility for promoting the language, it would include more bodies and it would make it easier for bodies to accept that they have to have Gaelic plans.

I shall give another example. According to the wording of the bill, the Western Isles Tourist Board, for example, could come to the conclusion that it did not need to bother with a Gaelic plan, because the majority of people who deal with the Western Isles Tourist Board are not Gaelic speakers but people who come from England and from other parts of Scotland, Europe and the world, and who do not speak Gaelic.

**Dr Murray:** Your example of the Scottish Parliament illustrates the point that the problem is not where people are willing; it is where people or bodies are unwilling to have a Gaelic plan or to support Gaelic. Do you have any views on dispute resolution? Are you content that the final arbiter should be ministers, or should the final arbiter be a languages ombudsman or the Scottish public services ombudsman?

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Chan eil sinn a' moladh aig an ìre seo gum bu chòir dhuinn a dhol an t-slighe a tha Èirinn air a ghabhail—gum bu chòir coimiseanair sònraichte a bhith againn airson a bhith a' dèiligeadh le duilgheadasan den t-seòrsa sin. Bu chòir dhuinn na structaran a tha againn an-dràsta a chleachdadh. Tha mi làn chinnteach gum biodh seirbheisean ombudsman comasach air dèiligeadh ri duilgheadasan sam bith a tha a' tighinn an àird ma tha eas-aonta ann eadar buidheann sam bith agus Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Chan eil sinne gu pearsanta a' faicinn càil ceàrr air an t-suidheachadh a tha an-dràsta air a dhealbhadh anns a' bhile, far a bheil am ministear, aig deireadh an latha, a' tighinn gu co-dhùnadh gum biodh Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' gabhail ri rud a tha buidheann phoblach ag iarraidh a dhèanamh an àite an rud a bha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' sùileachadh a dhèanadh iad. Tha am ministear ann an suidheachadh far a bheil e a' dèiligeadh ri tòrr de chuspairean den t-seòrsa seo, agus bidh eòlas anns an roinn air dè na dòighean a bhiodh èifeachdach airson dèiligeadh ri suidheachadh den t-seòrsa sin.

Chan eil sinn a' smaoinichadh gum bu chòir neach air leth a bhith ann aig an ìre seo. Ma bhios tòrr de dhuilgheadasan ann, is dòcha gum bu chòir dhuinn tighinn air ais thuige ann am bliadhna no dhà, ach chan ann airson toiseach tòiseachaidh. Bu chòir dhuinn dìreach gabhail ris na structaran a tha againn an-dràsta.

*Following is the translation:*

We do not recommend at this stage that we should go down the route that the Irish have taken—that there ought to be a special commissioner to deal with problems of that kind. We should use the structures that we have at the moment, and I am certain that the services of an ombudsman would be capable of dealing with any problems that arose if there was disagreement between any public body and Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

We do not see anything wrong with the position that is set out in the bill at present, whereby the minister, at the end of the day, will decide whether Bòrd na Gàidhlig should agree to what a public authority wants to do rather than what Bòrd na Gàidhlig envisages it doing. The minister deals with many such matters, and his department will know the most effective ways of dealing with such situations.

We do not think that there needs to be a separate individual at this stage. If there are lots of problems, perhaps we should come back to that in a few years, but not to begin with. We should just go with structures that we have at the moment.

**Ms Alexander:** I think that we have covered almost all the financial aspects in depth, so I do not have a specific question. I simply invite the witnesses to comment on whether there are any financial aspects of the bill, regarding either the finance that is provided for in the financial memorandum or the impact that it might have on other streams of funding support for Gaelic, that they wish to place on the record.

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Am faod mi puing no dhà a ràdh an toiseach? Bha mi a' leughadh agus ag èisteachd ris an fhianais a ghabh sibh o chionn cheala-deug agus am beachd a bha aig Comhairle Shruighlea, mar eisimpleir. Bha iad dhen bheachd

gum feumadh iad neach-obrach fhadstadh airson plana a dheasachadh. Chan eil mi a' smaoinichadh gu bheil sin iomchaidh, ciallach no freagarrach aig an ìre seo. Faodar plana a dheasachadh air iomadach dòigh, agus cha leig a leas neach-obrach fhadstadh a dh'aon ghnòthach. Is dòcha gu bheil e buailteach gum biodh buidhnean poblach nach eil airson ghnòthach sam bith a ghabhail ri taic a thoirt dhan Ghàidhlig a' lorg leisgeulan, agus is e an leisgeul as motha, tha mi a' creidsinn, gu bheil e a' dol a chosg cus agus mar sin nach urrainn dhaibh ghnòthach sam bith a ghabhail ris.

Tha eisimpleirean againn far a bheil comhairlean ann an ceann a deas Alba air tighinn gu co-aonta còmhla ri, mar eisimpleir, Comhairle Earra-Ghaidheil agus Bòid airson seirbheisean sònraichte speisealta ann am foghlam. Is e oifigear à Earra-Ghaidheal agus Bòid a tha a' comhairleachadh nan comhairlean sin. Tha mi a' smaoinichadh gu bheil gu leòr eisimpleirean ann a dh'fhaodar a chleachdadh.

Tha mi làn chinnteach gu bheil an Riaghaltas mothachail gum feum barrachd airgid a chur an aghaidh leasachaidhean na Gàidhlig. Chan eil e na annas sam bith; tha seo a' tachairt gu math tric. Thachair e, mar eisimpleir, nuair a chruthaich an Riaghaltas pàirce nàiseanta. Nuair a chaidh Achd nam Pàircean Nàiseanta 2000 tron Phàrlamaid, bha aig an Riaghaltas ri airgead a bharrachd a chur an aghaidh sin. Tha sinne mothachail gu bheil na tha Bile na Gàidhlig (Alba) a' dol a thoirt dhuinn aig deireadh an latha a' ciallachadh gum feumar barrachd de dh'airgead poblach a chur an aghaidh nan leasachaidhean sin ma tha an rud a' dol a dh'obrachadh gu h-èifeachdach.

*Following is the translation:*

May I make a couple of points first? I was reading and listening to the evidence that you took a fortnight ago, including for example the views of Stirling Council, which was of the opinion that it would have to hire a member of staff to draw up a plan. I do not think that that is appropriate, sensible or fitting at this stage. A plan can be drawn up in many ways, and a member of staff does not have to be hired specifically for that purpose. Perhaps it is likely that public authorities that do not want to have anything to do with supporting Gaelic will find excuses, and the biggest excuse they will find, I believe, is that it will cost too much and that they can therefore have nothing to do with it.

We have examples of councils in the south of Scotland coming to an agreement with, for example, Argyll and Bute Council for specific specialist education services. An officer from Argyll and Bute gives advice to those other councils. I think that there are plenty such examples that could be followed.

I am quite certain that the Executive is aware that more money must be put towards Gaelic development. That is no surprise; it often happens. It happened, for example, when the Executive created a national park. When the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 went through Parliament, the Executive had to provide money for that. We are aware that what the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill will give us at the end of the day means that more public money must be put towards those developments if the thing is to work effectively.

**Mr Ingram:** On the face of it, the board with its new functions will supersede a lot of the work that your organisation has done down the years. How do you see yourselves working in association with the new board? Are we going to go down the line that Donald MacDonald talked about, of trying to develop more economic opportunities using Gaelic? How do you see your mission following the establishment of the board and the new regime?

**Màiri Bremner:** A bharrachd air a bhith an sàs anns na bliadhnaichean a chaidh seachad ann a bhith a' cur air adhart inbhe thèarainte airson na Gàidhlig, bha CNAG an sàs gu mòr ann an tàladh luchd-teagaisg. Bha rud againn ris an canar "Thig a theagasg", agus tha sin a' dol fhathast. Bha CNAG an sàs gu mòr ann a bhith a' brosnachadh na h-òigridh le diofar chur-seachadan agus an leithid sin airson na Gàidhlig. Bha sinn gu mòr a' brosnachadh ghnìomhachasan cuideachd air feadh na coimhearsnachd, agus bha sinn a' brosnachadh na coimhearsnachd gu bhith a' toirt air aghaidh agus a' gabhail cheumannan mòra anns a' Ghàidhlig.

Tha mise gu mòr a' faicinn gu bheil CNAG a' dol a bhith a' dèanamh barrachd agus barrachd den obair sin anns na bliadhnaichean a tha romhainn. Tha sinn aig an dearbh àm seo a' dèanamh sgrùdadh mionaideach air CNAG fhèin, agus bidh sinn a' faighinn na h-aithisg sin aig toiseach na h-ath-bhliadhna. Bidh sinn a' toirt sùil air dè na dòighean anns a bhios sinn a' dol air adhart, ach tha mise a' faicinn gu bheil àite aig CNAG a bhith a' leantainn orra agus a' togail air an obair a rinn iad a bharrachd air a bhith a' brosnachadh agus a bhith a' cur air adhart inbhe thèarainte. Tha mi dìreach a' dol a dh'iarraidh air Dòmhnall Màrtainn, mar cheannard, beagan a chur ri sin cuideachd.

*Following is the translation:*

As well as being involved in promoting secure status in years gone by, CNAG was greatly involved in attracting teachers. We had an initiative called "Come and teach", which is still ongoing. CNAG was very much involved in encouraging young people to take up a variety of activities connected to Gaelic. We have also strongly encouraged businesses throughout the community, and we have encouraged the

community to move forwards and make great strides for Gaelic.

I envisage CNAG doing more and more of that kind of work in the years to come. We are currently undertaking a detailed study of CNAG itself, and we shall receive that report at the beginning of next year. We shall be looking at the ways in which we can go forward, but I see a role for CNAG in continuing with and building on the work that it has been doing in addition to encouraging and promoting secure status. I shall ask Dòmhnall Màrtainn, as chief executive, to say more about that.

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Mar a thuirt ar cathraiche, tha sinn mothachail gum bi atharrachaidhean anns na dleastanasan againn. Sin an t-adhbhar a dh'aontaich am bòrd-stiùiridh againn gum biodh sgrùdadh air a dhèanamh air dè na dleastanasan a bu chòir a bhith air Comunn na Gàidhlig, dè na h-amasan a bu chòir a bhith againn agus dè na structaran a bu chòir a bhith againn ann a bhith a' libhrigeadh an rud a tha na buidhnean maoineachaidh ag iarraidh oirnn. Aig deireadh an latha, cha bhi CNAG ann—no buidheann sam bith eile—mura h-eil na buidhnean a tha a' toirt dhaibh airgead deònach airgead a thoirt dhaibh. Chan eil dòigh ann air an urrainn Bòrd na Gàidhlig, aig an ìre aig a bheil iad an-dràsta, a h-uile càil a tha mar dhleastanas orra anns a' bhile a dhèanamh. Mar sin, tha sinn a' faicinn gur e an dòigh air am bi an suidheachadh ag obair gum bi Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' toirt seachad chùmhnanntan do bhuidhnean mar CNAG airson iomadach seirbheis agus pròiseact.

Thairis air na bliadhnaichean, tha Comunn na Gàidhlig cuideachd air a bhith a' faighinn cùmhnannt bliadhna bho lomaire na Gaidhealtachd is nan Eilean airson a bhith a' libhrigeadh dleastanasan lomaire na Gaidhealtachd is nan Eilean a thaobh Gàidhlig agus cultar ann an sgìre na Gaidhealtachd agus nan Eilean. Ma tha lomaire na Gaidhealtachd agus nan Eilean deònach a leantainn air adhart leis an sin, bidh CNAG ann. Mura h-eil, cha bhi, ach tha sinn làn dòchais gum bi, bu chòir dhomh a ràdh.

*Following is the translation:*

As our chairman said, we are aware that there will be changes in our responsibilities. That is why our board of directors agreed that a study should be done on what responsibilities we ought to have, what aims we ought to have and what structures we should have in place for delivering what the funding bodies ask us to deliver. At the end of the day, CNAG would not exist—and nor will any other organisation—if the bodies that provide the funding were not willing to do so. At the stage that it is currently at, there is no way that Bòrd na Gàidhlig can do all the things that it is charged with doing in the bill. We envisage, therefore, that the way things will work is that Bòrd na Gàidhlig

will award contracts to bodies such as CNAG for a variety of services and projects.

Over the years, Comunn na Gàidhlig has had an annual contract from Highlands and Islands Enterprise for fulfilling Highlands and Islands Enterprise's responsibilities in relation to Gaelic and culture in the Highlands and Islands area. If HIE is willing to continue with that arrangement, CNAG will be there to do it. If it is not, we will not be, but I have to say that I fully hope that we shall.

**Donald MacDonald:** Anns na bliadhnaichean ri tighinn, bidh obair mhòr ri dhèanamh anns na coimhearsnachdan a thaobh na Gàidhlig. Thairis air na bliadhnaichean a chaidh seachad, airson diofar adhbharan—cion luchd-obrach, cion airgid, ge bith dè an t-adhbhar a bha ann—chan eil sinn air a bhith a' dèanamh uibhir anns a' choimhearsnachd 's a bu thoil leamsa fhaicinn. Tha mi a' smaoineachadh gum bi obair aig Comunn na Gàidhlig ri dhèanamh anns na bliadhnaichean ri tighinn ann a bhith a' brosnachadh na Gàidhlig aig an ìre sin. Bu thoil leam cuideachd ceangal nas dlùithe agus nas làidire fhaicinn eadar Comunn na Gàidhlig agus na buidhnean poblach—gu h-àraid na buidhnean iomairt—airson a bhith a' toirt Gàidhlig a-staigh gu gnìomhachasan air feadh na Gaidhealtachd.

O chionn dà bhliadhna air ais, chaidh rannsachadh mòr a dhèanamh air feadh na Gaidhealtachd leis a' bhòrd turasachd. Nuair a thàinig iad dhan Eilean Sgitheanach, is e an dàrna gearan bu mhotha a bha aig luchd-turais mu dheidhinn turasachd an eilein seo cho beag fios a bha aig daoine air an eachdraidh agus an cultar. Tha sin air tachairt air sgàth 's gu bheil daoine a' gluasad bho sgìrean eile a-staigh dhan eilean seo agus a' gabhail thairis gnìomhachasan turasachd. Chan eil càil ceàrr air an sin, ach is e an rud a tha againn ri dhèanamh ar cànan agus ar cultar a chumail beò. Saoilidh mi gu bheil obair aig Comunn na Gàidhlig ri dhèanamh an sin fhathast.

*Following is the translation:*

In the years to come, there will be a great deal of work to do in the community in relation to Gaelic. In years gone by, for different reasons—lack of staff, lack of money, or for whatever reason—we have not done as much in the community as I would like to see being done. I think that Comunn na Gàidhlig will have work to do in the years to come in promoting Gaelic at that level. I would like to see a closer, stronger link between Comunn na Gàidhlig and the public authorities—particularly the enterprise bodies—in bringing Gaelic into businesses throughout the Highlands.

Two years ago, a major research project was conducted throughout the Highlands by the tourist board. When it came to the Isle of Skye, the

second most common complaint that tourists had about tourism in this island was how little knowledge people had about the history and culture. That has come about because people move to the island from other areas and take over tourism businesses. There is nothing wrong with that, but we have to keep our language and culture alive, and I think that Comunn na Gàidhlig still has a job to do in that regard.

**The Convener:** I thank Comunn na Gàidhlig for its work over the years. I am a layperson outwith the area, but I have been very aware of the organisation for many years. It has done a tremendous job in helping us to arrive at the present position.

I will play devil's advocate a little. In the homeland areas—the Highlands and Islands—one can see the arguments for taking particular lines on Gaelic and Gaelic rights. One can see issues in Glasgow, Edinburgh and areas where Gaelic has retreated over the years. However, Dumfries and Galloway Council's submission says:

"It is essential that the requirements of this legislation do not result in the Gaelic language being artificially imposed on areas where there is little or no demand for it."

In several parts of Scotland, Gaelic has not just retreated, but has not been part of the tradition in anything like the recent past. On the contrary, some areas have had a solid Scots tradition; Shetland, too, has its own tradition. Given that, is there a case for any exemptions from the bill for such areas? I accept that that is not the central point but, in some such areas, an element of saying, "Do we really have to bother with this?" is emerging. I am interested in your thoughts about that as the Gaelic promotion organisation.

**Dòmhnall Màrtainn:** Chan eil sinn a' faicinn gu bheil ciall sam bith ann a bhith a' comharrachadh a-mach dhà no trì àiteachan nach bu chòir tighinn a-staigh dhan bhile. Tha e a' dol an aghaidh an rud a tha am Prìomh Mhinistear agus ministearan eile air ràdh mu dheidhinn an cànan a bhith air fhaicinn mar phàirt de dhualchas Alba—is e sin an rìoghachd air fad.

Chan eil teagamh nach eil a leithid de dh'àiteachan ann. Chaidh Dùn Phris is Gall-Ghaidhealaibh agus Arcaibh a chleachdadh mar eisimpleirean, ach tha mise a' tuigsinn gu bheil còrr is 900 duine a' fuireach ann an sgìre Dhùn Phris is Gall-Ghaidhealaibh a tha ag ràdh gu bheil iad comasach air a' Ghàidhlig a bhruidhinn, no gu bheil ùidh aca anns a' Ghàidhlig agus gun urrainn dhaibh a leughadh no a sgrìobhadh. Is e deagh àireamh a tha sin de choimhearsnachd. Tha fhios agam nach eil iad a' fuireach còmhla, ach nam biodh iad a' fuireach còmhla ann an aon àite ann an aon choimhearsnachd, is dòcha gum biodh iad airson a dhol chun na comhairle agus seirbheisean Gàidhlig fhaighinn. Bhiodh e an uair

sin an urra ris a' chomhairle an inntinn a dhèanamh an àird an robh e comasach dhaibh sin a dhèanamh taobh a-staigh nam prìomhachasan, am maoinachadh agus na poileasaidhean eile a tha Comhairle Dhùn Phris agus Gall-Ghaidhealaibh a' cur air adhart.

Tha sinn a' smaoinachadh gur e an rud as ciallaiche an rud a tha air a mhineachadh anns a' bhile—gum bu chòir dha na planaichean cànan aig na buidhnean poblach gabhail a-staigh de an ìre de sheirbheisean Gàidhlig a bu chòir gach buidheann a thoirt seachad. Bidh sin a rèir na h-àireimh de dhaoine a tha anns an sgìre agus de na feumalachdan a tha anns an sgìre sin airson a' chànan.

*Following is the translation:*

We do not think that there is any sense in stipulating two or three places that ought not to be included in the bill. That goes against what the First Minister and other ministers have said about the language being seen as part of the heritage of Scotland—of the whole country.

There is no doubt that there are such places, and we have heard Dumfries and Galloway and Orkney being given as examples, but I understand that there are more than 900 people in the Dumfries and Galloway area who say that they are able to speak Gaelic or that they are interested in Gaelic and are able to read or write it. That is a fair number for any community. I know that those people do not all live together, but if they lived together in one place and in one community, perhaps they would want to go to the council and to get Gaelic services. It would then be for the council to make a decision based on its priorities, its funding and the other services that Dumfries and Galloway Council provides.

We think that the most sensible thing is what is explained in the bill—that public authorities' language plans should include the level of Gaelic services that each authority should provide. That will depend on the number of people in the area and the need for the language in the area.

**The Convener:** The representations have come full circle to the European charter, with which we began. Does anyone want to raise anything else?

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** I record our gratitude to Dr Farquhar Macintosh for his spirited intervention on every conceivable occasion in the past 10 years to defend the interests of Gaelic.

**The Convener:** That is a good point on which to finish.

I thank everyone who has given evidence, not least Comunn na Gàidhlig. The session has been extremely useful and the committee has picked up many useful insights and information. If witnesses want to add anything to their evidence, they

should feel free to contact us. I have no doubt that we will have other communications with them during our scrutiny of the bill.

*Meeting closed at 12:30.*





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