MEMO
FROM: G. T. FAULKNER
RE: CHILD MIGRANT UPDATE

CHIL erratic COUNCIL


MEETING: VOICES: Gordon Grant (President), Bruce Blythe, Mr. Jones (John).
C.B.'s: Gerry Faulkner, Peter McGowan (Phillips Fox)
9:30 - 11:05 a.m. Board Room 459 Hay Street.
The meeting actually began at 9:50 due to late arrival of
Grant and Blythe - very brief apology.

Preamble:
It's very difficult to write an orderly report of a very disorderly meeting!
Points are not necessarily in chronological order.

1. Both Blythe and Jones objected to i) the short notice
   ii) the presence of a lawyer

   Re i) I made it clear that the timing was proposed by President of
   VOICES - "so don't blame me!"

   ii) Gordon's letter of last week (quoted) invited me to bring a lawyer -
   and even suggested Phillips Fox.

2. There was clearly confusion or at least lack of communication in VOICES
   group; Blythe and Jones came with an Agenda different from Grant.

3. Blythe and Jones (not sure of Grant) demand a 'Public Enquiry'.
   They claim our common ground is "desire for truth".
   McGowan pushed them on
   i) Public enquiry for what purpose? Only 'truth'?
      They said: "Let's see where it leads."

   ii) People (individuals) involved already know their "truth";
      what more is an enquiry going to do?

   iii) Grant's letter saying too many people would be hurt by an enquiry.
      So what about respect for privacy of individuals?
      I cited phone-calls to me saying: "Please tell 'them' (media,
      VOICES etc.) to leave us alone."

4. McGowan also made the point that legal avenues are open to individuals who
   wish to pursue such a direction, so why a "public enquiry" which would
   necessarily further damage already hurt people?

5. Early in the meeting, Blythe said: "We are pressing for a public enquiry..."
   So I said (very seriously): "Excuse me, but who is WE?" He didn't take
   kindly to that, but I insisted, saying that we were getting mixed messages
   from VOICES.
   Grant then said his letters were his "personal opinion".

6. Blythe and Jones pushed me to agree to a Public Enquiry. I refused to make
   an on-spot decision on a matter which was not even on the Agenda.
   I agreed to "consider your request to push for the holding of a Government
   enquiry."

7. I itemised the assistance to former Child Migrants that C.B.'s are/have been
   involved in.
8. Grant gave a long and very angry account of his recent (i.e. 10-15) years since leaving the army; blames it all on Bindoon (that's what his Counsellor says) and also volunteered graphic accounts of other people's sufferings.
I did not respond.
Blythe claims to have received "over 200 phone calls".

9. Grant asked me

   i) if I knew [REDACTED]? I said: "No, I've never met him but I know of him."

   ii) if it was true the C.B.'s were making a film, or is it not true what Sheilagh Pearce says? I said: "I don't know what Sheilagh Pearce says, but I can state very clearly that the C.B.'s are not making a film!

10. It was now near 11:00, so I suggested that the question of Alex McDonald SJ might be part of our next agenda.

11. Jones wanted another meeting within a few days. I refused. So we settled for "about a month's time", preferably on a Saturday morning - Grant and I to arrange.

12. At the end, Grant said: "No more use of media" and Blythe said: "We must use the media:"!

CONCLUSIONS:

It is clear
i) that Blythe is calling the shots
ii) that they (Grant?) want a Public Enquiry
iii) that they want C.B.'s publicly to support that move
iv) that they want C.B.'s to "foot the bill" for "urgent independent (i.e. non-church) counselling services"

v) that they blame current ills of orphans/former child migrants on the Christian Brothers
vi) that they are determined to rid Keaney's name and statue from Bindoon.

Peter McGowan and I to meet within a week or so.

G. T. Faulkner