From: **James Smith** [redacted]
Date: Thu, 16 Feb 2012 at 21:08
Subject: RE: McAleese Meeting
To: Claire McGettrick [redacted] Mari Steed [redacted] katherine.odonnel [redacted] <[redacted] <mary.mcauli [redacted] Maeve O'Rourke [redacted]

Hi Guys,

I will fill in some additional information below using CAPS

From: Claire McGettrick [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2012 1:00 PM
To: James Smith; Mari Steed; katherine.odonnel [redacted] mary.mcauli [redacted] Maeve O'Rourke
Subject: McAleese Meeting

Hi folks,

Just a quick update from the meeting Jim and I had with McAleese - I didn't take many notes, so Jim, correct me if I'm remembering anything wrong...

- They have access to all available religious records - there are gaps (e.g. a fire at the Mercy convent), plus gaps described by McAleese as "if only they'd written two more lines". WE TALKED ABOUT GALWAY SPECIFICALLY, THEIR RECORDS WERE DESTROYED. THEY ALSO SIGNALED OTHER AVENUES FOR BACK-FILLING GAPS, BUT DIDN'T SPECIFY HOW? FOR ME, I TOOK FROM THEM SOME ASSURANCE THAT THEY ARE NOT SIMPLY TAKING THE NUNS INFORMATION ON FACE VALUE.

- They're looking into access to data from post-1911 censuses. I WONDERED WHETHER THEY MIGHT ALSO BE LOOKING AT ELECTORAL REGISTERS?

- They appreciate our holding back on media coverage. THIS WAS A STRONG MESSAGE FROM BOTH OF THEM, ALMOST AS IF THEY REALIZE COULD BE MORE PUBLIC BUT ARE HOLDING BACK.

- Their deadline is August/September and is entirely separate to UNCAT, though they suspect that the government response to UNCAT will be that the I-D Committee has been set up I UNDERSCORED FOR THEM THAT JFM WILL BE RESPONDING TO THE UNCAT ONE YEAR DEADLINE, AND THAT WE ARE WILL BE IN CONTACT WITH FELICE GAER. THEY ALSO ALSO FOR WHETHER AND HOW THE DEPT OF JUSTICE ARE RESPONDING TO JFM AND OUR

SUBMISSION IN OCTOBER. WE TOLD THEM THAT WE HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING FROM THEM AND THAT OUR SENSE IS THE SHATTER IS POINTING TO THE I-D COMMITTEE REPORT AS A STARTING POINT FOR WORKING O ANY PROPOSED SCHEME. WE SPOKE ABOUT THE TIME DELAY FACTOR FOR AGING SURVIVORS.

- They had some difficulty in understanding the adoption link - they understand about transfers from mother and baby homes but don't seem to be getting the other stuff. With that in mind it occurred to me afterwards that it might be helpful for us to send them the "Magdalene Laundries and Adoption" document we put together for the IHRC - pdf attached here in case you can't find it Jim. - I had forgotten that we included stories in that document. I WILL FORWARD THIS WITH THE MATERIALS I PROMISED THEM, i) MARY RAFTERY'S MATERIAL ON HIGH PARK EXHUMATIONS, AND ii) PHOTOGRAPHS OF GALWAY GRAVES WITHOUT NAMES--MCALEESE WAS OBVIOUSLY DISTURBED BY THE LACK OF NAMES, BUT ASKED THAT WE HOLD OFF FOR NOW FROM APPROACHING THE NUNS.

- They were keen to assure us that they are being thorough, that they are following similar lines of investigation to us and that they obviously have access to a lot more. As I said to Jim afterwards, it was on the tip of my tongue to ask them if it was possible to have a mechanism whereby a) if they feel, coming near the end of the investigation, that they are missing something, that they could approach us for help/suggestions or, b) if, once the report is out, we feel there are gaps, that there would be a way for us to feed back to them and for those gaps to be filled -I held back though as I just wasn't sure how best to say it.. - I guess what I'm getting at is (as I explained it to Jim) it's the difference between a social worker doing an adoption trace and an adopted person tracing - the social worker will throw their hands in the air a lot quicker and give up, but the adopted person will not give up until every avenue is followed..
YES, CLAIRE IS BANG ON. MCALEESE IS OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED IN ANTICIPATING NEGATIVE RESPONSES TO HIS REPORT. I RAISED THE ISSUE OF SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PROCESSS AND THE FACT THAT SOME WILL SAY "THE COMMITTEE ENGAGED WITH THE NUNS BUT NOT WITH SURVIVORS" -- THE SEEMED TO STRIKE A CORD LEADING TO A POTENTIAL TO FIRST RECEIVE WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOLLOWED UP BY A POSSIBLE FACE TO FACE MEETING WITH SURVIVORS FOCUSED ON THE STATE INTERACTION ASPECT. MCALEESE AND NUALA BOTH SAID THEY ARE NOT QUALIFIED TO RESPOND TO THE PERSONAL TRAUMATIC ASPECTS OF SURVIVOR TESTIMOY, BUT THEY DO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN FEELING THEY HAVE ACCESS TO THE COMMITTEE WORK. THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY STRADDLING A LINE HERE -- I THINK IT BEHOOVES US TO DO SOME MORE LEG WORK ON THIS ASPECT -- CLAIRE SPEAKS TO THIS BELOW ...

- I am going to send them the databases of graves and other figures we have - Jim, I've forgotten already what you've promised to send (brain mush)...

- They are following up on the Factories Act, capitation grants and the Prison Service --THEY AS MUCH AS SAID THAT THE DEPT OF JOBS, INNOVATION, ETC ARE ON THE COMMITTEE TO EXPLAIN WHY THE LAUNDRIES WERE NEVER INVESTIGATED. THERE WERE INTERESTED IN THE MATERIAL I PRESENTED THIS WEEK ABOUT THE FACTORIES INSPECTORATE AND DIDN'T REFUTE MY INTERPRETATION OF THAT MATERIAL.

- The report will be about fact finding but it won't be cold. MCALEESE IN PARTICULAR, WHILE AGAIN DRAWING THE LINE BETWEEN THE COMMITTEE AND TRACK TWO (SHATTER), AGAIN AND AGAIN REFERRED TO THE NEED FOR "ADDED VALUE" IN THE REPORT -- YES GET THE FACTS CORRECT, BUT ALSO SIGNAL POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS FOR THE MINISTER'S TASK.

- Re meeting the survivors....initially there was definite resistance, the reasons stated were a) they didn't want to raise expectations and b) they didn't feel equipped, they're not counsellors. We told them that we take the time to explain everything to survivors so that their expectations are not raised - in fact it's one of the golden rules, no false hopes [redacted] Regarding the "not being equipped" issue, I suspect that there is an impression that survivors are going to be overwhelmingly emotional and there's almost a fear of dealing with them, [redacted]
In any case, I told them all about the meeting we had at BC, how the idea of meeting with McAleese had come from that meeting; how, instead of being a draining experience, it was an energising experience and basically that once a safe space is created, there's no reason to worry.

They also wanted to make clear that they were about fact finding, but understood the need for "added value" as McAleese put it, that people should not feel excluded. So, it was from that human side that we appealed to them and ultimately we came to an agreement that first, as the committee is in the fact-finding stage of its investigations, we would submit as much testimony as we could from the women and then, later in the process, a meeting would be arranged. Jim, in a stroke of genius, offered BC as a venue and emphasised it wasn't to be a media affair etc - something which went down very well I think.....I JUST ENCOURAGED THEM TO DROP BY AND CHECK OUT THE SPACE AND AT LEAST THEY DIDN'T BALK.

So, Jim and I were chatting afterwards and have come up with an idea that might help progress things along.... We write to the survivors,

inviting them to a meeting...make sure as many of us are available as possible (and let the survivors know who will be there). At the meeting we fill them in on what McAleese said and explain about testimonies/oral history in a bit more detail, possibly even make a start on arrangements. Also at the meeting though, we ask them if they are willing to answer a few questions specifically regarding state involvement (that's why we need a few of us there), that we could quickly get to McAleese, emphasising that fuller testimonies will follow. FOR THIS TO WORK, HOWEVER, MCALEESE AND NUALA NEED THE WOMAN'S NAME, DATE OF BIRTH, INSTITUTION SHE WAS AT, HOW LONG SHE WAS AT. THIS INFO IS SOLELY ABOUT THEIR BEING ABLE TO FOLLOW UP AND DOUBLE CHECK AGAINST THE INFO THEY NOW HAVE ACCESS TO.

That's about it I think - Jim, corrections/additions welcome!
THAT'S IT FOLKS ...

BEST
JIM

Claire