

3, Grasmere Road,
Muswell Hill,
London, N.10.

6th December, 1970.

Dear Mr. Hill,

Having been involved in the work of this department (the I.A.C.) I would like to say how unhappy I am at the prospect of British participation in the International Apprentice Competition coming to an end.

I find it difficult to understand how responsible people in their right minds can find it quite acceptable that a country of the importance of the United Kingdom cannot afford to participate in the I.A.C. whereas small countries like Liechtenstein and Malta are able to find the money. A lot has been said and I do not presume to add anything fresh but I fear that what the I.A.C. stands for may not be understood by the various bodies who have been dealing with us and in particular the D.E.P. and possibly the Director General of the City and Guilds for whom it seems to be little more than a question of figures.

We are dealing with people - not only a mere 25 apprentices as it was the case this year but all those who work behind the scene because they believe that trying to achieve their best in a particular craft is in itself a very worthwhile task. All the efforts and co-ordination of the work put in by people at all levels, year after year, to enable apprentices to compare their skills, technique and method with those of other young people from some sixteen mostly European countries might be wasted. It is a pity that people with possibly limited personal resources who have done well in their trade will be denied this opportunity. I do not know of any organisation similar to that of the Competition. It appears to be unique and it would take years to achieve what has been achieved up to now. Every single apprentice in the U.K. is a potential entrant to the Competition. What seems to be so much lacking in modern society is idealism. The Competition gives to people of around twenty an incentive and the very worthwhile aim of improving on their own standards. Whether or not they bring back a gold medal seems to me not as important as the fact that they have put in a lot of work, learnt more about their job and opened their eyes to the fact that other people abroad are doing the same thing. Now that our entry into the Common Market seems imminent an even closer apprentice liaison with Europe is a necessity. The Competition provides this in embryo and it would seem the worst psychological moment for British participation in the Competition to cease. The Government may be saving a few thousand pounds in the short term but they will certainly lose an incalculable amount of good will overseas in the longer term which may lose the Country much more than any hypothetical saving.]

I am aware that you are doing everything humanly possible to rescue the Competition and I do not mind being quoted for what I have written.

Yours sincerely,

Helene Phillips

M.C. Phillips (Mrs.)

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