

TWENTY-FIFTH INTERNATIONAL APPRENTICE COMPETITION

OPENING CEREMONY

CORK CITY HALL

9 SEPTEMBER 1979

1. FOLK MUSIC
2. PARADE OF TEAMS
  - Federal Republic of Germany
  - Austria
  - Belgium
  - Korea
  - Taiwan
  - Spain
  - United States of America
  - France
  - Netherlands
  - Japan
  - Liechtenstein
  - United Kingdom
  - Switzerland
  - Ireland
3. ADDRESSES
  - Rt. Hon. Councillor J.A. Corr,  
Lord Mayor of Cork
  - John P. Wilson, T.D.,  
Minister for Education
  - Manuel Valentin-Gamazo y de Cardenas,  
President
  - A.A. Healy  
Chairman  
Irish National Organising Committee
4. IRISH NATIONAL ANTHEM

## TWENTY FIFTH INTERNATIONAL APPRENTICE COMPETITION

Greeting from the Lord Mayor of Cork

The Right Honourable Councillor J. A. Corr

As Lord Mayor of the City of Cork, it is a singular honour for me to welcome you on behalf of all the citizens to this city and to express this in our country's language - "cead mile failte" - one hundred thousand welcomes. My welcome extends to all who have come here to-day, church and state dignitaries, members of the diplomatic corps, and representatives of many organisations, but it is particularly directed to the teams of young apprentices who, together with their leaders, officials, experts and observers, have travelled great distances to be present and to take part in the Twenty Fifth International Apprentice Competition.

Cork is an old city dating back to the seventh century when St. Finbarr founded a church here. Later, in the ninth century, the Danes and Norseman set up trading establishments which were the beginning of commerce and trade in the city. Cork people are friendly and proud of their origins and traditions, and I am certain that they will do everything to make your stay here a most pleasant one. The country around the city, and more particularly to the west, is very beautiful and I understand that while you are here you will have the opportunity to travel through some of the areas most noted for their scenic beauty and natural magnificence.

Education in all spheres and at all levels has to face the challenge of the increasing store of human knowledge. The problem has been posed as that of "teaching more young people and of teaching them more than young people were ever required to know before". Education in the craft trades is no exception. We, in Cork, look to this experience of the International Apprenticeship Competition as a means of renewal and as a major support in the daunting, but ever-present task of redefining our methods, our practices and our standards.

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Tomorrow will see the beginning of the work of the competitions and it is very understandable that you the apprentices who will be taking part are probably feeling a little apprehensive about what lies before you. To each of you I wish success in your work and I hope this will result from a calm mind, a keen eye and a steady hand, but above all from a determination to bring honour to your country, your family and to yourself by an honest expression of your work in the craft you are privileged to represent.

Guidhim rath De ar an obair.

Thank you.



ADDRESS BY MR. JOHN P. WILSON, T.D., MINISTER FOR EDUCATION  
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 25TH INTERNATIONAL APPRENTICE  
COMPETITIONS AT THE CITY HALL, CORK, ON SUNDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER,  
1979.

It is not easy to express the extent of the pleasure and the pride it gives me to declare open the Twenty Fifth International Apprentice Competitions. My pleasure stems mainly from having the opportunity of welcoming so many people, from so many different countries to our shores. We are pleased and honoured, President Gamazo, to welcome you and your International Committee, to welcome the experts, the team leaders and official observers, to welcome the many guests from overseas and from home, who have been drawn here by their interest in these competitions, whether it be personal or professional; and above all to welcome the young craftsmen, who are here to demonstrate their skills and knowledge to one another and to the world at large, to exercise these skills in open and demanding competition, to display what is possible, what can be achieved, in the way of high standards and of excellence and to provide a headline, over the range of trades, against which we can measure our objectives and our aspirations. I trust that your stay in Ireland and in Cork will be a happy, a satisfying and a memorable experience.

No less gratifying to me is the extent to which this competition has demonstrated public interest in apprenticeship in many levels of our society. Here at the opening ceremony to welcome you and to accord distinction to the competitions are representatives of Church and State, of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to this country, of public and of civic life, of educational, training and employment agencies, of industrial and commercial concerns, of trades unions and of vocational associations. This wide spectrum of interest in apprenticeship is the clearest indication that apprenticeship is a partnership, involving in its different stages and designs, many bodies, agencies and organisations, all of which take their roles very seriously, because they realise the importance of apprenticeship, not only to the young apprentices but also to the social and economic well-being of our country. What is true for Ireland in this respect is true for all your countries. This interest has

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been manifested also in the tangible support from both at home and abroad, which has been given to the National Organising Committee in making arrangements for these competitions.

The education and training of apprentices is about producing craftsmen just as these competitions are about demonstrating excellence and high standards in craftsmanship. Craftsmanship has been described as the masterly fashioning of materials to a utilitarian or aesthetic purpose. In this sense we in Ireland can claim that craftsmanship represents one of the proudest and most ancient traditions of this island.

Metalwork, for example, began in Ireland some four thousand years ago; and there was a flourishing industry here in gold and bronze long before the Celts arrived in this country. As for the Celts, they brought with them from the Continent a richly varied experience of craftsmanship and a standard of achievement in metalwork unequalled until then in Northern Europe. Their artistic history demonstrated an openness to the stimulus of outside influences, an ability to absorb the best elements from other civilisations and to weave them into a new texture. In ancient times such stimuli derived from invasion and settlement. In modern times something of the same function is served by international association and competition.

In Celtic societies the craftsmen were members of a privileged and honoured class - of the "aes dána", as it was known in Ireland. Craftsmanship in wood, metal, or stone was looked on as a kind of material poetry, just as poetry itself was seen as craftsmanship in words. Early Irish civilisation had its values right! It must surely have been the greatest moment of our history, a true Golden Age, when Christianity, external cultural and technological influences and native artistic traditions combined, with apparently miraculous suddenness, to produce the great efflorescence of Irish Art and Craftsmanship that began in the seventh century A.D. The Tara Brooch - a happy choice as the medal motif for this competition - represents the complex, intricate and yet delicate workmanship of the period. This Golden Age was, if you like, only a moment in history, but it was a moment whose influence has endured. It has left us with an abiding respect for craftsmanship. You have all had your own Golden Ages, in which you find the traditions, the roots, the inspiration, which drives all of us to seek standards of excellence in craft skills.



skills are still with us. all around there are new skills which bring in elements of design, elements of technical knowledge, elements of technological capability. The product of the craftsman's skill can still be a symphony in stone, or an exquisite piece of jewellery. It can also be a vital part of a complex machine, or an essential component of a communications, or an energy system. And while product related crafts continue often organised in different and more highly sectionalised and specialised forms, service related crafts allied to the functioning of machines and systems, to the provision of the many and complex services which we accept as being part of modern living, grow and expand.

Craftsmanship faces the challenge of the technological age in the rapid obsolescence of skills and knowledge painfully acquired over a long-time, in the deskilling of certain functions long regarded as the apotheosis of a particular craft, in the emergence of new skills and the drastic modification of others, in the application of new materials, new processes, new working methods. The advent of "black-box" servicing as distinct from diagnosis and repair, the computerisation of production processes, the economics of replacement rather than maintenance of consumer goods, have their implications for all of us, but more seriously for the craftsman. Nobody questions what appears to be the march of progress, the productivity process by which we hope all people will eventually be better off - materially at any rate! In a sense we are seeking a type of social Golden Age.

It is pertinent to look at how we have reacted and why we react in the way that we do in the formulation of education, training and employment policies for young craftsmen. Initially the answer was sought in greater specialisation, which continues to be necessary in certain fields, but across the board had the disadvantage of short duration and the attendant problems of redundancy and retraining. With these forms of specialisation also came a reluctance by enterprises to engage in long-term training, leaving more to public authority and thereby upsetting the relationship between apprentice and craftsman and seriously modifying the nature of the learning process in craftsmanship. Answers to the problems arising from over-specialisation were often sought by looking at job mobility factors, by broadening initial basic training, by seeking transferrable skills, by producing associations or families of skills, by modular training and periodic re-training. Side by side with these there has been the closer integration of apprenticeship with education, arising from a realisation, that a more extended general and scientifically-based education, as well

as an increased emphasis on the technology associated with the trade, not only give the future craftsman an ability to cope with change, but can also make him a partner, a contributor, in desirable innovation processes. Such integration, too, is seen as a component of policies of equalisation of opportunity, in which education plays such an important role in our societies.

The nett effect of all these trends, however, has been to move more of the apprentice's training to an institutionalised, off-the-job situation, where the essential stimulus and challenge of learning by doing and while doing, is difficult to reproduce. It might be said, too, that a large number of these changes have an element of the reactive about them and that within them we seek for some form of clarity, some philosophy, which will be enlightening to the educators and trainers and which will be sufficiently convincing to the apprentice to provide that motivation and drive, that sense of involvement and commitment, which leads to satisfactory learning.

And paradoxically, while we find apprentices spending more and more of their time in schools and training institutions, there is a growing concern among educators about the transition from school to working life. How much of this concern may be due to the extent to which educational and economic systems have grown away from one another and what steps are necessary to bring them into a closer coherence and understanding, are subjects of debate and discussion in many of our countries. But equally true, our approaches to the problems of transition are resting almost universally on the construction of bridges between school and work, on the provision of planned work experience as an integrated part of courses in the latter years of schooling. But perhaps there is no paradox!.. Maybe what we are seeing is the emergence of a new balance of the best in education and the best in work experience: a sort of universalisation of the concept of apprenticeship, now being applied to an ever-growing proportion of our young people.

So here we are then at the commencement of the Twenty-Fifth International Apprenticeship Competitions, at a time when policies regarding apprenticeship, regarding craftsmanship, regarding the nature of work and production are facing serious challenges. It is a time for asking fundamental questions as to what apprenticeship and craftsmanship are all about. It is a time indeed when, for many, the basic assumptions underlying the rapid change



of recent decades have also to be called into question. While we live in an infinite Universe we occupy and control only a very finite part of it. To many of our countries this has been brought home in recent times by our rude awakening to the prospect of limitation of readily available and cheap energy. What we might very well be facing is a challenge to our profligacy in the use of our finite resources. And surely this is also a challenge to craftsmanship: the age-old challenge of fashioning materials to a utilitarian purpose, but in such a way as to conserve our limited resources of energy and materials, in such a way that the objects of production may be maintained, modified and recycled rather than discarded as pollutants in our environment. In such a milieu should we not strengthen the pride in craftsmanship, which this competition has maintained throughout the years of rapid change: the touch of the aesthetic which is as gratifying to the conceiver as to the receiver?

We are here then, I submit, because we believe that excellence in craft skills should be acclaimed and honoured. We are here because we share an overriding concern to equip our young people as best we can for the challenges of the future and a conviction that apprenticeship is a potent and valuable method of fulfilling this task. We are here because we hope that by acquiring and maintaining mastery over the many skills and techniques required for survival and for progress in the modern world, and by generously sharing such mastery, we can make a contribution to a better life for all. We are here because we are convinced that by developing the skills and talents of all our young people we can make common purpose, as allies and associates, in making war on poverty on disease, on want, on ignorance, hopelessness and despair. I am sure that many of these thoughts are on our minds on this solemn occasion, thoughts which transcend nationality and competition, thoughts which consciously govern our actions in an activity in which there may be winners, but there are no losers. Some will deservedly take away acclaim and award. All will take away knowledge, understanding, and experience shared, a comradeship, which will have wide and lasting effects on many individuals in many parts of the world.

And so the International Organisation for the Promotion of Vocational Education and Training will have taken some further steps towards fulfillment of its objectives as it moves towards its own Golden Age. It



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is in this context, Mr. Chairman, that I am honoured to announce the commencement of the Twenty Fifth International Apprentice Competitions.

## WELCOMING ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY

Once more, a hearty welcome to the Olympics of Work and Technique! In the name of the Member Assembly of our Organisation, which has conferred upon me the honour of presiding over this meeting, I extend very cordial greetings to all participating in every way in this extraordinary event of the XXVth International Competition, especially to you, the young competitors, who have come here from the furthest corners of the world to demonstrate your technical capacity and desire to cooperate and live together.

I would like to underline the very special meaning of our encounter in 1979. Today is the culmination of a long process of common action and joint work, started thirty years ago between two European countries and now enabling us to hold our XXVth version of the Olympics with great enthusiasm and joy. We have with us the Representatives of several continents, Technical Delegates, Experts and young people who, even though speaking different languages, have the common goal of co-existence and generous service to one another.

I cannot say that there are magic numbers and dates as I am sure that we have worked with the same enthusiasm and interest in all Competitions held to date. We have brought to all countries holding Competitions, technical advances, the happiness of youth and our insistent desire for peace and understanding among all men. But human beings, unlike other living things, have the singular aspect of making history because they have an awareness of the past and of the possibilities of the future. That which has occurred in the past does not simply become cold stone, but reacts like seeds dropped on fertile ground and, with the untiring efforts of all, bears fruit.

Therefore, the fact of having reached our Silver Jubilee Anniversary means that we have consolidated an important contribution to the history of culture and civilization, because the construction of a modern free society is only possible on the basis of integral human formation of young people. Thus continuity is given to the values which make up the foundation of social life from generation to generation and increasing freedom and justices are achieved.



There is no doubt that the founders of this splendid institution, the International Competition took into account the difficulties to be faced, and it is true that there have been moments of vacillation and apprehension. These were probably due to the technical conditions of the Competitions, but were, I think, also due to the lack of understanding of many people who did not share the same generous spirit and vision of the future. But, the truth is, that in all the countries where we have held our Skill Olympics, we have been supported by the highest State Representatives, by the Governments, Ministries and Public Bodies responsible for Education and Work. I know that the Vocational Training Competitions have always left an impression in these countries of perfection, seriousness and efficiency and, precisely due to this, all those who have devoted a great part of their lives to this task should feel satisfied and proud.

In spite of the advances of science and technology during all these years, in spite of great political and social changes and even in spite of the profound economic crises experienced in developed and underdeveloped countries - in spite of all that - the Olympics have survived and we have been able to adapt ourselves to all circumstances, no matter how changed or evolved, while at the same time contributing to the conservation of artistic and handicraft occupations.

Now, apart from the very satisfying accomplishment of holding our XXVth Competition, we are particularly happy to hold this event in the Emerald Isle, I can imagine the very normal and understandable envy of the other Member Countries of the Organization since the Irish Committee has had the good fortune to celebrate our Anniversary in this beautiful country.

But we can all congratulate ourselves on being in this well-loved country again. We are all aware of the immense difficulties experienced by the Irish Committee in making it possible for us to meet here, but we are certain that the reliability and efficiency of our Irish friends will ensure a brilliant showing in this September of 1979.

I would like to extend special greetings to the beautiful city of Cork which has received us with open arms and with the charm of its citizens. I also wish to express the gratitude in advance of our International Organization to the State Authorities of Ireland which have supported the Irish National Committee in the organisation of our XXVth International

Competition, once more demonstrating the constant co-operation that the Competitions have received from the Irish Government for so many years. To these bodies and to the noble people of Ireland, my most sincere greetings.

Finally, I would like to remind all the young participants here that the Olympics should promote nobility, cooperation and friendship.

During twenty-four Olympics, young people like you from all over the world have carried the torch of enthusiasm and the spirit of understanding while showing their skills. The next few days are going to be difficult and challenging but, at the end, we will be able to say that we are all winners because we have all played the game with good sportsmanship and we have sown in the ancient ground of Ireland thousands of hours of happy, youthful and generous work.



## TWENTY FIFTH INTERNATIONAL APPRENTICE COMPETITION

Greeting from Chairman of the Irish National Organising  
Committee. Mr. A.A. Healy.

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On behalf of the Organising Committee for this the XXV Competition. I would like to join with the Lord Mayor in welcoming all of you here to-day. It is very gratifying and heartening to see so many nations represented by their teams of young men and women who are gathered together on this stage and I feel sure that it is a proud occasion for them. The participating countries could be said to range across the whole world, from Japan in the east to the United States of America in the west. I am pleased that you all arrived here safely and I hope you will find your stay here in Cork to be educational in terms of the experience gained in the work of the competition and helpful in your personal development and awareness of others by making contact with so many other people who have similar interests and skills.

It was a great honour for the City of Cork Vocational Education Committee to be requested by the Minister for Education to host the XXV International Apprentice Competition. This is the second occasion the competition has been held in this country, the last occasion being in 1963 when the Competition was held in Dublin.

The Organising Committee began its work well over a year ago in making the necessary preparations for the holding of the Competitions. Cork Regional Technical College is the competition centre and a tremendous amount of effort has gone into making the necessary changes so that all would be up to the best possible standard for the various trade tests. The Organising Committee is indebted to the Department of Education, to the staff of the College and to many others for the dedicated and unsparing efforts to ensure that this competition would be a memorable one.

These competitions provide the opportunity for young people, who have taken an interest in their particular craft which almost amounts to dedication, to compare and match their ability, knowledge and skills at international level. Out of this event much good has come and will continue to come. But the success of the whole venture depends on the interest of the young apprentices, and in spite of the rapid changes and development in craft techniques and technology which have taken place in recent times it is most gratifying to find

in so many countries the continuation of such a strong tradition and interest in some of man's oldest activities, making articles of use and beauty from natural materials. We note too a revival of interest in crafts and craftsmen's products particularly among the young people to-day who seem to favour hand-made ornaments, articles of hand-made pottery, ceramics or woodcarving and leather work to name a few.

The holding of the competition in Cork is also viewed by the manufacturing and commercial interests here as of great importance for the country and for the greater Cork area in particular. This is a time of great industrial development here and our visitors from other countries will I am sure become aware of the capacity and potential of the Cork region during the next few weeks.

To the apprentices I wish the best of luck in your endeavours which begin tomorrow. You have spent many months in preparation for this event and while each country is said to have a team, each member of that team is very much an individual carrying the responsibility for his particular trade. Let each one of you do his or her best and make an honest effort. No one can expect more than that.

A programme of social events and visits has also been arranged and I hope you will enjoy this and that you will come to know us a little better as a result. At some later stage you may come back on holiday and we will be pleased to see you return.

Again every good wish, success and happiness during your stay in Cork.

Thank you.