

EXTRACTS FROM THE ADDRESS OF THE MOST REVEREND DR ROBIN EAMES,
ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH, PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND, AT SPEECH DAY IN
PORTORA ROYAL SCHOOL, ENNISKILLEN : 29 NOVEMBER 1989.

N.B. EMBARGO : 29 NOVEMBER 1989 AT 1.45 P.M.

A CALL TO THE YOUTH OF NORTHERN IRELAND

"I believe that a pre-occupation with the needs of the moment, great though they be, have prevented sufficient attention being given to the potential for real progress in Northern Ireland which is to be found in the generation growing up in our schools.

This school has been to the forefront of developing a degree of community awareness which is so vital as we face the future. Such efforts in encouraging our young people to look at the community and to think of what they want to see happening is one of the real signs of hope I see today.

So many young people are looking at our society as it is and are reaching the conclusion that they don't want to perpetuate the divisions or prolong the agony. They have seen what violence can do : they have seen what prejudice can mean : they have seen what is happening in other parts of the world and they don't want to see their own community left "out in the cold".

As I look at the faces of those who are pulling down the barriers and turning the map of Europe upside down - what do I see? I see so many young faces. Faces of hope and determination : faces of those who want to make a break from the old ways.

I see something of those same faces when I visit many of our schools. The questions being asked, the views being expressed : the hopes being pronounced - are all among the most hopeful signs I find today.

It is a sobering thought that so many young people who have the potential for real leadership and influence are concluding that the society they see has nothing for them - except as a place to leave ...

May I take this opportunity as one who is so deeply concerned about this community to issue a simple call or challenge to the young people who will one day soon be the majority of adults in Northern Ireland?

- **Make your voice heard**
- **Don't be afraid to criticise what you see as wrong:**
- **Dedicate yourselves to building a better community where your generation will not have to live in fear ...**

You must be given the chance to inherit a better future. You deserve that chance....

PEOPLE FEEL UNSURE

The greatest ingredient for instability in our community today is uncertainty. Uncertainty leads to fear. Fear leads to prejudice and encourages bigotry...

It is so easy to contribute to uncertainty by what we say or do. Too frequently public utterances are not judged in terms of the perception listeners will have. Words can be just as divisive as actions.

Anyone in a position of leadership or influence must be constantly aware of the likely perception others will place on their words. The greatest possible care must be exercised in how we express ourselves in the present climate of uncertainty....

We all have a clear duty to understand the real feelings of communities other than our own. We will only make real progress towards healing the wounds in this community when we have the courage and patience to understand that the aspirations and hopes of each community must be taken seriously. To learn what it means to live with difference is to take the vital first step towards the just and peaceful society we all yearn for...

Surely the future lies not in the exclusion of one section of this community but in the mutual respect and joint contribution each community can make to the good of all? This is where the real hope must lie. This is the end to which we all must strive. This must be the vision we pray for."