

Deputy Ruairí Quinn TD
Dáil Éireann
Dublin 2

23 June 2009

Dear Deputy Quinn TD

The Association of Higher Civil and Public Servants protests in the strongest terms at your unwarranted attack on the staff of the Department of Education and Science, under Dáil privilege, in the course of the discussion of the Ryan report on child-abuse, in Dáil Éireann on 11 June 2009.

At the outset it is very important to say that this Association wishes to place on record that the general shock and horror felt by the public at the events described in the Ryan Report is shared fully by our members in the Department of Education & Science and by the members of this Association.

That being the case your comments are not simply untrue but are bizarre, unreasonable and uncalled-for. The anger of my members at the nature of the attack is tinged with disappointment that a long standing Labour member of the Oireachtas and former Minister should use his privileged position to unjustly attack civil servants.

The general tenor of your remarks is to imply that the present staff of the Department of Education and Science in 2009 are personally guilty of the shortcomings of the Department in the past that are criticised in the report.

You described personnel in the Department of Education and Science as “*incompetent, lazy and destructive*”. Such comments are unfair and gratuitous. It is impossible to dignify such intemperate remarks with a measured reply and we do not intend to do so.

The conscientious attempts of my members to fulfil their public duties have been severely undermined in recent times by reductions in staff numbers, salary cuts and the whimsical decisions taken on decentralisation. The position has been compounded in the case of some Departments, including Education and Science,

where staff are constantly exposed to the angry reactions of the public who are affected by recent restrictions and reductions in services.

In the present climate, where there are constant attacks on public servants, it is to members of the Oireachtas, especially Labour members, who public servants depend upon to give fair and balanced comments.

In this context we would ask you to publicly withdraw your remarks.

Yours sincerely

Dave Thomas
General Secretary

cc Deputy Eamon Gilmore TD