

Agenda item 5

NOTICE OF THE REPORT OF THE CELTIC DIVISION

UNITED NATIONS

Group of Experts on Geographical Names,

Fourteenth Session

Geneva 17-26 May, 1989

Notice of the report of the Celtic Division

The Celtic Division has been in existence only since the Fifth Conference in Quebec in 1987. It may be of interest, therefore, to the present session of the United Nations group of experts on geographical names meeting here in Geneva to note that if this session had taken place here just before the first arrival here of Roman administration bringing with it the pervasive Roman alphabet, it is almost certain that the language which would have been most commonly heard then here on the shore of Lac Lemman would have been a Celtic language. Of course this would have been over two thousand years ago.

At present Ireland is the principal representative of the Celtic group of languages. Other countries also have Celtic languages and one country in particular has two distinctly separate languages since prehistoric times. The reference, of course, is to the United Kingdom. In this connection, even in the short time since the establishing of the Celtic Division, important developments have taken place as can be seen in the final paragraph of the contribution of the Celtic Division to the Newsletter of UNGEGN, Vol. 3, p. 3. This contribution is, in fact, the full text of the report of the Celtic Division. Perhaps by the time that the next session of the Group of Experts

meets, the Celtic Division will be able to present a base broader than at present.

As regards the formal presentation of reports there seems to be practical difficulty in discerning dividing lines between working papers, national reports, divisional reports and contribution to the Newsletter. Of course there may be good reasons for leaving matters imprecise. However, perhaps the Chairman would consider giving some guidelines on the desired nature of each of the various categories.