

Taoiseach At Opening Of German Cultural Institute



Dr. E. Vetter

THE TAOISEACH, Mr. Lemass; the Taoiseach, Mr. MacEntee; members of the Diplomatic Corps and cultural bodies attended the official opening of the German Institute for Cultural Relations ("Deutsches Kulturinstitut") in the rooms of the Institute at 37 Merrion Square, Dublin, last night.

The opening ceremony was performed by the German Ambassador, Dr. A. Reifferscheidt, who said that the many links between Germany and Ireland could be traced in history from medieval times. They were always of a particularly friendly and cordial nature, especially after the last war when Ireland proved an unwavering friend in bitter need, when it took care of hundreds of German children. The Ambassador said there were doubts which might still exist and which were based on the assumption that the Institute was to be established for purely political reasons, described as "Kulturpolitik," and that it would attempt to indoctrinate the Irish people with German party politics.

He wished to make it clear that politics and in particular party politics would not be tolerated. "Our sole aim is to offer this house as a meeting place for all people in Ireland interested in getting better acquainted with the past and present cultural developments in Germany."

INCREASED EXCHANGE

With the aid of the Institute they would try to increase the exchange of Irish artists and scientists with the Federal Republic of Germany. He paid tribute to the active members of the former Irish-German Society in Dublin which, he said, owing to some unfortunate misunderstandings concerning the future form of their co-operation, dissolved itself.

Dr. Eugen Vetter, Director of the Institute, said, it aimed to promote cultural relations between Ireland and Germany by offering German language classes, courses in German history, literature and fine arts as well as lectures, concerts, exhibitions, film shows and recitals. They hoped to extend their activities to Wexford, Limerick, Cork, Galway and Sligo where Irish-German Societies flourished. They had no intention of working in isolation from other cultural bodies.

A German musician, Bruno Hoffman from Stuttgart gave a recital on a "glass harp" which took him seven years to build, using 50 drinking glasses. It was an Irishman named Puckert who introduced the glass harp to Germany around 1746 and earned fame all over Europe for his playing. Influencing composers like Mozart and many others.

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