

# Labour seeks Dáil debate after AG's tax cut speech

**THE** contentious speech by Attorney General (AG) Michael McDowell, which called for further radical tax cuts, has prompted the Labour Party to table two parliamentary questions for the resumption of the Dáil this week, probing the government's views on the AG's intervention.

In a wide-ranging address to the Irish Financial Services Society last Tuesday, McDowell said consideration should be given in the five years after the current programme for government, to reducing the stan-

**Shane Coleman**  
dard rate of income tax to 16% and the top rate to 33%.

McDowell also spoke in favour of Irish membership of the euro, hinted at his opposition to a EU super-state, and argued for further competition in the Irish economy and modernisation of the courts system.

Labour has asked the coalition to clarify whether the speech represents government policy and whether it was cleared by the

Taoiseach. It has also asked if the government has any plans to review the role and functions of the Attorney General.

A spokesman for Labour stressed that the party was not challenging the right of the AG to hold views but he said the AG had a unique constitutional position as defender of the public interest.

"There is a strong tradition that the AG does not become involved in current political controversy. Part of that is because he is not answerable to the Dáil," he said.

Responding to the fact that previous AGs - John Kelly and Declan Costello - have also been TDs and hence could have taken political positions on matters, the spokesman said that as deputies they would have been answerable to the Dáil. "None of the recent AGs have adopted such a public position," he added.

However, sources close to government strongly defended McDowell's right to make such a speech. They noted that he stressed in the address that he did not wish "that anything I would say tonight would be miscon-

strued as related to the forthcoming budget or the policy issues which will be resolved by the government in that context".

They also said there was no law or even convention preventing the AG from expressing his views on subjects.

"The AG sits at the cabinet table so it is no harm to know what they are thinking," one source said.

McDowell's speech has inevitably heightened speculation that he is set to make a return to party politics by rejoining the PDs in a senior role and standing in the next general election.

"Michael wouldn't make such a speech without a reason but talks aren't concluded," one well-placed observer said. "If you look at the speech, it's all PD stuff. If you line it up with what Harney was saying in a newspaper interview last week, it's the same stuff."

PD members make no secret of their strong desire to see McDowell return to the party and the radical tone of last week's speech will only heighten such feelings.

and standing in the next general election.

"Michael wouldn't make such a speech without a reason but talks aren't concluded," one well-placed observer said. "If you look at the speech, it's all PD stuff. If you line it up with what Harney was saying in a newspaper interview last week, it's the same stuff."

PD members make no secret of their strong desire to see McDowell return to the party and the radical tone of last week's speech will only heighten such feelings.



McDowell: public interest

## O'Rourke in trouble over time-tabling at Dublin Airport

**PUBLIC** enterprise minister Mary O'Rourke has run into further turbulence at Dublin Airport with a key committee, that includes all the leading airlines at the airport, criticising her decision to allow for stricter time-tabling of airplane departures and landings.

The minister was bluntly warned in a letter from the Chairman of the Dublin Airport Scheduling Committee that a move to full coordinated status was unnecessary and would lead to a reduction in traffic using the airport.

The letter from Wolf Schmidt of German airline Lufthansa, was also critical of Aer Rianta saying that many of the scheduling committee members had questioned the company's "efficiency and motives".

Schmidt also referred to a "blame culture" at the airport "with neither the airport nor the airlines/handling agents willing to understand the others' problems".

He said the members had formally directed him to object to the designation of the airport as coordinated.

"They have also directed me to request an open meeting prior to which the Department [of Public Enterprise] should make available all the information, analysis and underlying method for the change of status," the letter, which has been seen by *The Sunday Tribune*, said.

Schmidt said it was apparent that the airport was seeking "an easy way out" and believes full coordination status would provide that way. "I can assure you that nothing could be further from the truth. In reality all that full coordination status will achieve is the reduction in traffic using the airport, as airlines will not move slots to accommodate extra flights," he said.

At a meeting of the Scheduling Committee last Wednesday week, attended

**Shane Coleman**  
Political Correspondent

by Aer Rianta senior management, members generally felt the requested co-ordinated status was not justified, Schmidt said. He added that they believed "the airport authority was not taking proper action to manage perceived problems at Dublin Airport."

"Many of the members questioned Aer Rianta's efficiency and motives. This volatile situation indicates that the matter could well be improved if there were full and frank statements by Aer Rianta made in advance and in writing. This should outline in detail the areas of concern that need addressing. A constructive solution could then be found which would lead to the smooth running of the airport, allow for properly planned expansion and avoid the unnecessary change of status," the letter said.

"Many of the members reported yesterday that Aer Lingus pilots are preparing to embark on a work to rule over pay and conditions, which could leave thousands of passengers facing serious flight disruptions. It is set to begin this Tuesday and that the airline has already conceded it may have to cancel some flights and hire in crew for others."



Mary O'Rourke: criticised



Participants in the Carnival for Economic Justice march in Dublin yesterday

DEREK SPERS

## Sports women have different goal

**IRISH** women are lagging behind men when it comes to sport. Despite the success of top female athletes such as the Olympic medal-winner Sonia O'Sullivan and marathon runner Catherine McKiernan, a new report has found that women in Ireland are less likely to get involved in sport, do not see competition as important and have little impact on the organisation of sporting bodies and administration. At top levels, they are also given less funding than men.

The government report, *Women in Sport*, obtained by *The Sunday Tribune*, shows that females only account for 38% of all sports club members and are quicker to drop out of sport than men. Young girls participate in sport as much as boys, however, there is an "alarming and dramatic reduction in participation levels

and members of executive sporting bodies in the report states, "very low indeed".

Overall, the ratio of male coaches to female coaches is about two to one, with women constituting approximately one third of all sports instructors.

At elite levels, less women are funded than men and those given financial aid secure smaller amounts than their male counterparts. Data for grants for the years 1997 and 1998, according to the study, shows that twice as many males are allowed financial aid. In 1997, 107 men compared to 47 women were given grants while in 1998, 128 males and 50 females were granted aid.

For both years, the average given to men was significantly higher than that for women. In 1997, male sportspersons received on average, 20% more

than females. In 1998, the average grant for a man was \$2,685 while that for a woman was \$4,708. The total grants given to female sportspersons in both years was three times less than that of males.

Lack of available time, lack of opportunities, lack of facilities and a reluctance among the media to take female sports seriously are cited in the report as explanations for the low levels of female participation in sports.

A number of recommendations are also made to enhance female participation. These include the provision for special funding to be given to organisations which encour-

age female activity and a call for the drawing up of guidelines for the planning and management of sports facilities to ensure they are female-friendly.

The *Women in Sport* report was initiated by Fine Gael TD Bernard Allen when he was minister for sport in 1997, but has only just been completed. It was carried out by a specially appointed task force linked to the Irish Sports Council.

**WEBLINK**  
Irish Sports Council  
www.irishsportscouncil.ie

## IRISH ART AUCTION

**10TH October 2000**  
10.30pm in the Minerva Suite, RDS, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

WILLIAM CONOR RHA RUA (1884-1968)  
*Overs the Fences*, crayon, pencil and chalk.  
16.5 by 15.5in., IR£20,000-IR£25,000

Jack B. Yeats, Markey Robinson, Norah McGuinness, Sean Keating, Maurice MacGonigal, Paul Henry, Arland A. Usher, Graham Knuttel, James Humbert Craig, Frank Egginton, Edwin Hayes, Frank McCann, Colin Middleton, Maurice C. Wilks, William Orpen, May Guinness, James Le Jeune, etc.

VIEWING: RDS, Minerva Suite, Ballsbridge, Dublin, Sun./Mon., Oct. 8/9th: 10am-6pm, Tues., 10th: 10am-3pm.  
Free Car Parking in the RDS (Merrion Road).  
ADMISSION BY CATALOGUE: £6 postpaid.  
We accept MasterCard/Visa. You can view and download the entire catalogue at [www.wyts.ie](http://www.wyts.ie)

## McCreewy and credit unions end stand-off

**THE** long-running feud between finance minister Charlie McCreewy and the Irish League of Credit Unions (ILCU) may be coming to an end with both sides agreeing a compromise solution will be reached in the next few weeks.

Government sources confirmed that McCreewy and the ILCU will meet again on Tuesday when the credit unions will make a presentation to the minister that could form the basis of an agreement on how to handle the taxation of their members' savings.

It is understood that Department of Finance officials and the ILCU have been meeting to work out a solution and there is a desire on both sides to end the sometimes bitter dispute. "There is a proposal being looked at that has been discussed between the credit unions and the department officials. Arising out of that, it is hoped that a compromise can be reached," one observer said, before adding that "everything

was still at a delicate stage".

A government source said that "both sides are hopeful that Tuesday's meeting will move it along. It is not in anyone's interests for this to continue any longer."

The president of the ILCU, Jim McMahon, who has already had separate meetings with McCreewy, the Taoiseach and Tanaiste, said he was "hopeful that both sides will be able to reach an agreement to give a fair tax deal to credit unions" but declined to comment further.

There was considerable surprise that McCreewy first agreed to meet with the ILCU a number of weeks ago, given his previous persistent refusal to do so and his infamous comment that he still had the "stab wounds" in his back from his handling of the issue of the movement over two years ago when he tried to regulate the tax treatment of credit unions

## TONY QUINN'S SUCCESSFUL LIVING 6 WEEK COURSE

IT HAS BEEN DISCOVERED THAT MANY PEOPLE THINK IN A DIVIDED WAY AS FOLLOWS:

"I want to be successful, there's no way I'll succeed"  
"I want to give up smoking but I've tried so many times before"  
"I'd like to get into shape but I haven't got the time"

As long as your mind is divided in this way you will never succeed to any great degree because there are too many opposing negative thoughts - you must learn to think in one direction

You own one of the most powerful, natural resources on our planet, your whole mind. It is unlikely that you have ever experienced the truly awesome power that it can yield. What would happen if you were to focus, not just some, but all of your mind, on a goal?

**CONTENTS OF NEW 6-WEEK SUCCESSFUL LIVING COURSE.**

- Learn to unleash the power within •
- How to lead, influence and take action •
- Focus, super-concentration, relaxation •
- Displace your weaknesses and overcome limitations •
- Achieve peak performance in all areas •
- Visualisation, personal power and confidence •

<b>Venue:</b> Burlington Hotel	Jurys Hotel ( Ballsbridge )	The Shelburne Hotel
<b>Date:</b> Mon Oct 2nd	Thurs Oct 5th	Tues Oct 3rd
<b>Time:</b> 8pm-9.30pm	8pm - 9.30pm	6.15pm - 7.45pm
<b>Cost:</b> £ 100.00	£ 100.00	£ 100.00

**For Credit Card Booking Contact:**  
Tony Quinn Health Centre  
Tel: 01 478 5404 / 01 497 4234 Yvonne on 087 229 8878  
Or Dave on 086 8300575

**Today's weather**  
Cloud will increase in the morning, leading to outbreaks of rain in the afternoon. These showers will turn into persistent rain as the day progresses. Later on, it will brighten with heavy rain giving way to lighter showers and there will be a light southern wind. Highest temperatures will reach 15 to 17 degrees Celsius.

**LEINSTER:** Rain will approach from the west this morning and will reach all areas by afternoon but will ease off later giving way to lighter showers. Winds will be moderate to fresh, strengthening as the day goes on. Highest temperatures 14 to 17 degrees Celsius.

**MUNSTER:** Rain will spread throughout the province