

## the IRISH NEWS

Pro fide et patria

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## NHS may be first victim

THE suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly will have a negative impact across the entire range of public services, but perhaps the greatest concern will be for the vital area of health.

There are a number of important decisions due to be taken soon which will have major implications for hospitals, medical staff and patients.

Perhaps the most far-reaching is the Department of Health's reorganisation of acute services which will determine the siting of hospitals and delivery of emergency and maternity care across the north for possibly the next 50 years.

The consultation process on this review is due to be completed at the end of this month with a decision likely in December.

However, there must be a real concern that suspension will leave hospitals and staff in a state of limbo, which is wholly unsatisfactory.

Primary care reforms are also at a delicate stage and proposed legislation on other key areas such as the protection of children and vulnerable adults looks set to be delayed.

We are also coming into the time of year when winter pressures put an even greater strain on already overstretched hospitals.

And given the fact that Northern Ireland has the longest waiting lists in Europe, this suspension could not come at a worse time for those desperate to receive treatment.

According to Dr Joe Hendron, the health committee will continue to scrutinise the minister's plan to reduce the number of people waiting far longer than they should.

This must be welcomed and many people would share the view that elected representatives must remain engaged and focused on important issues.

It is unlikely that British ministers will take any major policy decisions during the period of suspension.

There is no doubt that one of the reasons the health service in Northern Ireland is in such a poor state is due to massive underfunding during the many years of direct rule.

And while the pace of progress in recent times has been slower than many would have liked, it is also clear that the Stormont executive has at least been able to prioritise funding and target areas of greatest importance to local people.

The worry is that, when the institutions are again up and running, the health service will be in a far worse state than it is now.

## Jimmy Carter deserves Nobel peace accolade

MANY people will not have missed the irony of a former US president being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize at a time when the current incumbent is pursuing a policy which may result in global conflict.

There has been a warm welcome for the honour which has been bestowed on Jimmy Carter, who has been untiring in his efforts to advance democracy and human rights for many years.

During his presidency, Mr Carter brokered the groundbreaking Camp David accord between President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menachim Begin of Israel.

Despite being ousted from office after only one term, Mr Carter deserves enormous credit for continuing to work towards the resolution of conflict and improving the lives of those lacking such fundamentals as health care, food and shelter.

Now 78, he is a statesman who has used the weight of his former office to positive effect throughout the world and few would deny that he deserves this accolade.

## Quotes of the day

What we are saying is come forward and tell us because these boys are operating just as they wish at the minute.

They are indiscriminate where they shoot and how they shoot and at some stage somebody will be killed who is not the intended target

**Detective Superintendent Alan Mains speaking yesterday after a murder bid in Bangor believed to be connected to the latest loyalist feud**

Raising the age maximum allows Civil Service staff in Northern Ireland greater freedom of choice in their careers by allowing them the opportunity to achieve job fulfilment and an appropriate work/life balance

**Stormont Finance and Personnel Minister Sean Farren welcomes the announcement that the compulsory retirement age in the north's Civil Service has been extended from 60 to 65**



## Gilded palace faces an uncertain future

NOW you see it, now you don't - for the fourth time in as many years the gilded Stormont Palace is being closed down and now faces an uncertain future.

First Minister Trimble, the sham squire of the peace process, has pulled the plug on Northern Ireland devolution.

He and his muddled party have torn the house down about their ears as he and DUP boss Paisley prepare for an election next May, the hidden agenda of which seems to be the undoing of the Good Friday Agreement.

Trimble and his Ulster Unionists went to 10 Downing Street and issued an impertinent ultimatum to Prime Minister Blair.

As the decommissioning of IRA weapons has begun, they invoked a new word - 'disband'. In view of the fact that they are stealing Paisley's clothes for the election fray, they wanted immediate action.

They got their answer within 24 hours - Stormont is to be disbanded.

In other words, the majority unionist party, as well as the resigning DUP ministers, is reckoned as unfit to rule.

The unfairness of this is that the other parties - living in the real world of the new century and not the Orange fantasia of 1690 - must go too as direct rule, with the important input from Dublin, takes over for God knows how long.

This is Trimble's contribution to the peace in Northern Ireland.

It has prompted many people to ask, should this flawed politician not, in all conscience, either return the Nobel peace award to the Norwegians or give it to charity?

As he stood outside 10 Downing Street delivering his pitiful ultimatum, he was flanked by Lord Kilclooney, the former John Taylor, ex-home affairs minister in the old Stormont regime.

His face was expressionless, but - knowing John Taylor - I wondered whether the thought was flitting through his mind: "How did this guy ever



JAMES KELLY

become my party leader?"

He knows and we all know, the answer is 'Drumcree'.

While Fleet Street dimwits are still as gullible as ever, last Friday's unionist plot that went wrong has left most of the population here - and as far off as America - dumbfounded.

If ever there was a set up, this was it. News management, preliminary build-up...

Ed Moloney's less than exciting 'sensational' revelations, quoted extensively in advance by, among others, the Orange Order's Dublin sweetheart revisionist Ruth Dudley Edwards...

The 8.30am invasion of the Stormont parliament buildings by a 30-strong police riot squad lucky to depart, like figures from a Goon Show, carrying a floppy disk taken from a Sinn Fein drawer...

All this was televised for world propaganda. TV cameras just happened to be there! Westminster had better look out.

Is this a precedent? No, it happened before, way back in Oliver Cromwell's time, when his storm troopers invaded and threatened the MPs of the Long Parliament.

Nothing new under the sun. It's reported that Hugh Orde, the new police chief, only heard about the Stormont raid by phone while on his way to London.

When he saw the television footage later he must have wondered if he was

out of his mind to take on this job.

I recall hearing Brian Faulkner, in the famous balcony scene at Stormont when Heath 'suspended' the Unionist government, complain that they were being "treated like a coconut colony".

Last Friday it really looked like a coconut colony with nutcases in control.

And the media routinely reporting the presence in our midst of spies, double agents, informers and agents provocateurs.

All this and a loyalist turf war of murder going on unchecked in east Belfast.

A few hours ago I heard a unionist spokesman on the radio denying an accusation that they were destroying the agreement on the basis of unproven allegations.

He claimed that they were rather acting on the reports of the secretary of state, Dr Reid.

So Dr Reid, who will take charge during the period of direct rule, is to be left holding the baby and blamed for the resultant shambles. Preposterous!

But in truth his handling of the situation in these last days of devolution has been less than impressive.

Mo Mowlam would have made a better fist of it. We all remember with sadness the day that has become known as Bloody Friday.

Last Friday too must go down in history - as Black Friday.

Quite apart from the shenanigans which that day landed us in - political no-man's land - there was the forgotten tragedy of the end of Belfast's famous Titanic shipyard which, in its heyday of employing 30,000 workers, was famously described by Paddy Devlin MP as a "loyalist soup kitchen".

In their obsession with IRA intelligence-gathering, Unionist and DUP politicians who used to crave the shipyard vote at election after election ignored the admission that the end has come.

Harland & Wolff, like the great ship itself, has sunk without a trace.

On This Day/October 12 1932

By Eamon Phoenix

## Man shot dead during Belfast riots

SERIOUS rioting - in which one man was fatally shot, a number of others wounded and many people injured - occurred all over Belfast yesterday.

Scores of business premises were seriously damaged and in some cases looted.

So serious did the disorders become that the authorities took the grave step of imposing a curfew on the city last night and, until the order is revoked, unauthorised persons may not be out of doors between the hours of 11pm and 5am.

The trouble was the outcome of the workers' defiance of the proclamation banning the demonstrations planned by them for yesterday. Disorders began in early afternoon and continued with varying intensity until curfew hour.

Guns, batons, stones and, in fact, every conceivable missile were used in the course of the disorders.

In shooting which occurred in the Cullinstree Road district, Samuel J Baxter (20),

of Regent Street, was killed.

At least two other men suffering from bullet wounds are in a critical condition and are not expected to live.

A feature of the rioting was the apparent determination of the rioters to destroy Corporation property.

Trams and buses were smashed, lamps and lampposts broken, watchmen's huts burned and road-mending material destroyed.

Extraordinary scenes were witnessed in the disturbed areas after nightfall.

Many of them were in absolute darkness owing to the earlier destruction of lamps.

Fusillades of stones rained on the police from out of the darkness and the reply of the latter was to discharge volleys of shots.

The screams of women could be heard frequently in the night, adding to the general terror which pervaded the scenes of the worst incidents.

After curfew the city quietened

and large forces of police armed with rifles, who were on duty at nearly every street corner, were not called into action.

A number of arrests, mostly for infringement of the curfew regulations, were made.

The day's scenes had a sequel at midnight when, at a special court, 34 men were charged with riotous assembly and were remanded for eight days.

In all, 38 arrests were made throughout the city up to 11pm.

Shankill Road was one of the worst storm centres of the day and there was scarcely an hour when the police were not in grips with crowds of men who harried the constabulary right from Woodvale Road down to Peter's Hill, a distance of more than a mile.

Men, women and even children were on this great shopping thoroughfare demonstrating against the action of the authorities in prohibiting the march of the outdoor relief workers.