

Initiative '92 to invite all citizens to put ideas before public

By Liz MacPherson

INITIATIVE '92, the independent citizens body set up to promote "grassroots" democracy will begin 1993 with a new name and a series of public meetings to present proposals on the future of Northern Ireland.

The taped and written submissions on how the north should be governed, represent a cross section of opinion, ranging from churches, trade unions, community groups and political parties, including Sinn Féin.

A number of people who made the submissions will be invited to present them to the public at a series of meetings, beginning on January 9 in the Old Museum Arts Centre in Belfast.

From today, the year-old initiative will be known as the Opatil Commission of Inquiry. It is named after its chairman, Professor Torkel Opsahl, an international lawyer and human rights activist.

Journalist Andy Pollak, who is helping to coordinate the submissions, said that the initiative "isn't going to go away in 1993".

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Berlin wall protesters to picket border road closures

By Conor Macauley

THREE Germans, who helped tear down the Berlin Wall, are to take part in protests against the closure of border roads.

The co-ordinated demonstrations taking place today will culminate in a three-day vigil at the Ladey Bridge park crossing in Co Fermanagh. Pickets are being organised at

static checkpoints along the border, from Cloughogue in Co Armagh to the Bunrana Road base in Co Donegal.

A number of road openings are being planned and there will be a protest in Crossmaglen, Co Fermanagh against alleged radiation emissions from watchtowers along the south Armagh border.

The protests, organised by the Irish National Congress and the

Border Roads Campaign, are being organised to coincide with the removal of border road controls across Europe with the completion of the Single European Market on New Year's Day.

The Germans will join hundreds of other protesters for the demonstration at Derry's Bunrana Road checkpoint.

Organiser, Paul O'Connor, of the Bloody Sunday Initiative, said it was

an honour to have them take part. "It is entirely appropriate that they should make the journey to Derry this New Year to show their solidarity with our campaign to end the British state's programme of militarism on the border."

"The demonstration in Derry will be one of twelve that is being organised and co-ordinated by the Irish National Congress to coincide with the implementation of the

Single European Act which comes into effect at midnight on New Year's Eve.

"A key element of the act is the dismantling of all internal borders within the European Community. Ireland is the one exception. As walls and borders come down all over Europe, Britain is actively strengthening the border in the north of Ireland."

People attending the Derry demonstration are asked to assemble at the Templemore Sports Complex at 1.30pm.

The protest starts across the border in Mull, Co Donegal, when 12 cyclists, each representing one of the 12 EC states, will cycle through the Bunrana Road checkpoint before meeting up with demonstrators. The crowd will then hold a short rally on the border.

In brief

Hooray! It's a 1,500-pounder

THE first baby born in the new year has made the parents more than happy... they will receive a cheque for \$1,500.

Babypool manufacturers Farley opened their telephone hotline between midnight and 2.30am to receive news of the firstborn of the New Year. After authentication the winner will be announced at 9.30am.

Massville the first arrival at Glasgow's Royal Maternity Hospital will get a year's free supply of disposable nappies worth £350, a firm of nappy makers said.

Mugged milkman has partial sight

MILKMAN Adrian Staitte, who was blinded by thugs who squirted superglue in his eyes, yesterday regained partial sight in one eye.

Doctors at Cheltenham General Hospital snipped through 27-year-old Adrian's left eyelashes so that he could open it for the first time since he was attacked on Tuesday morning.

Mr Staitte's wife Jeanette (50), has been regularly bathing both his eyes with a solvent solution to dry up the superglue so that it will gradually flake away.

Mass executions after coup plot

UP to 26 alleged coup plotters in Sierra Leone are believed to have been executed after a secret summary trial.

At least two of the victims, the West African country's former police chief and a top army officer, were in prison during failed bids to topple Captain Valentine Strasser's ruling junta.

It is true they were executed that is very frightening. This is a step back in West Africa, a western diplomat in the region commented.

Three angry men are executed

THREE men angry at being disciplined at work have been executed in Peking for setting explosions at the Temple of Heaven, once a place of worship and now one of China's major tourist attractions, officials said.

Train driver dies in crash

A PASSENGER Express train leaving crashed into a locomotive near the northeastern German city of Schwerin yesterday, killing the train driver and injuring four people, railway officials said.

Border town marks tumbling of trans European frontiers

By Brendan Anderson

WITH borders tumbling all over Europe and capital cities celebrating throughout the continent yesterday, it was left to the little frontier town of Newry to mark the arrival of the single market in Ireland.

The town's art centre resembled a tower of Babel as representatives of the EC's 12-member countries rubbed shoulders with Newry and Mourne councillors.

Euro-MPs John Hume and Jim Nicholson accepted the invitation of council chairman P J Bradley to help launch the single market which meant to give almost unlimited freedom of trade and movement to citizens of member states.

And in a gesture symbolising the removal of trade barriers, Mr Bradley presented each politician with a customs officer's cap - Irish for Jim Nicholson and British for John Hume.

After being led to the dining area by a pipe; guests were treated to a bewildering array of dishes from the 12 countries, ranging from Ireland's offering of salmon through Italy's broad salad to the French bouillabaisse.

John Hume said the single market would not automatically make a difference unless people took advantage of the opportunities being created.

"There is no way that things are going to land in our lap. We are now part of the biggest single market in the world and therefore we should take advantage of that by getting our small and medium-sized businesses to expand their markets beyond Northern Ireland and elsewhere."

"It also gives us the opportunity to bring inward investment from the Republic and elsewhere. It is offering them a foothold in the biggest single market in the world."

Thousands of extra guards were put on the streets in bid to discourage motorists from drinking and driving and 13 people on average were arrested daily.

If the troubles were not on, there would be no checkpoints

John Hume

"The tragedy here is that the only sign of a border in the new Europe will be the military checkpoints on the Irish border, and what are they there for? They are there to get rid of people who want to get rid of the border."

"The facts are that if the troubles were not on, now there would be no checkpoints."

Jim Nicholson warned the business community that the single market was a two-way process with competitors increasing in the North's main markets.

Other countries in Europe will have greater freedom into the United Kingdom market and the Republic market and they are going to be competing with our goods."

On the security aspect of the border, Mr Nicholson said: "I would not be in favour of anything affecting security or the lives of the people of Northern Ireland. Certainly there will still be security on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It's nobody's fault other than the IRA."

With more than 60 approved and unapproved border roads, the Newry and Mourne area had been a natural haunt for smugglers for most of this century.

The Irish Trade Protection Association found that a total of 137 companies in the Newry area had been involved in the trade in counterfeit goods over the past 12 months.

Legal judgments against firms increased by 700 and the number of seizures of counterfeit goods by examiners appointed rose by 22.

ITPA development manager Patricia Mellon said the statistics reflected the trading difficulties experienced by many businesses throughout 1992.



End of an era... Newry and Mourne District Council Chairman P J Bradley with the customs officers' caps which are now collectors' items

Figures show big increase in firm failures in Republic

THE number of companies in the Republic which went into receivership in 1992 rose by 62 per cent on the previous year, according to figures released yesterday.

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Warning of pressure on Irish pound

From Mary Carolan in Dublin

THE Irish pound will come under intense pressure from currency speculators today when exchange rates are linked, supermarket chief Feargal Quinn has warned.

The controls imposed at midnight to comply with EC regulations on economic and monetary union and this development will leave the punt exposed to greedy speculators.

In an address to top executives of his Superquinn chain, Mr Quinn asked the government to take urgent

action in defence of the Irish currency and to postpone the abolition of exchange controls.

This should be done now in order to avoid a possible 'fatal wave' of speculation, he said, stressing that devaluation was no answer to the situation and the 'worst option' available.

The department of finance stressed that the government had retained the right, under the new Financial Transactions Act sanctioned by the Dail just weeks ago, to impose emergency controls for up to two six-month periods.

More cabinet secrets opened to public

By Eamon Phoenix

THIS week, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland released to the public under the '30-year rule' some 2,000 previously classified cabinet files relating to 1962. The files included some dating from earlier periods, mainly the 1930s and 1940s.

As in previous years, however, some files remain closed to researchers for extended periods of 50, 75 or 100 years from their cover dates.

or have had vital papers removed to facilitate access.

Amongst those closed for 75 years was a Home Office file dated 1954 and entitled 'O'Connell Incident' at the end of his 20-year term, and included in addition: Captain Terence O'Neill (Minister of Finance); Mr Brian Faulkner (Minister of Home Affairs); Mr J. O. Andrews (Minister of Commerce); Mr Harry West (Minister of Agriculture); Mr Herbert Kirk (Minister of Labour and National Insurance); Mr William Morgan (Minister of Health and Local Government); Mr Maurice Macmillan (Minister of Education until May 1962 when he was replaced by Major Ivan Neil.

The Year 1962 was quiet in Northern Ireland politics. In February the IRA called off its deadly border campaign and Mr Brian Faulkner could describe the security situation as satisfactory.

Unemployment remained a critical problem for the Brookborough government throughout the year. The cabinet remained concerned at the implications of EEC membership for the north and, in particular, for the

area's Safeguarding of Employment Act (1947), designed to control the migration of labour from the south.

In the Northern Ireland general election of May 1962 the Unionist Party lost three seats but retained a comfortable 34 of the local House of Commons's 52 seats.

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Cardinal's plan for federal Ireland

THE plan for a federal Ireland within the commonwealth, unveiled by the Archbishop of Armagh, Cardinal D'Alton in 1957, resulted in a flurry of activity between Stormont and Whitehall. This is revealed by confidential files released today in Belfast.

In his interview, the Cardinal made it clear that the plan was speaking 'not as a churchman but as a citizen and an Irishman'.

The matter became the focus of controversy in March 1957 when a British Conservative MP, Mr Philip Butler put down the question in the Commons in response to the IRA's border campaign.

This suggested that 'in view of the increasing tension in Ireland' the British secretary for commonwealth relations should initiate discussion with both the Irish and Northern Ireland governments on the possibility of the Republic re-entering the commonwealth on the basis of the Cardinal's proposals.

On 11 March 1957, a Stormont official sent a stiff note to the British home office on the need for a formal parliamentary reply on the part of the Macmillan government.

The official's opinion was that the Cardinal's proposals had been greeted with 'disdain' throughout Ireland.

As a result, the British government accepted Stormont's draft reply which stressed the north's constitutional position which 'could only be altered with the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland.'

Protests at unity 'slight' by an African official

A SPEECH by the Nigerian governor-general in support of Irish unity prompted angry protests from the Northern Ireland government, according to this week's Stormont Cabinet releases.

In October 1961, in a ceremony in Lagos to mark the appointment of the first Irish diplomatic mission to the African continent, the governor-general, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe expressed the view that Ireland would be reunited.

Replying to the new Irish ambassador, Mr Eamon Kennedy, the governor-general, a noted African nationalist and statesman, said: "I am confident that the faith of the people of Ireland will be in the fullest of time make Ireland one and indivisible."

Their experience in Nigeria had shown that 'given goodwill and tolerance, a people can live together as a nation in spite of honest differences of opinion.'

Dr Azikiwe welcomed the fact that 'your great republic' had chosen Nigeria for its first diplomatic mission in Africa.

The official's remarks reportedly irritated the Brookborough government which decided that it could not ignore them. In a memo in the file, a Stormont official asked whether the commonwealth relations office should be approached over this 'extremist statement'.

Since the governor-general represented the queen, the statement was 'all the more incredible.' It was decided to raise the case with a Nigerian ministerial delegation due in London shortly.

On 6 October 1961, the Northern Ireland cabinet secretary, Sir Arthur Kelly wrote to Whitehall conveying the view of the unionist authorities: 'It seems... out of place that for a governor-general who represents the queen to voice sentiments favouring the dismemberment of the UK as presently constituted.'

The commonwealth relations office was duly approached by the home office on the matter.

An official informed Kelly on 3 January 1962: 'The high commissioner... considers that it would not in any event be possible to take the matter further and it seems difficult to dispute this view.'

The concept of parity and the close financial integration achieved with Great Britain', he wrote, 'has restricted the powers given to Northern Ireland under the 1920 Act. Our inclusion in the Common Market may mean further sacrifices in our legislative independence.'

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Worry over 'sacrifice' of entry to the EEC

THE Brookborough cabinet was perturbed by the constitutional implications of EEC membership for Northern Ireland, according to previously-confidential cabinet minutes.

The constitutional implications of the Treaty of Rome for the North were the subject of a memo circulated to ministers in January 1962 by the Stormont attorney-general, Mr Brian Maginness.

The concept of parity and the close financial integration achieved with Great Britain', he wrote, 'has restricted the powers given to Northern Ireland under the 1920 Act. Our inclusion in the Common Market may mean further sacrifices in our legislative independence.'

The attorney-general drew his colleagues' attention to several possible consequences of EEC membership.

First, 'if Eire became a member she would try to raise the Special Powers Act. Moreover, the treaty provided for aid to industry in regions where serious unemployment existed while the northern government's Safeguarding of Employment Act might be endangered if the south secured full employment under the new market.'

The memo was considered by the full cabinet at Stormont Castle. It was agreed that the prime minister would recommend to the home secretary that a Northern Ireland report should be attached to the British team responsible for the Common Market negotiations.

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