



Allister defiant over President's financial penalty

Jim Allister MEP is among a group of MEPs punished by the President, Hans-Gert Pottering, for taking part in a demonstration in the Chamber in December 07, demanding national referenda on the Lisbon Treaty. Mr Allister has been subjected to a £600 fine.

Commenting the Traditional Unionist MEP said:-

"I'm not surprised by the President's vindictive action, not least because it is the product of a most flawed process in which Hans-Gert Pottering was both my accuser and my judge. Such defiance of the basic rules of natural justice is hardly likely to produce an equitable outcome.

If the President thinks his punitive action will subdue my demands, on behalf of my constituents, for the right to vote on their own



future, then he is sadly mistaken. If £600 is the price of free speech in Strasbourg and of speaking up for the people of the UK, then so be it!

Whatever, the injustice done to the protesting MEPs, it pales into insignificance when compared with the great undemocratic injustice being done to the peoples of Europe by denying them a say on the radical changes in governance which the Lisbon Treaty will bring.

I will exercise my right of appeal to the Bureau of the Parliament, both to expose the farcical nature of the President's process and to underscore my belief in my actions."



Where were the DUP MPs?

Given its vital constitutional importance, I am greatly disappointed that the MPs for North Antrim, Lagan Valley and Strangford did not trouble to go and vote in favour of a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty in the House of Commons on 5 March 2008.

The Lisbon Treaty is going to strip away further national powers to Brussels, something the British people do not want and yet, shamefully, when there

was an opportunity to demand the people be consulted, Iris Robinson, Jeffrey Donaldson and Ian Paisley were absent. Why?



Indeed the poor level of involvement by Northern Ireland MPs, who are also MLAs, in the crucial debates on the Lisbon Treaty over recent weeks, is confirmation in itself of the damage being inflicted on Ulster representation by dual mandates.

No pride can be taken in Paisley's legacy

"I have no doubt that Ian Paisley jumped before he was pushed. It was very significant that when Dublin and Sinn Fein raised the campaign "Paisley Must Stay", not a single DUP figure, apart from Baroness Paisley, publicly agreed. Ian Paisley was hung out to dry by the so called "pragmatists" in the DUP because, frankly, he'd served his purpose, in that he delivered what no other DUP leader could deliver, a DUP/Sinn Fein coalition.

Since the Dromore by-election the DUP has been in something of a blind panic and changing the guard was their answer. Of course, it is not the personalities, but the policies which need to change.

No democrat or Unionist could take pride in a legacy which bequeathed to Northern Ireland

unrepentant terrorists at the heart of its government and joint rule with a Party which clings to a wicked Army Council and which still has a military wing, murdering as in the case of Paul Quinn. Sadly, this is Ian Paisley's political legacy to Ulster."



Allister stoutly defends Israel in Strasbourg

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has been speaking in the European Parliament in Strasbourg on the renewed violence in the Middle East. During a debate on the situation in Gaza, he stoutly defended Israel and its right to defend itself from terrorist rocket attacks.

In the course of his remarks, Mr Allister said:-

"Mr President, I can readily join in deploring the recent events in Gaza and the Middle East and in remarking on how terrible is the humanitarian tragedy there and the immense suffering that all sides are being subjected to. But I have to draw a distinction between the orchestrated, constant, repeated attacks upon the State of Israel and the right of that State to defend itself. It is an



internationally recognised state. It recognises and accepts a two-state solution in the Middle East, and yet it is constantly, persistently and viciously subjected to the most horrendous violence from across its borders, particularly from Hamas-controlled territory.

I therefore make no apology, from my perspective, of saying that Israel does have the right, indeed the necessity, to defend itself and to act against those who, beyond reason and argument, will not even make the most basic concession of accepting the right of Israel to exist.

We hear much talk in this debate and elsewhere about a balanced and even-handed approach. There is nothing even-handed in equating, no matter how justified they are, the political demands of Gaza with the vicious and repeated terrorist attacks on Israel as epitomised by the attack on the school. There is nothing even-handed in equivocating over Hamas's refusal to recognise Israel and then demanding that no walls, no defensive action should be taken by the state that is not even recognised. It is a consequence of that failure to recognise the right of Israel to exist which has bred so much of the trouble and turmoil in the Middle East."



All editions of the monthly newsletter 'Brussels Briefing' are available to download at my website, www.jimallister.org

There, you can also sign up to receive each new edition, either by post or by e-mail.

Gildernew blocking Fisheries Aid

Jim Allister QC MEP has pledged full support to fishermen, who recently lobbied at Stormont, particularly over spiralling fuel costs.

The MEP said, "Fishermen have seen their primary operational cost -namely fuel for trawlers rocket to £4000 per week, while there has not been the same ability to recover costs from the market. This is on top of other 'stealth taxes', such as payments to the Irish Light Commission for largely outdated

navigation aids, and excessive harbour dues."

"EU de Minimis State Aid rules permit up to 7500 Euros of aid, per fisherman to be allocated for assistance with such crises situations as we have today. Michelle Gildernew cannot blame Europe for her inaction in this case, which unsurprisingly follows her weak performance at the December Fisheries Negotiations in Europe. These factors combined are contributing to fishermen's woes".

MEP protests intended gagging of MEPs

At a meeting of the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee in Brussels, Traditional Unionist MEP, Jim Allister, protested against a proposal to restrict MEPs to 3 Written Parliamentary Questions per month.

The proposal is being made by British Labour MEP, Richard Corbett, as the rapporteur on proposals by a Working Party on Parliamentary Reform.

Describing the proposal as "a monstrous attempt to gag elected members in the performance of their duties on behalf of constituents", Mr Allister said no other Parliament, worthy of the name, would ever contemplate such an anti-democratic proposal. "Thus", declared the Ulster MEP, "far from the Reform Treaty enhancing parliamentary democracy, as claimed by its proponents, the

anti-democratic forces that drive European centralisation are now in the business of gagging elected members."

Mr Allister challenged Commission Vice-President Margot Wallstrom as to whether the Commission was driving this proposal to restrict parliamentarians. She denied that and contradicted a claim in Mr Corbett's report that the Commission has strongly complained about the number of Questions. This caused Mr Allister to challenge Corbett as to why his report made this claim.

It is expected that a lively debate will ensue as the recommendation proceeds through committee and the plenary of the Parliament.

Ideal opportunity to address flawed legislation

Commenting on reports that legislation to approve the new victims' commission is to be rushed through Stormont, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister said:

"The post of Victims' Commissioner was created under the terms of the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. In order for the new Victims Commission to become official this order must be amended to turn the post of commissioner into a commission.

"The inability of the joint First Ministers to agree a single appointee has resulted in huge additional cost - all four commissioners will be paid the full £65,000 salary for a job originally designed for one person.

"It is also evident that - to put it mildly - the commission has no confidence within the victims' sector with OFMDFM fighting 15 victims groups in

the courts in order to defend their decision.

"However, moves to amend legislation so as to provide for the establishment of the Commission provide Unionists with the ideal opportunity to address a fundamental flaw in the Victims and Survivors Order namely the definition of the term "victim". The law defines a victim as anyone affected by "a conflict-related incident". Thus the IRA terrorist killed by his own bomb is put on the same level as the innocent victim murdered at Enniskillen, Omagh, Teeban or Kingsmill.

"It has been alleged that Unionists now run Stormont. Here is the ideal opportunity for the DUP to display their control. Let's see them amend the definition of victim. However, I expect that the DUP are unlikely to even propose such an amendment because it will expose the fact that Sinn Fein/IRA can block whatever proposals they want."

“Scowl, don’t smile”, says new DUP Ministerial Code

Addressing South Antrim TUV Association, Jim Allister MEP said that though on the scene a very short time TUV has already had a huge impact on politics in the Province. “Without TUV we wouldn’t have had the Dromore result, which had been the curtain call on the chuckle routine and toppled not one, but two Paisleys. Mr Peter Robinson should be deeply grateful”, quipped Mr Allister.

The Traditional Unionist MEP continued, “But our interest is not in the change of personnel, our mission is to see IRA/Sinn Fein removed from government and with them the hideous system of mandatory coalition which let them in. Whether it’s Ian Paisley chuckling with McGuinness or Peter Robinson deliberately scowling beside the equal First Minister, the reality and unacceptability of unrepentant terrorists at the heart of government remains undiminished.

The new instruction manual for DUP Ministers says, “when you are with a Sinn Fein colleague

and you see a camera “scowl, don’t smile, never look happy. Don’t say cheese, say Dromore - that will wipe the smile off your face.”

Out goes Mr Happy, in comes Mr Angry, but it’s to dance the same routine with Marty the Terrorist. Changing either the packaging or the salesman doesn’t alter the product. It’s as flawed and dangerous as ever.

IRA/Sinn Fein remains as unfit for government with Peter Robinson as with Ian Paisley. We will still have the poison at the heart of government of a republican revolutionary party which is dedicated to the destruction of the state which they govern, which holds tenaciously to an illegal Army Council, which retains a military wing and which you can never vote out of office because of the pernicious system of mandatory coalition which guarantees them places in government for as long as it takes them to deliver the all-Ireland outcome which is the Belfast Agreement’s ultimate destination.”

Which Gerry should we believe, Ian? Correction: Which Ian should we believe?

“In recent weeks the DUP has been very keen to quote Gerry McHugh. I wonder will they be so keen to quote a rather more significant Gerry, Gerry Adams and his boast at the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis that republicanism, thanks to having the Belfast Agreement in full operation, is now closer than ever to a united Ireland? Not much sign of Sinn Fein having “bought into the British state”, as DUP politicians have foolishly boasted.

Indeed the contradictory confusion in Ian Paisley’s thinking is well illustrated by his statement on policing & justice. He said of his government partner, Sinn Fein, “If republicans are absolutely committed to democracy and the rule of law they have no need of a so-called Army Council and they should end their sectarian campaign against our Loyal Orders.”

Indeed, but aren’t these the same republicans who the same Ian Paisley has constantly told us are already signed up to the rule of law! Is he now accepting the elementary precept that support for the rule of law and retention of an Army Council are mutually exclusive? If so, then

what is he doing in government with IRA/Sinn Fein? Interesting, too, that he now seems to believe his partners in government are still waging a sectarian campaign against the Loyal Orders, the most overt aspect of which is arson attacks on Orange Halls.

It is such confused thinking and contradictory actions which has brought unionism to the point where Adams can gloat over the progress he is making in destroying the Union.”



Why is Paisley running away?

On **6th August 2007** I wrote to the First Minister asking for a meeting with him to discuss European issues, for which his office has responsibilities. My letter was neither acknowledged nor answered, so I sent a reminder. It too went unacknowledged and unanswered.

On **27th January 2008** an Assembly Member tabled a written question to OFMDFM asking what contact there had been with the MEPs. Clearly, in order to save their blushes and so that they could include a reference in the answer, OFMDFM suddenly on **29th January 2008** replied to my letter of 6th August 2007, supposedly offering a meeting and saying "Our office will contact you to work out a way forward". Here we are a full two months later and no contact has been made by OFMDFM. Clearly, their letter was wholly disingenuous.

As I made clear in my letter of 6th August 2007 my request is to meet the First Minister and I will not countenance a meeting including Sinn Fein. As I expressed it to Ian Paisley in that letter, *"For reasons of principle, which you once espoused yourself, I do not meet or speak with IRA/Sinn Fein. Thus, I make it plain that I will not attend any meeting at which your deputy, or Junior Minister Kelly, are present or represented."*

As an elected MEP I believe it is important that I should have the cooperation of the First Minister and should be entitled to meet with him in the interests of Northern Ireland in Europe. Sadly, for his own reasons, he continues to run away and deny the opportunity for such a meeting. The public can draw their own conclusions. Under Direct Rule it never took me 8 weeks, never mind 8 months, to get a meeting with a Minister."

MEP raises suicide and abuse of Internet

Jim Allister MEP, in the wake of rising levels of suicide among young people, has raised in the European Parliament the need for EU wide action to curb internet sites which promote and facilitate suicide. Speaking during Question Time to the President of the Council, Mr Allister said:-

"President-in-Office, could I direct you to another matter in terms of the protection of children in the context of media, in particular against the background of rising and alarming suicide rates in Europe, not least in my own constituency? This is, what can the Council do in respect of the gross misuse, in particular via internet services, of readily available advice on how to commit suicide? I today downloaded information from one such site, which gave multiple advice on how to commit suicide.

It is quite appalling. Even if one goes onto

Wikipedia one can find information on how to commit suicide. Will the Council address that in the context of child protection, in particular in the context of media?"

In response the Minister promised to examine if the Audio-Visual Media Services Directive could be deployed to try and clamp down on the offending websites.

Speaking afterwards, Mr Allister said, "It is not only the task of Governments to do everything possible to deal with these websites - a far from easy task given the worldwide nature of the net - but internet providers and search engines like Google need to play their part. More responsibility is required from them. It is quite appalling that a culture of suicide can be glamorised and promoted on these wicked sites. They need to be blocked and subjected to severe restraint."

MEP responds to IRA's Easter message

"Some deluded Unionist politicians have foolishly claimed that Sinn Fein is signed up to "British rule". Yet, in their Easter Message Sinn Fein's senior partner, the IRA, makes clear their unwavering commitment to the goal of a united Ireland.

Interestingly, P O'Neill says *"Since 28 July 2005*

IRA Volunteers are playing a positive role in the new phase of our struggle."

Those IRA volunteers who have been enabled to play this "positive role" in the new phase of their republican struggle within the Executive, is something for which we can thank those gullible DUP leaders who admitted them to government."

“Dromore has given hope to many dispirited by betrayal” - Allister

Speaking to a gathering of 200 at a dinner organised by Ballymoney Branch of TUV, in the Causeway Hotel, Jim Allister MEP reflected on the dramatic events of recent days and on the future.

Mr Allister said:- “When a young man of 24, Keith Harbinson, can so humble the biggest Party in the country as to take 40% of their vote in a by-election in a DUP heartland - a by-election into which the DUP threw everything - and claim the scalp of the ‘Young Pretender’, then, something very significant is happening in Unionism.

It confirms my conviction that there are tens of thousands of Unionists across the Province who refuse to accept the validity of being governed by unrepentant terrorists and who never again will vote for those who put them there.

Far from splitting and diminishing the Unionist vote, we are in fact maximising it, by giving disaffected Unionists someone and something to vote for. With the other two unionist parties now fanatically implementing the Belfast Agreement, with little to choose between them, we now present a viable alternative.

And as our voters in Dromore demonstrated they know how to use their preferences to make their point with most effect.

Dromore has provided hope to many dispirited by betrayal. We will build upon this foundation to give a Province-wide voice to unionists who know its right to hold to traditional unionist values and know its wrong to be governed by those who murdered so many of our kith and kin, and who still retain a military wing and a wicked Army Council.



Whatever the venomous attacks of those smarting from defeat, I do not intend to be distracted from the task in hand.

The swiftness with which Ian Junior was dispatched - soon to be followed by his father, because he has served his purpose, for power-hungry DUP MLAs, of

delivering Sinn Fein/DUP government - demonstrates the power of the unionist electorate. If this is what 800 voters in Dromore can do, think what Traditional Unionists mobilised across the Province can achieve. Our mission is to get IRA/Sinn Fein out of government and abolish the rigged system that ever let them in.



As we set about the great task ahead I am greatly encouraged by the growth of TUV; even since Dromore we'd had a flood of membership enquiries. We are already organised in much of the Province and with further new branches to follow shortly, we have got the momentum to carry us forward. In North Antrim it is particularly encouraging to see two large branches already at work, recruiting and fundraising for the battles ahead.

The European Election in June 09 is likely to be the first Province-wide test, but whether it comes there or in further by-elections, or even in a General Election, we'll be ready for the challenge. I see Ian Paisley Senior is predicting my demise. We'll see. That's for the voters not him to decide. Of course when he issued that rash prediction, cosily seated between Marty and Bertie, he probably wasn't expecting that someone much closer to home would get his come-uppance much quicker. Maybe, indeed, Ian Junior, with time on his hands, would like to take on the challenge of unseating me! Interesting that already in the EU election the DUP is more interested in defeating me than their Sinn Fein partner.

As for the jibe of being “our” chief opponent, I wear that as a badge of honour, happy to be identified as the principal enemy by the Chuckle Coalition. Of course, what that really means is that every traditional unionist in Northern Ireland - “the north” to some - is now the enemy. They always were as far as Marty was concerned, sad that Ian Paisley ends his career by now seeing them in the same light.”

Allister answers Robinson

So, Peter Robinson thinks I've a paper bag over my head. Interesting! Our First Minister in waiting seems a little confused. It's not me who has a penchant for strange headgear, but the balaclava brigade who are now his partners in government. When Peter is joint First Minister he can explore with Marty the finer details of headgear. Marty is probably quite a connoisseur on coiffure.

It might be more fitting to ask Marty about the numerous people who exited this scene of time with a black bag or hood over their head, courtesy of IRA/Sinn Fein. Mr Robinson used to be interested in these matters, as in a speech he made in the Assembly on 8 May 2001. Now, of course, in his own parallel universe where wrong is right and right is wrong, nothing stirs him except those who dare to stand where he once stood.



With a rashness, possessed of a certain boomerang potential, Mr Robinson invites comparison between utterances in the 1980s and today in 2008. I don't think he's the man to go there.

But, here too, he is confused. I think he'll find I compared Belfast Agreement rule to Dublin Rule. Indeed within the material I produced in 1998, he'll find an analysis of the Belfast Agreement, which he is now implementing, entitled "*10 Steps on the Road to Dublin Rule*". It contained this paragraph, which Mr Robinson then agreed with:-

"The thrust and purpose of the Agreement could not be clearer. It is not an end in itself. It unfolds a programme of rolling all-Ireland integration. The logic and intent of the Agreement is shown by the fact that the only and ultimate political outcome which Dublin and London commit themselves to legislating for is an all-Ireland Republic. (pages 27/28)."

The 1998 Agreement still stands in this and virtually every other aspect. What has changed is that Mr Robinson and the DUP are now enthusiastically implementing it.

As for 'Direct Rule', I'd gladly prefer democratic devolution. But what we've got is a rigged and undemocratic arrangement of joint government with unrepentant terrorists in which you can never vote a party out of government, nor have an effective opposition."

Smug McGuinness demands policing now from "DUP Nua"

Responding to Joint First Minister McGuinness' speech to the Sinn Fein conference in Dublin, Traditional Unionist MEP, Jim Allister, challenged the DUP to spell out precisely the undertakings they had given IRA/Sinn Fein before their first official meeting on 26 March 2007.

Coming on top of the so far unchallenged claim in Ed Moloney's recent biography on Ian Paisley, that at St Andrews 2 DUP MPs secretly met Sinn Fein, Mr Allister said it was time for complete candour from "DUP Nua", as McGuinness dubbed them.

In a statement Mr Allister said, "What a commentary in itself on the DUP's departure from traditional Unionist values that at the annual

IRA/Sinn Fein jamboree the chief acolyte of the still continuing Army Council can laud Ian Paisley and speak tellingly of "DUP Nua".

As for his expectation that the DUP will indeed assent to the devolution of policing & justice, I expect he's right, because having gone into government with a partner with a military wing, in time their reverse gear - just like last March - will put them where they presently say they will not go.

No one should be surprised if by the next Sinn Fein Ard Fheis McGuinness is exercising the powers over the Judiciary which shamefully devolution of policing & justice will bring him."

“Moment of truth approaching on Quinn Murder” - Allister tells TUV

Speaking to the Central Council of Traditional Unionist Voice, Jim Allister MEP warned that over the coming month we would see determined efforts to whitewash the Paul Quinn murder and evade the political consequences which the DUP promised would flow from IRA/Sinn Fein default on total support for the rule of law.

With the IMC due to report on the killing in April, having already identified IRA involvement, Mr Allister said we could expect both maximum “behind the scenes” pressure on the IMC to fudge the issue and frenzied dancing on the point of a needle by the DUP to justify the very thing they said they’d never do, equivocate over IRA default.

“We can expect Jeffrey Donaldson - though forced to concede on the Nolan Show that any IRA involvement would be enough to bring down sanctions on Sinn Fein - to lead the prevaricators and fancy footwork by running around saying “*I can’t find any mention of killing Quinn in the Minute Book of the Army Council, so they didn’t really do it.*” But as Lord Morrow said in the Assembly on 11 March 2008:

“One day they (Sinn Fein) will say we backed the police, the next they stand up and they pontificate and say Paul Quinn wasn’t murdered by the IRA. They must be about the only people on this planet that believes that.”

There is a **serious moment of truth** approaching for all in the DUP, but particularly those like **Lord Morrow, David Simpson, Jim Wells and William McCrea**, who have properly made this wicked IRA killing a testing point. But it is not just a testing point for Sinn Fein, it is equally a testing point for the sincerity of the DUP, especially those who have espoused the truth that the IRA did indeed murder Paul Quinn. The time is fast approaching when they will have to face up to that truth, and its inevitable consequences, if their political stance is to retain any credibility. I trust, like others, they will not melt away again to take refuge in whatever fantasist pretence is spun by the power-hungry “pragmatists” who control the DUP.

As for the Army Council no one should be surprised if, as part of the maneuverings of Sinn Fein, some conjuring trick is attempted, both to prime concessions on policing & justice and divert the heat on the Quinn murder. They bought a decade of concessions and time on “now you see it, now you don’t” decommissioning. Don’t be surprised if the same trick is pulled again.”



TUV putting the brakes on concessions

Responding to the debate in the Assembly on the devolution of policing and justice, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister said:

“It is not very often that Sinn Fein/IRA comes anywhere near the truth. However, when Gerry Adams says that the DUP’s attitude to the devolution of policing and justice is “to do with the Dromore by-election” I think he has hit the nail on the head.

Having fought just one by-election, Traditional Unionists have been able to put the brakes on the stream of concessions to republicans - not bad for a bunch of “flat earthers”! The Maze terrordome is likely to be the next casualty.

It is, however, evident that the DUP have agreed to the devolution of these powers sometime in

the future. As several MLAs stated, there is broad agreement about how the powers should be devolved. Shamefully, no Unionists seem to have any difficulty with Martin McGuinness having a say in the appointment of Northern Ireland’s judiciary.

And there is a fundamental contradiction in the DUP’s position. If it is wrong to be in government with IRA/Sinn Fein over policing and justice - and it is - how can it be right to have them as partners in government at all?”



Peter Robinson and pint-sized political thinking

Addressing the inaugural meeting of a new branch of TUV in West Tyrone, Jim Allister spoke of the 10th anniversary of the Belfast Agreement. In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:

“Ten years ago the DUP hierarchy quite rightly rubbished those who claimed there was “no alternative” to the Belfast Agreement.

In a press release issued in May 1998 our soon to be joint First Minister Mr Robinson stated: “*The Yes Brigade, unable to argue on the content of the Agreement, resort to the pathetic sound bite that there is no alternative. Such nonsense!*” and went on to outline some alternatives:

- The alternative to putting terrorist godfathers in government is to keep the out
- The alternative to a rigged Assembly is a democratic one
- The alternative to forced integration through all-Ireland executive bodies is non-political co-operation.

Well said Peter! How right he was then and how hopelessly wrong he is now!

Trimble-like Mr Robinson now likes to ask, “*what is the alternative?*” In April 1998 he answered his own question in a speech in Tandragee in which he said:

“The hapless fools who ask what our alternative is to such a process are implicitly suggesting there is no alternative to a united Ireland process. They are not entitled to make that claim as there are many alternatives to Dublin Rule. Complete and total integration within the United Kingdom is one such alternative and the fashion of devolution given recently to Scotland within the United Kingdom is another. However, these pint-sized political thinkers are not really asking “have you got an alternative?” They are implicitly asking “what alternative have you that the IRA will accept?””

Now, of course, Peter is the “pint-sized political thinker” reduced to recycling UUP speeches from 1998 and claiming that there is “no alternative” to Marty the Terrorist.”



Allister meets Foster on Rural Planning

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has met with DOE Minister Arlene Foster, in response to findings emerging from the Review of Draft PPS14.

The MEP said, “I requested the meeting to voice a number of concerns I have arising from the Executive’s emerging findings document.



Firstly, the intention to permit more flexibility outside of Green Belt and Countryside Policy Areas (CPA’s), but retaining a more restrictive approach therein is fundamentally unfair and prejudicial to the East of the Province. Virtually all of Counties Down and Antrim lie

within Greenbelt/CPA designations, a point I raised strongly with the Minister.”

“I am also concerned that Ministers are divided over making any provision for permitting development for sons and daughters of rural dwellers, where suitable sites exist. It is my view that a rural kinship clause should be introduced which is capable of benefiting children of both farming and established non-farming rural dwellers.”

“While relaxation on farm viability and on the retirement dwellings policy are welcome, they of themselves do not do enough to deal with the gross inequality of approach which afflicts the east of the Province. I trust these issues will be addressed in further consideration by the Minister.”

Farming News

“Biogas before Biofuels”, says MEP

In a debate in the European Parliament in Strasbourg Jim Allister MEP gave strong support to the promotion and development of biogas production within the EU. Drawing parallels with the EU's over-indulgence of biofuels, which has both diminished food production and increased feedstock prices, the Traditional Unionist MEP highlighted that biogas, on the other hand, complemented agriculture by producing a viable and profitable solution for agricultural waste.

Speaking on a report from the Agriculture Committee Mr Allister said:-

"I welcome the recognition of the potential for a considerable increase in biogas production. It ticks the boxes of helping livestock farmers tap into an alternative income stream and at the same time makes a worthwhile contribution to the environment by solving problems allied to the disposal of agricultural waste. A third distinct advantage for biogas is that, unlike biofuels, it helps, not hinders, food security. Therein is a key advantage for biogas: using waste rather than crops it does not discourage essential feedstock production.

The fledging biogas sector needs meaningful start-up support, with a uniform support instrument across the EU, rather than the sporadic patchwork of support which we have at the moment. Also, extra research support to exploit second generation biogas as a biofuel is a forward-looking necessity.

So, there is much that can and should be done to promote biogas and at the same time make agriculture more sustainable. I believe we grossly miscalculated in over-indulging biofuels, lets not compound that error by under-valuing biogas."



Allister again raises inequality in import standards

During a debate in the Agriculture Committee of the European Parliament in Brussels, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister again raised the need for imported food to meet the same production, animal welfare and environmental standards as home-produced EU food.

Mr Allister said:- "It remains an issue of great irritation to our own farmers that the EU makes no concessions when dealing with internal production, penalising for the least failure, but can permit imports, not knowing, and sometimes it seems not caring, how much default there has been in acceptable standards of production, quality, traceability and animal welfare.

This policy not only penalises our own producers but prejudices our consumers.

Soon we will impose new constraints on chicken production, with no regard to the consequence of enhancing imports from third countries like Thailand where production standards are often lamentable. There is no gain in animal welfare terms if we so up the standards in Europe as to drive production abroad, where such considerations hardly even feature. The net result is less animals in good conditions in Europe and more animals in poor conditions in Asia! What purpose is that serving, other than driving our own farmers out of business?"

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Allister opposes 2% increase in Milk Quotas

During a debate on the future of milk quotas in the European Parliament, Jim Allister MEP challenged the logic of the Commission's proposal to permit a 2% increase in 2008 in circumstances where EU production is significantly sub-quota. With Northern Ireland heavily dependant on the international trading of dairy commodities, Mr Allister is concerned that a 2% increase could destabilise the market for milk powders and butter.

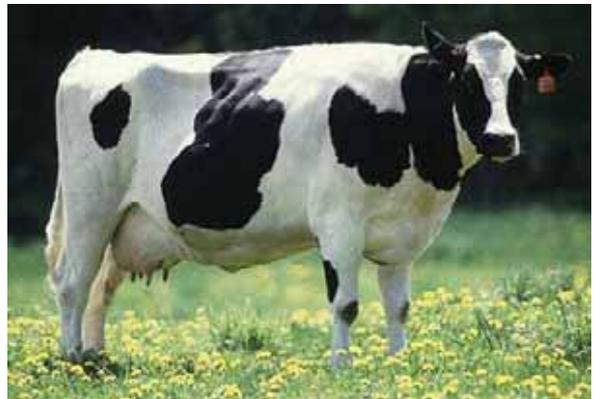
"With spiralling production costs, we need stability and markets retaining their strength, whereas the introduction of millions of tonnes of extra milk on the market could be very damaging", said the Traditional Unionist MEP. Mr Allister proceeded to vote against the Commission's proposal.

In the course of his remarks in Parliament Mr Allister said:-

"Mr President, I share the concern of many in this House about a definitive increase in milk quotas. I think the point we have arrived at requires the asking of fundamental questions, which includes the fact that, if we have a

prevailing underproduction and sub-quota situation in Europe, then what really is the underlying justification for increasing quotas? This year, we expect three million tonnes' under-usage, so what is the great rush in this regard?

Secondly, in terms of the much talked-of soft landing, we need to have particular regard for those regions which have built their structure and their strategy supplying other regions which are currently limited in their production - regions such as my own constituency, which supplies across the border to the Republic of Ireland. In terms of a soft landing, we need to find a long-term strategy and alternative outlets for regions such as this."



Allister speaks in CAP Health Check debate

Speaking in the debate in Strasbourg on the CAP Health Check, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister expressed considerable satisfaction with the content of the report and urged the commission to act upon it.

Mr Allister made four points in the debate, majoring on the potential to use unspent budget money on essential aid under Article 69 to strengthen EU agriculture. Millions of euros each year go unspent on intervention, export refunds and private storage. Rather than going back into general EU coffers, Mr Allister called for it to be used, particularly in regions where there are few alternatives to traditional types of agricultural production, to sustain agriculture there and tackle such socio-economic problems as an aging farming community with no alternative prospects.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:- "There is much in this report with which I agree and would like to comment. Time restricts me to 4 points.

1. As the report highlights, the theory of decoupling is good, but its practice has been disappointing in failing to command higher market returns for producers.

2. We must retain sufficient instruments to safeguard against market and supply crises. Imbalances in the supply chain endangers the CAP's aim of secure food supply. Food security is impossible without guaranteed economic sustainability for producers.

3. We can do more on CAP simplification to reduce the bureaucratic burden and, yes, to decriminalise farmers who make honest mistakes through minor breaches.

4. Unused Agri Budget allocations on market management measures should be available for Art 69 aid to strengthen EU agriculture, particularly where production is marginal and to deal with situations, as in my constituency, where there are high number of farmers over 55 with little prospect of alternative employment."

Allister meets Rivers Agency on Staffing Concerns

Jim Allister QC MEP has met with senior DARD and Rivers Agency officials, to raise concerns relating to staffing matters within Rivers Agency.

Mr Allister said, "A number of Rivers Agency staff, all Protestants, have contacted my office in recent months with complaints of the manner of treatment they have been receiving.

I am aware of a large number of complaints, concerning the manner in which staff appointments are made, and in perceived imbalance in terms of community background of appointments. The same allegations have been made regarding promotion procedures, and in the unsatisfactory manner in which complaints are handled."

"The sheer volume of complaints from Protestant employees is alarming in itself. Indeed, I am further concerned at the apparent apathy of senior Management, both of Rivers

Agency and DARD, in their failure to admit that a problem exists. This, despite the fact that DARD's own equal opportunities unit has 'off-the-record' admitted there is, '*...an undercurrent of sectarianism' within Rivers Agency.*"

"To date, my understanding is that not one of the many complaints from Protestant employees has been upheld. This, despite the fact that a number of individuals have had to leave positions of employment on ill health grounds, such is the stress of their working environment within Rivers Agency - this has got to stop."

"The situation has become increasingly worse over a number of years, particularly in Rivers Agency sites at Omagh and Craigavon. I look to Rivers Agency, and particularly to DARD's Equal Opportunities Unit to demonstrate a much greater vigour in facing up to their responsibilities, of securing harmonious working environments which treat persons from all community backgrounds equally.

UK defeated on EU law to force cars to drive with lights on all day

A new EU directive has been passed forcing cars to drive with their lights on all day. Britain opposed the directive but was unable to prevent European transport ministers approving it because of majority voting in transport policy.

Labour MP Stephen Ladyman, who was Transport Minister during earlier EU Council discussions on the measure, said: "*This directive will kill a lot of motorcyclists.*"

Politicisation of HM The Queen's visit regrettable - Allister

"The politicisation of Her Majesty's recent visit by stage managing a simultaneous visit of Mary McAleese is regrettable. It is clear that the NIO and Dublin have collaborated to push forward the imagery of joint London/Dublin synergy."

"McAleese's audacious declaration that there will be no royal visit to Dublin till policing and justice is devolved is remarkable. The political meaning is clear and explains why republicans are so adamant on securing such devolution.

"I would like to know if the Northern Ireland Executive, and particularly the First Minister assented to this joint visit, not least since the DUP has boasted that through devolution, they have thwarted the drift towards joint authority manifestations."

"As part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland should be able to enjoy a Royal visit without any element of hijack from Dublin or peddling of joint symmetry"



Devolution of policing and justice for republicans means the end of British justice and British policing anywhere in Ireland. That is why McAleese said what she said today and that is why no unionist should rush into such devolution. When their goal of "Brits Out" of policing and justice has been achieved, then, they will they deign to permit Queen Elizabeth to visit.

What a cheek!"
