

Tánaiste and Minister for Justice MICHAEL McDOWELL will be in Cork tonight for a law enforcement seminar. He will be a guest speaker at the head office of Thomas Crosbie Holdings Ltd for the seminar, entitled Law and Order — Does Co-operation Exist? Here, Mr McDowell writes exclusively for the Evening Echo about his impressions of Cork and the challenges for the future



'Entrepreneur spirit is key'

EVERY time I visit Cork I am struck by the energy and confidence of the people here, delighted at the growing prosperity of their city.

The thriving Cork of today bears little resemblance to just 20 years ago or so.

Cork has suffered from the closures of Fords, Dunlops and Gouldings and the end of shipbuilding in Verolme Dockyard.

Indeed, when the party I am now fortunate enough to lead was founded, the whole of Ireland was suffering as a result of mass emigration, unemployment and crippling taxation.

Now we're a nation transformed — immigrants come here in search of jobs. Our industries have changed and we have adapted.

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But international competition is fierce.

And our State still

“ *Cork is a good example of a place undergoing a major programme of renewal, with both city centre and suburban developments. The docklands is set to become the flagship project of this vibrant city — reflecting all that is good about Cork today.*

faces many challenges.

I know there is a strong entrepreneurial spirit in Cork. My hope is that the business community will lead the way in facing up to the challenges. I want to see their energies encouraged and rewarded.

This Government has unleashed the talents of the Irish businesspeople by cutting taxes and incentivising entrepreneurship. In return, the jobs they create and the contribution they make to the nation's coffers allow us in Government to spend money where it is needed most: in health, in education and in looking after the less fortunate in our society.

Naturally, a key element of my vision for the future is to increase the Progressive Democrats' Dáil representa-

tion. And in Cork you have a high-calibre candidate in Senator John Minihan. I am confident John can take a seat in Cork South Central.

If you wish to continue to take pride in the prosperity of Cork, I urge you to support him on polling day.

John is our Education Spokesman and he, like myself, wants to see an even higher proportion in third-level education.

Cork has a superb third-level education sector, with University College Cork receiving many accolades. It leads the charge on research and development, forging valuable links with the pharmaceutical industry. And that industry is working more and more in partnership with Cork Institute of Technology.

It is only by having the best educated workers that we can continue to compete at the highest level. Our educated workforce has helped drive the economy. Continued focus on education will help sustain that success.

But education has another benefit, and my experience at the head of the Department of Justice has made me well aware of this.

If we can stop educational deprivation, we can reduce the number of young people getting involved in crime.

Education breeds self-worth and self-respect. We want to see no young person fall through the cracks and leave school without the skills and self-respect to allow them contribute positively to society.

John and I also agree that the completion of the National Motorway Network will deliver first-class infrastructure. This is something any Government dependent on the Greens could never deliver.

We also want to see public transport become a realistic option for every commuter.

We want to see the full integration of immigrants. We want to see a Northern Ireland based on reconciliation, where the two communities work together in pursuit of common goals, and an all-island economy where our neighbours enjoy the same prosperity as we do.

We are building a health service which will make our nation proud. Mary Harney is making modernising strides — our hospitals are cleaner, waiting lists have been cut and A&E waiting times are down.

We also need to apply our best minds to developing methods of deriving energy from the natural resources we have. For Cork, and for the rest of Ireland, the best is yet to come.



ROBERT O'SHEA

THE *Irish Examiner* is conducting a poll to find out what its readers think is the prettiest modern building in Cork, with voting closing tomorrow.

Included are the Victoria Mills apartment complex, MahonPoint shopping centre and North Main Street car park.

I like architecture, it's one of my favourite forms of building, but I must say my appreciation of the North Main Street car park facility is limited.

I don't think I would ever have noticed it at all if cars hadn't come close to knocking me down at its entrance on a few occasions.

The Glucksman Gallery, I would guess, will be a runaway winner. It is the only knockout modern building in the city.

I also have a soft spot for another on the list, the extension to the Crawford Gallery on Academy Street. It's not a building per se, but whenever I stroll past it I can't help but associate it's sinuous curve with Jennifer Lopez's backside.

While the Glucksman is graceful, beautiful even, it is a little disappointing the city doesn't have one unique, world-renowned building. Perhaps when the docks are developed, we will see one.

Yet, with a little imagination, we could work with what we already have there.

I've always admired the R&H Hall, which for years my brother thought was where they made Bensons and Hedges because he had poor eyesight and thought the R was a B, never more so than when its top was aflame one morning recently.

Anyway, what I propose is that we set fire to the top of the R&H Hall's silos every day.

It could be like a sort of premeditated Old Faithful that would be conducted under the careful supervision and permission of the fire brigade.

Tourists would flock here, because who doesn't like looking at a fire? Afterwards, they could get their pictures taken with the firemen.

There are probably numerous reasons why this idea isn't feasible but I will

be very disappointed if it doesn't happen now.

But it's an omission from the *Irish Examiner* shortlist that I'm most disappointed about.

Where's the bus station? The building that I hurtle towards and away from each working day.

Bus drivers are always eager for the right change, and this is surely what happened here. The redevelopment of what was once the ugliest prominent building in Cork (it was a little slice of Chernobyl in the centre of our city) was finished in January 2005, and must be applauded. Its umbrella frontage is distinct.

There's even an attempt at art on the wall out back, which was recently added.

Busarás in Dublin was voted second by Irish architects in a poll on the greatest building in the state.

That building was designed by famous Irish architect Michael Scott, but for me, it has always been the most hideous building in the capital, looking for all the world like a Vegas casino. Our station is less grandiose and a sight prettier.

"The facilities of the bus station are for the use of Bus Éireann customers only."

This sign can be seen on several walls at the Cork station. It is ostensibly a warning to certain clientele that they should not be using the benches out back as barstools.

But 'facilities' is rather a fanciful word. The only useful facilities there are the toilets and we are expected to pay 20c for the privilege of using them.

And they are not the most comfortable toilets around. The cubicle partitions are that low that a slightly tall man would be able to peek even if on his tippy toes, if he felt like doing so.

I suppose this is an irrational fear but I have the feeling that if there are men out there who do this, you would find them in bus stations.

But overall, it is a fine building. And if you don't appreciate the architecture of the city, if you're at the bus station and you have a tenner, you can always go somewhere else.

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