



CRIMINAL INJUSTICE

Home Affairs Department admits to trying to "steamroller" legislation through before next election



Picture from www.gov.im

John Shimmin MHK, DHA Minister

The Department of Home Affairs under John Shimmin has committed itself to driving an admittedly contentious piece of legislation through Tynwald without any valid consultation. Attempts by several bodies to secure even a small amount of consideration time for a new Criminal Justice Bill, which impacts on several other complex pieces of legislation, have been flatly rejected.

In a response to Mec Vannin's request for a few week's opportunity to study the draft Bill, reproduced with comment below, the department has admitted that its sole objective is to drive the Bill through before the next election, but why should this be important?

"The Department recognises that the period for consultation is shorter than usual however the overriding importance of the issues encompassed within the Bill make it essential that the provisions proposed are progressed through the legislative process as quickly as practicable"

Of course, nobody has actually been given the opportunity to see what these "overriding" issues are and the DHA has not chosen to enlighten us, but in such time as has been available, it could (and has been) claimed that the Department seeks to lay the foundations of a police state. Small wonder that they're not keen for people to look too closely.

"It is normal practice for the consultation period to be six weeks where in this case it has been reduced to four weeks which the Department feel is not unreasonable in the circumstances. If we do not meet the required deadlines for submission, and especially in light of the Election next year, the provisions would be delayed for a considerable period of time which would be unacceptable, as I am sure you would agree."

Well, no we don't agree, not by a long way. What are these circumstances? Has there been a collapse of civil order that has gone unnoticed outside the corridors of the DHA? What is this deadline? Why will an election cause such disruption?

"The Bill provides a package of important measures to help ensure the law enforcement agencies and the Courts can effectively tackle crime and address the issues which are of most concern to the public."

Does this mean that the police and Courts aren't effectively tackling crime at the moment? Does "tackling crime" simply mean locking up more people? Is that the reason for having a new prison, rather than replacing an out-dated prison?

The department actually asked for responses and then refused any time to make them. It is obvious from this that the intention is to legitimise the process before dumping it on MHKs who will be subject to departmental brow beating to vote for legislation of which they have little grasp of the full implications and no valid public consultation to help direct them.

This country has no constitution or human rights legislation. This Bill impacts heavily on the rights of the individual and it is essential that close scrutiny be paid to each and every clause.

On this basis, we appeal to all MHKs who have any genuine concern in good legislation to send this Bill straight back to the DHA and have it stay there until such time as informed comment has been taken and they can study all concerns and implications.

Illiam Dhone's judicial murder to be featured on Border Television

Border Television has produced a series of six programmes under the title of "True Crimes" which start screening on Thursday 5th January 2006.

The final episode, due to be broadcast on Thursday 9th February at 7.30pm, deals with the shooting of Illiam Dhone on the 2nd January, 1663. The programme runs for just half an hour so don't expect anything too "in depth" and it is unknown from what perspective the producers have treated the issue.

PARADOX OF OPPOSITION TO CHANGE IN GOVERNOR'S TITLE

Mec Vannin's antipathy towards playing around with the title of the British Crown's permanent overseer in our country is well established and has nothing to do with liking the idea of being the last colony of a burnt-out empire. See our Jan. 2003 issue.

Yet we have found ourselves on the same side as a substantial body of opinion against change but for very different reasons. Most others opposing the change seem to think that a title change would undermine the Governor's status!

Meanwhile, Donald Gelling, Chief Minister, has responded to claims that the UK could reject the change by saying it would provoke a constitutional crisis!

You can't have a constitutional crisis when you have no constitution. The UK routinely rejects Manx legislation without a peep and, of course, if constitutional propriety were ever an issue here, we wouldn't have Chief Minister who could hire and fire ministers at will while being utterly without any mandate from the electorate, would we, Mr. Gelling?

Laa cooinaghtyn Illiam Dhone - oraid ghaelghagh

Liorish Phill Gawne Oltey yn Kiare as Feed, Oltey Coonseil ny Shirveishee

Mysh shey bleeaney jeig er dy henney ren mee oraid y livrey er y chronk shoh ayns cooinaghtyn Illiam Dhone. Ec y tra v'ayn va aile loshtey ayns my chree as va mee corree dy liooar dy row wheesh d' yeeyl er ve jeant da Mannin. Hug mee yn foill dy bollaghtagh er Reiltys Vannin as ny olteynyn Tinvaal er lheh. Cre'n fa nagh row ad jannoo red ennagh dy lhiettal yn assee - hug mee roish dy row "yn Reiltys doalit liorish airh yn ommidan."

S'liklee dy bee yindys er paart jiu dy vel yn aile shen foast bio aynym pene - cha nel eh loshtey cha fergagh as v'eh tra va mee my 'ghooinney aeg corree' agh t'eh foast ayn kiart dy liooar. Mleeaney cha nel mee son cur yn olk er y reiltys as soilsheym diu nish yn agh ta my aigney er ve caghlaait.

'Sy toshiaght er lhiam dy vel toiggalys down aym nish er yn agh ta politickaght gobbragh ayns Mannin, nagh row aym shey bleeaney jeig er dy henney. Cheau mee mysh queig blein as mish gallvergagh agglagh mychione bunnys dy chooilley red va jeant ayns Mannin as va'n foill dy kinjagh er peiagh ennagh elley - oltey y chiare as feed, jantagh thalloon, banceyr ny ard-delleyder.

Lurg tammylt - as va shoh lessoon ynsit dy chreoi aym - hooar mee magh dy ren reddyn cheet lhiam foddey ny sassey as ny smoo tappee tra doobree mee maroosyn va mee genmyssey ny noidyn aym. Lurg tammylt sodjey huitt fys sullyr orrym nagh row dy chooilley pheigh ayns Mannin my noid - ec y chooid smessey cha row ad son y chooish aym agh son y chooid smoo cha row sleih toiggal ny cooishyn va mee gearree bishaghey.

As quoi b'lesh yn foill son shoh - s'lhiam eh, as lesh paart jeh my chaarjyn va gobbragh da cooishyn ashoooneyragh as culturoil ayns Mannin. Cha row shin soilshaghey

magh yn chooish ain ayns agh cooie dauesyn va shin shirrey cooney veih, as myr shen cha row anaase oc ayns nyn gooish. My ta shiu gearree red ennagh veih peiagh nagh vel enn echey erriu cre vees speeideilagh - brishey stiagh 'sy thie echey gaccan dy lajer ny 'oi as shirrey dy cho-eignaghey cooney veih, ny reaghey tra cooie da dy loayrt riu as cur da ayns agh so-hoiggalagh fys er yn chooish ta shiu shirrey cooney er.

Ta fys mie aym dy vel feme ayn nish as reesht y voayrd y woalley as roish my row mee pontit my hirveishagh 'sy reiltys, nish as reesht va mee jannoo ymmyd jeh saaseyn jeeragh as neuchurtoil my chooishyn y chummal seose - agh gyn ourys erbee ta ellynyn jesh cosney yn caggey ny s'menkey na focklyn corree. T'eh aashagh dy liooar dy 'eddyn magh boiraghyn nyn ellan as gaccan myr nyn gione - t'eh foddey smoo doillee feaysley ny boiraghyn shoh.

Er lhiam pene dy vel eh scanshoil dy 'reayll shoh ayns cooinaght. Adsyn ta shiu dy mennick clashtyn gaccan dy lajer noi dy chooilley pheigh as dy chooilley red s'liklee nagh vel ad feer fondagh ec feaysley reddyn.

Nish ta mee er chlashtyn nish as reesht Manninee gaccan mychione coonseil ny shirveishee (CoShirv) gra dy vel eh er shirveishee 'dy chreck magh' my vees ad son cosney soiaj ayns CoShirv. Ta mee toiggal yn oyr dy vel sleih smooinghtyn myr shoh as gyn ourys ta ny shirveishee ooilley kianlt liorish reillyn dyn dy chur yn olk er rheyynnyn y reiltys. Shoh yn red smoo doillee dou er lhiam as mish my oltey noa da CoShirv.

Agh ga nagh vel shin abyly dy loayrt dy bollagh gyn lhietrymys ta shirveishee foast slane jeean er reaghey polasee y reiltys, foast shirrey feaysley boiraghyn

nyn ellan, foast gennaghtyn corree tra ta assee jeant da nyn ellan as foast goaill nearey tra ta brock jeant ec y reiltys. Myr oltey CoShirv, as shoh yn red smoo scanshoil, t'ou ayns boayl foddey smoo lajer son jannoo reddyn mie son Mannin.

Yn bun ta mee prowal dy heet er, ta shoh. Mannagh vel shiu ayn gobbragh dy trang, kianlt bit beg veih ginsh dy chooilley red t'ayns dty aigney gyn ourys agh soie ayns boayl raad t'ou abyly dy chaghlaa y theihll, cha jig dty chooishyn lhiat.

Smooinee shiu er shoh - my va Illiam Dhone ny ghooinney granganagh va gaccan dy kinjagh mychione dy chooilley red va jeant ec y Staanelagh Mooar cha beagh eh er ve ayns y voayl kiart dy hauail shenn vunraght as kiartyn ny Manninee. My va Illiam Dhone gyllagh mygeayrt Mannin dy row reiltys ny Staanelaghyn olk dy liooar cha beagh eh er ve pointit ny Resour Vannin, cha beagh eh er ve faagit ny ard dooiny ayns Mannin choud's va'n Staanelagh ersooyl caggey noi ny Sostynee as cha beagh eh er ve abyly dy resooney magh coardailys lesh ny ardwhaiyllee tra haink ad dy chur mow da Mannin.

Wahll, cre mysh yn aile ta foast freayll my annym politickaght cheh? Cre ta cur orrym cummal seose my vea politickaght?

Shegin dou goaill rish dy vel mee foast geddyn corree ny keayrtyn kyndagh rish cooishyn politickaght. Tra ta mee fakin jallooghyn er y chellveeish jeh paitchyn er chee geddyn baase er y fa nagh vel bee dy liooar oc as eisht fakin berchys y theihll sheear ta cur millioonyn dy phunt da delleyderyn ta roostey berchys ny cheeraghyn boghtey as cur eh ayns poggad jeusyn nagh vod rieu ceau ooilley nyn argid, ta wheesh oc. S'aaglagh dou dy vel wheesh **Gow-jee** er ...

ORATIO ghaelgagh er ny ghol er.

dy phooar ec ny margee argidoil eddyr-ashoonagh as adsyn gobbragh dy lajer noi cheeraghyn lhiasee. Fodmayd jannoo shennaghys jeh boghtynys as shegin dooin!

T'eh doillee dy liooar toiggal yn aght ta'n margey seyr lowal pishyryn v'er naase ayns yn Affrick dy ghol er creck ayns Mannin er costys sloo na'n costys jannoo 'syn ellan ain. As cre'n fa ta shin lowal ard-costys thaloo as thieyn dy reayll Manninee veih thieyn noa, dy churr eirinee ass nyn daloo as eer dy ghooney buill kiaull gollrish yn Venue. Vel eh towse yn fail ain ta ro injil ny ny costysyn, thaloo as thieyn er l'eh, ta ro ard?

As cre mysh yn brock ta shin jannoo da nyn jymmyltaght - ta shin dooney ny sooilyn ain da boiraghyn vees cheet veih ny aghtyn sondagh ain. Ayns Reiltys

Vannin cha noddym toiggal yn oyr ta shin freayll wheesh dy chooishyn follit as ta baarney deynlaght ayn er lhiam ta freayll yn poble veih reih raad polasee y reiltys. Boiraghyn dy liooar ayn as gyn ourys obbyr dy liooar ry-yannoo ain. As cre mysh yn enney as cultoor ain?

Eer dy vel shenn aght bea ny Manninee er caghlaa dy mooar ta foast Manninaghys faagit ayns Mannin. Son ooilley my laghyn ta mee er ve slane graihagh er anninaghys, Mannin as ny Manninee as bee yn graih shen aym er son dy bragh. Ta fys mie aym dy vel Manninee dy liooar gaccan dy vel rour cailt as cha neeu veg eh streeu dy vishaghey enney as cultoor Vannin agh cha noddym coardail rish shen.

Choud's nagh beemayd agh soie mygeayrt gaccan as dobberan er stayd nyn ellan bee Mannin cailt - she currym dy chooilley nane jin

dy aaniartaghey nyn obbyr son shickyraghey tra ry-heet Manninaghys as Mannin. Freillshiu ayns cooinaght dy row Illiam y Christeen currit gy baase er y fa dy ren eh bargane dy reayll yn ashoon ain bio. Foddee dy row anaasehene echey tra smooinee eh er y choorse kiart son sauail Mannin agh scummye shen. Mannagh ren eh shen myr ren eh s'liklee nagh beagh Mannin ayn jiu.

Cha neeu veg gaccan myr partan Manninagh - shass-shiu seose son ny reddyn ta scanshoil diu - ny lhig da boghtnid as breagyn ve faagit gyn obbal - as ny jarrood ta speeideilys cheet veih obbyr creoi. My ta shiu gearree caghlaa yn theihll ny eer jus yn ellan ain foddee shiu! My vees yn obbyr eu cha speeideilagh as shen ren Illiam Dhone bee eh feeu jannoo ee .

Illiam Dhone Commemoration - Manx Oration (English Translation)

PLEASE NOTE: It is not the policy of the organisers of this event to ask for or supply translations of the National Language orations. This translation has been supplied and included at the request of Mr. Gawne himself.

About 16 years ago I delivered a speech on this hill in memory of Illiam Dhone. At that time a fire was burning in my heart and I was angry at the damage I perceived was being done to Mann. I placed the blame firmly at the feet of the Government and in particular members of Tynwald. Why had they done nothing to stop the decay - I suggested at the time that "Government was blinded by fool's gold."

I expect that some of you will be surprised to know that the fire and passion which drove me then is still alive inside me - perhaps not burning so intensely as when I was 'an angry young man' but its still there. This year, however, I will not be seeking to blame the Government for everything and here's why.

First of all I'd like to think that over the past 16 years I've gained a greater insight into the way in which Manx politics works. I spent the first five years of my political life

angrily attacking everything that was happening in Mann and blaming all my woes on everyone but me - MHKs, estate agents, bankers and businessmen all attracted my wrath.

After a while I learned a hard lesson that in fact the world was not my enemy and that it was actually much easier to succeed if you work with people rather than always fighting against them. It became clear to me that at worst people were indifferent to my ideas but generally people did not really understand the issues I wished to progress.

So who was really to blame for this? Me and some of my friends who were working for nationalist and cultural causes who had singularly failed to explain our concerns in a way which engaged the people who could help us. After all if you wish to gain support from someone for an initiative do you break into their house, call them names, threaten them and use forceful coercion to extract their support or do you arrange a suitable time to meet and present an easy to follow, easy to support case to them.

I know that in politics it is occasionally necessary to bang the table and before I was appointed Minister I did use from time to time the direct, confrontational approach - but

undoubtedly the most successful method is the polite, well researched and well considered approach. It is after all very easy to identify all Mannin's problems and complain about them - its much more difficult, however, to offer real and credible solutions.

I think it is important to bear this in mind. Those people with the loudest and most aggressive voices are not always the most effective at resolving problems.

Now before and indeed after becoming a minister in the Isle of Man Government I've heard plenty of voices declaring that it is almost a prerequisite that ministers should 'sell out' their principles if they wish to join the ministerial club. I understand this perception as clearly ministers are bound by various rules of collective responsibility which require them to be circumspect about the way in which they talk about Government policy. This is quite a difficult thing to adhere to, especially as a new member of Council of Ministers.

Even though we can't speak out completely freely on all issues ministers

Continued

Manx oration - English translation continued

remain keen to develop good, effective policies which address Mann's problems, they still feel angry when people do damage to our island and indeed feel embarrassment and frustration when Government gets it wrong. However, as a member of the Council of Ministers you are in a very strong position to influence the shape and direction of policies which will benefit the Isle of Man.

I suppose the message I'm trying to deliver here is this. If you are not working hard with your colleagues, bound perhaps a little from speaking out on all occasions and restricted by collective responsibility from pursuing some of your more radical ideas you aren't then in such a strong position to make the positive changes to the world that surrounds you.

The actions of Illiam Dhone provide an important analogy here. If Illiam Dhone had been a grumpy complaining old so and so always criticising the Stanley rule and always seeing the bad in everything and everyone he would never have been in a position to change the history of our nation. If Illiam Dhone had spent his life going round the island shouting about the terrible way in which the Stanley's governed our island he would not have been appointed to high office and left in charge of Mann while the Lord of Mann was away fighting the English and so he would not have been in a position to strike a deal with the parliamentarians which protected the ancient rights of the Manx people and upheld our constitutional independence.

So what of the fire that still warms my political soul? What keeps me wanting to fight my political corner?

Though I try to control my political anger without doubt I still get angry about politics. Who can not be moved by the constant pictures and stories of real poverty in the world, of children dying for want of food. Yet the wealth of the western world allows us to pay millions of pounds in bonuses to financiers who extract the wealth of developing countries and place it in the pockets of people so rich that they could never spend all their money. It alarms and shames me that the international money markets which we all indirectly support have so much power to control the lives of millions of poverty stricken people in developing countries - how often have we seen this power being used for good? We can and must double our efforts to make poverty history.

It is difficult to understand how the free market allows us to buy in the Isle of Man peas grown in Africa at a price cheaper than the cost of production in the island - how can this possibly be right and just? How is it that we allow the high price of land and property to keep Manx people from buying homes in their own country, to drive farmers off the land and even to close places of entertainment such as the Venue. Is it that our average national wage is too low or is it that our costs, land and housing in particular, are too high?

What about the mess we're making of the environment - closing our eyes to the damage we're causing for future generations through selfish pursuit of our 'here and now' interests. Also I can't understand why the Isle of Man Government seems so keen to keep so much information secret and there's no doubt in my mind that we have a democratic deficit which seems to divorce the people from the

development of the political direction of government. No shortage of issues to address then and plenty of work to do. But what of our culture and identity

Even though the old Manx way of life has changed considerably Manxness still remains in Mann. Throughout my life I have always cared passionately about Manxness, Mann and the Manx people and that passion will be with me all my days. I know that some Manx people believe that too much has been lost and that it is not worth trying to protect and develop what remains of Manxness. While I can understand these feelings I can't agree with them.

If we are content with sitting back and lamenting the loss of our culture and identity then without doubt Mannin is lost. However, I believe it is the duty of all people who care about our island and its people to reinvigorate their efforts to ensure a secure future for Manxness and the Manx nation. Remember Illiam Dhone was put to death for his actions which preserved our ancient Manx rights and traditions. Perhaps self interest played a part in his actions but quite frankly who cares. If he hadn't acted as he did our Manx nation would long since have disappeared.

It is a self indulgence we can ill afford to complain like a Manx crab all the time. Stand up for the things you believe in, don't allow injustice or misinformation to go unchallenged and don't forget with a lot of hard work you can change the world. If your struggle is as successful as that of Illiam Dhone it will be well worth it!

Thank you.

Illiam Dhone Commemoration - English Oration

By Bill Henderson MHK, former member of the Council of Ministers

Tynwald is one of the oldest parliaments in the world. Our unique political system is the bedrock of our stability and success. But, so too is our unique independence from the United Kingdom, giving us the freedom we have enjoyed to successfully develop in our own unfettered way in latter years, earning us a fair degree of justly deserved international recognition.

These vital elements of our

social and political makeup have gained us access to the international financial stage and other world markets we now operate and compete in, which is so important for our economy and continued future survival in the new and expanding global village we now find ourselves in.

We are commemorating today the death of our patriot and fellow country man Illiam Dhone. He was of a time when

this Island bore witness to terrible poverty and unrest, witness to a scene set for English overlords to disenfranchise people of their land.

Taking his chances as the English Civil war raged across the other side of these waters, and in the knowledge the Island could lose those very same qualities if the wife of the then Lord of Man carried out her

Continued....

English Oration continued

intentions of using the Island and its inhabitants as a bartering tool to save her own interests, Iliam Dhone decided to do something.

He lost his life for those beliefs. Whatever the critics say we have retained those ancient qualities and rights - our Tynwald, our freedom, our independence and our stability. It is ironic then, that the Island again faces great challenges, causing very real unease and concern. Our community is angry, fed up, upset and completely disenchanted with the current political arrangements and calamities which have beset this Island.

In a way we are again seeing scenes of social unrest, not in the same way as was played out in 1651, but of social, political isolation. A feeling of being ignored by our Government, the Council of Ministers, the community set adrift, the Council of Ministers being there in spite of us. At times a nauseating political snobbery and arrogance emanating from their club doors.

A pawl of political fallout hangs over this Island which is masking and spoiling those special qualities that Iliam Dhone died for.

Political ineptitude, a CoMin culture of institutional club arrogance, a heavily bureaucratic system that seems almost paralysed at times, and a system which seemingly allows senior civil servants to heavily influence Ministers and even pull their strings: have all contributed to one of the worst series of

events this community has had to face in modern times. It has tarnished this place, which we should be so proud of.

The threats we are now facing are not as in Iliam Dhone's day, external, from English Parliamentary forces, but internal from our own constitution - our own Government - the Council of Ministers and the bureaucratic chief executive officer system which services that cabinet.

This cabal, or cartel if you like has developed its own institutional culture which is threatening and damaging the very fabric of our democracy and society. It is a culture that promotes a detachment from the community it should be here to serve and help.

It has also developed a unique coping mechanism when faced with threats or challenges beyond its capabilities. Deny the problem exists, sweep it under the carpet if you can. If not, distance yourself from it and hope none of the mud sticks. Or have an inquiry. Disown the problem as much as possible.

It started with the Mount Murray scandal, then ended up with the MEA blowing us nearly right out of the water. Inter spaced with a disgraced Chief Minister who had to resign his position, child care inquiries following deaths of young people, IRIS melt down, a DHSS bursting at the seams trying to cope, and failing miserably, they just sack their loyal staff, meanwhile waiting lists are elongating and service targets are not being met. Other much needed

improvements such as digital hearing aids they refuse to bring in.

The Council of Ministers system has bred "The club mentality" - sign up for collective responsibility and forego all your rights as a free thinking individual. And the cardinal rule - you must always obey their policies and support them in Tynwald. The block vote they carry in Tynwald, plus, the back bench hangers on who constantly vote with them: and we have a recipe for disaster.

And now we're suffering it: a community that once again feels it is about to be disenfranchised. A Government of globe trotting ministers, out of control, spiraling energy and heating costs, pensioners and folk who are on low incomes - freezing, who can't afford their heating, fuel poverty, the possible collapse of our agricultural industry, public service managers that treat their staff like dirt and some politicians who support that. Ministers and some politicians who are controlled by senior Civil Servants, afraid to challenge and assert themselves. The tail, is wagging the dog.

With a bit of luck all this sweeping it under the carpet will keep it all at bay and not come back. But it has come back! The sad fact is though, it comes back and hammers our community and leaves a very bitter and sour taste in our mouths.

We don't like being ignored, we don't like a Council of Ministers that seems to be there in spite of us, we don't like political snobbery, we want a

Continued.....

English Oration continued

government that can lead us away from disaster. Not the current squeamish, scared stiff of possible perceptions and what the world may think of us Government. Not a Government that just throws open the Treasury doors and throws millions of pounds to pay off the MEA and Barclays debacle - when we may not even be liable.

A membership constituting little more than men of straw. A membership that won't and will not, even when I have persistently called for: failed to pass the MEA books, papers and documents to the financial supervision commission and the Financial Crime Unit for assessment.

Don't be deceived by the lame excuses, the community must ask its self - why on earth is this not happening! These are supposed to be our leaders, our Ministers and in charge, accountable to us. They are working out side of their responsibilities and must be brought back to account.

No job should be too big or too small for a politician. MHK's, including me are there for the people of this Island. The latest scenes where certain Ministers have been outraged at questions being asked and claiming it is time wasting, or not for parliamentary business have done nothing but further tarnish our Tynwald. To this I say - Rubbish, absolute rubbish!

What we are witnessing here is a deliberate attempt to cajole and embarrass Members into not asking

Parliamentary questions and in effect stifling the special democratic process we have. We should be asking questions as that's what we are here for! Ministers bemoaning the fact they have to face questions: that's what they're there for - to face the music!

We need a Tynwald and Government of robust individuals, loyal first and foremost to their House of Keys oath with the ability to and courage to stand firmly to challenges, not run in vanity from perceptions - whether it be the UK, Europe or elsewhere - what ever they might or might not make of our country.

They might make a hell of a lot more of us if we were more robust, challenging, forging more working relationships and better communications with our larger neighbours. Being assertive with Whitehall in this aspect and having better representation in Europe. However Europe eventually works out, we still have to trade with them. Getting to know our neighbors at a detailed, day to day working level is critical for successful development.

We certainly don't want, nor could we stand in the future the fiasco and humiliation of our farming derogation being taken off us, leaving our agricultural industry teetering on the edge of disaster. And this happened while the Chief Minister held a humble little trade stall in the corridors of the European Parliament, announcing it as he did as a great and glorious success. He asserted that they need to know about us as many in Brussels are uncertain of the Island. And look what happened!

My call here is - they certainly don't know enough about us, nor we of them. This situation needs to drastically improve as a matter of urgency for the good of the Island and its economy.

The Island needs MHK's who have the courage and convictions of what we are remembering today. Not clubby clubby, not nodding donkeys - people who have the guts to make waves when necessary. People who are willing to stand up in Tynwald and say what needs to be said and have a go at making the difference we need. Politicians who are stalwart enough not to be afraid of falling out with each other over what matters, but strong and big enough to work together in the interests of this Island when we face serious challenges.

We have to rid ourselves of the current stigmas, and be proud of ourselves, our Tynwald, our special qualities which have helped make us successful. We have to have a Council of Ministers that has the ability to fully engage with the community.

My message to the community is simple - for goodness sake - make sure you are registered to vote for the forthcoming General Election, make your vote count. I would like nothing better than to see a large turnout. The old phrase - oh there's nothing that can be done is not right. If you do nothing, then nothing will ever happen. Make an effort and you can make a difference - a big difference. Make this year's ballot boxes speak out for you.

Thank you.

License fee theft

The UK forces us to pay a television license, even if we watch no UK originating television. We are required to pay to have any television receiving equipment. The UK conveniently forgot to extend the legislation that compels the BBC to reinvest 12% of its licence take into "regional programming" on its home turf.

As responsibility for the BBC and

licencing has moved out of the Home Office, more emphasis has been placed, in the UK, on the licence fee as a funder of "quality service provision."

As the UK government forges ahead with its plans to to move all terrestrial broadcsating to digital, those who remain on analogue are being force fed a diet of mindless drivel through the air-waves whilst being told what a good time they would have if they spent the money on going digital. A fairly obvious

ploy to drive people onto digital.

We will be forced onto digital in the Isle of Man in two years time, ready or not, despite the UK having made no provisions to support digital broadcasting here.

Meanwhile, householders who have understandably chosen to throw their televisions in the bin are subject to a campaign of harassment by the UK TV licensing authority. Wonderful.

SPACE CADETS!

If you remember Roly Drower's classic recital, "The Consultants" (published in the July 2000 issue of YPS), you must have laughed when the government started talking about the "Manx space industry".

Just what constitutes this "space industry" has not really been explained but some have unkindly suggested that it involves looking into the ears of MHKs.

It all became clear when Channel 4's (un)reality programme "Space Cadets" revealed that it had duped a group of wannabes into believing that they had been sent into orbit.

This explains why a group including Mr. Gelling went to Brussels but didn't (apparently) have anything important to talk about. It explains why, when the same group went to the US in November, they couldn't meet anyone worth talking to because it was a US holiday. It explains why the Island has supposed to have been removed from blacklists which, according to previous propaganda, we weren't on to start with.

It is now believed that the delegations never left a hangar at Ronaldsay and dealt with a bunch of actors throughout.



From Holyrood to Bloody Rude

We must all be aware of the controversy surrounding the construction of the Scottish Parliament building at Holyrood in Edinburgh, a project which went massively over budget. It was eventually completed at a cost of £431,000,000, something like ten times the original projected cost, and with Scotland having a population of approximately 5.1 million this works out at something like £84 per head. Remember this is for a brand new building for a brand new Parliament for use by 129 MSPs.

Compare this with our own refurbishment of part of our own Government Buildings, the so-called "wedding cake". The cost presently standing at £11.7 million and a population of 76000 calculates at £154 per head, and this for a legislature of just 33 members! Even Alan Bell lambasted the additional spending requested at the December sitting of Tynwald, but was absent from the Chamber when the vote was taken.

All claims by the present Government that they are financially prudent now look totally unbelievable. Remember the "wedding cake" fiasco is only the latest example of financial profligacy.

For more information about membership of Mec Vannin and our policies, see our internet site at

www.mecvannin.org

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Yn Arrane Ashoonagh

O Halloo nyn dooie
 O Chliejeen ny s' bwaai
 Ry gheddyn er ooir aalin Yee
 Ta dt' Ardstoyl Reill-Thie
 Myr Baarool er ny hoie
 Dy reayll shin ayns seyrsnys as shee.

Lhig dooin boggoil bee
 Lesh annym as cree
 As croghey er galdyn y Chiarn
 Dy vodmayd dagh oor
 Treishteil er e phooar
 Dagh olk ass nyn anmeenyn 'hayrn.

The National Anthem

O land of our birth
 O gem of God's earth
 O Island so strong and so fair
 Built firm as Barrool
 Thy throne of Home Rule
 Makes us free as thy sweet mountain air.

Then let us rejoice
 With heart, soul and voice
 And in the Lord's promise confide
 That each single hour
 We trust in His power
 No evil our souls can betide.

PLACES CALLED WHARF ARE IN!

Castletown (or is that Carseltown, now?) was an early victim with "Brewery Wharf". Now we have "Hillary Wharf" at the Battery Pier in Douglas and just "The Wharf" at what used to be the warehouse on Lake Lane in Peel. Not to be out-wharved, Jonathan Irving's redevelopment of the Viking Longhouse (actually a net factory) on East Quay, Peel, is to be "Mariner's Wharf".

All these developments have two things in common: They are all flats and none of them stand anywhere near anything ever called a wharf.

In parallel to this comes the news that Peel harbour (as long suspected) is going to be given over to marina style pontoon berthing at around ten times the price

boat owners currently pay. There isn't any choice in this, of course. Existing boat owners, already having had their access to the sea impaired by an unwanted barrier (and forget any environmental impact!) have the very simple choice of paying it or selling their boats to make room for those who like to own boats but not actually use them.

The whole thing is yet another demonstration of an agenda that is insidious and pervades every aspect of our life: This island is being deliberately structured to accommodate the wealthy by driving out those who aren't wealthy. This agenda is being carried out with the full complicity of those who pretend to represent us.

This agenda is reflected in housing, health-care, food and transport costs.

The name of blocks of flats may seem like an unimportant issue, but it is indicative of a psychology that is foreign to us and has no intention of accommodating us. The very word "heritage" has become sullied to the point of being a by-word for tacky, modern and artificial.

Culture is what is around us, not some highly artificial government spoon-fed semblance of an essentially lost culture. Perhaps some people need to extract themselves from their Celtic mist and take a look around them before singing the praises of a government who has cynically exploited them.

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