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DESERT JOHN!
SEE PAGE 10



Pictured during Midland Motor Club 2010 Stages Rally were Colin Flanagan and Gary Hall, Roscommon; Tommy Rafferty and Catherine Costello, Roscommon and Alan Gibbons and Noel Mulvihill, Roscommon. Pic: Andrew Fox.

ANOTHER FINE MESS!

"That's another fine mess you got me into."

With those words, a suitably frustrated Oliver Hardy would chastise his comedy partner Stan Laurel.

It's a good job Ollie isn't living in Ireland at the beginning of the 21st century.

Stan and Ollie, both of them touched by genius, were comic actors; the drama unfolding before our eyes is all too real. Our modern-day 'Stan and Ollies', our men in the dark suits, are a different proposition altogether.

Perhaps Minister Brian Lenihan had to take the action announced this week. After all, our banking system does have to be saved – although

one could argue for complete nationalisation of our established major banks – and for the largely wretched Anglo Irish Bank to be demolished.

Certainly we desperately need a functioning banking system – and fast. So it may be that this week's incredibly costly exercise is necessary – but that doesn't mean we shouldn't feel ongoing outrage at the 'fine mess' we've been landed in by various scurrilous mobs.

Top bankers toyed with our futures. Ordinary bank workers have nothing to do with this. But their largely faceless bosses treated us all with contempt and arrogance. Until recently, perhaps even now, they

PAGE ONE COMMENT

Paul Healy, Editor

parade around some of the finest golf courses and hotel lobbies in the world – while ordinary citizens parade to save our hospital services.

The Gardai finally came knocking on one of two of their doors – long after many a hapless taxpayer was hauled into court for failure to pay a television licence or some such 'crime.'

The Catholic Church betrayed its people. The vast majority of the clergy are innocent, indeed deserving of our sympathy and support at this time. But many within the Church let us down previously. Apart

from the horrendous suffering of abuse victims, it leaves a floundering 'flock' in need of leadership and hope itself.

Our politicians don't all deserve to be condemned either, but our political system as a whole – and many individuals within it – has failed us miserably.

'Limos' brought smug ministers from one airport terminal to another; millions were thrown at useless e-voting machines; the FAS debacle; waste, waste, waste. In politics, banking and certain business golden circles, they lifted two champagne-stained fingers to the people.

On Tuesday, as we pledged billions

more to our rotting banking system, some of the real architects of our state – present-day pensioners – turned uncomfortably on hospital trolleys. Despicable really.

Brian Lenihan's course of action may be correct – and necessary. We can only hope that it is. But it doesn't stop us feeling outrage. Yes, we need a functioning banking system now – and urgently. We need to re-build this nation. But how did it come to this? Why has this country, with its wonderful resources – best of which is its people – had to sign this grotesque blank cheque?

Our own modern-day 'Stan and Ollies' have truly landed us in a fine mess – but no-one's laughing.

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