

Straight talking



with 'The Duke'
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Mortgaging our children's future

I did something this morning (Wednesday) that I haven't done too often in recent years. I switched off Morning Ireland. There was nothing wrong with the programme, in fact it was up to its usual high standard, but I couldn't take any more.

I am not sure that most people understand what actually happened this week, as the scale of the greed and corruption that has gone on in this country over the past ten years was revealed in terms of pounds, shillings and pence. It's far worse than any of us thought possible. It will cost in or around €80 billion to clean up the mess.

The wonder about it all is that there are not people on the streets of the country. I can say without fear of contradiction if the scale of what happened here was experienced in any other country there would be serious public unrest. I hope it doesn't happen, but what has been done to the ordinary Joe and Josephine Soap is horrendous.

I said to the Editor of this paper this morning that I wish I was a more talented writer because I really want to express the dismay, disgust and total helplessness that ordinary people feel this week as the horror unfolds.

As a well-known Liverpool football manager might say, the facts are that we have mortgaged the future of our children

and their children on the backs of cronyism and total and utter greed. Another fact is that we are living in a deeply corrupt country where a few people were able to ruin our economy in the space of a few short years.

I attended a fund raising table quiz in Roscommon town last Friday night. There was a big crowd there, mostly young people. These are well-educated confident and superb people who deserve a future. The greedy politicians, bankers, big developers and even the church have let them down so badly. The people responsible should be ashamed of themselves. Michael Fingleton, Sean Fitzpatrick, Eugene Sheehy, Bertie Ahern, Charlie McCreery and their cronies should be in jail for what they have done to this country and it's as simple as that.

I listened to our Taoiseach Brian Cowen on Tuesday night on Prime Time and it was the same old story. He blamed Bear Sterns and Lehman Brothers and everyone else. Some day it might dawn on him that his own party ex-leader and his colleagues were largely responsible for the basket case economy that we now live in. Mr Ahern presided over a country where there was no regulation of the financial sector and a country where the unions got everything they asked for and a country where



The Jack and Jill Playgroup in Ballinlough celebrated their win in the Better Ireland Awards with a kids party puppet show and disco. The service runs a morning service for pre-school children. The playgroup achieved first place in the AIB Better Ireland Awards for the Castlereagh Branch, securing €5,000 prizemoney. The playgroup is now taking enrolments for September 2010. Jack and Jill Community Playgroup participate in ECCE Free year of playschool scheme.

certain big developers and business were allowed to do what they pleased.

Remember when some people warned Ahern that the bubble was going to burst, he told them to go off and commit suicide no less. Remember too that Brian Cowen was Minister for Finance while all this was going on.

Brian Lenihan is not totally innocent here either. In 2008 he said that he could see no real problem with the Irish banking system. Then, when he put in 3.5 billion into the two big commercial banks, he said that was sufficient to keep them afloat and they would restart lending into the economy. Ask any business person about how that turned out!

Then in December he

told us all that the corner has been turned with regard to the economy! Only last Sunday we learned that the economy had shrunk by 25 percent over the past two years alone and is continuing to shrink. There are now almost 450,000 people on the dole, the planes are full of young people emigrating and businesses are struggling to stay open because they have no credit.

The main problem that I have with all this is that the very people who are telling us that everything will be all right now, are the same people who told us there was no problem in the first place.

Despite the massive corruption, there have been no court cases, no convictions, no calling to

account. In fact many of the people responsible for this mess are doing very well out of it all.

A friend called me on Tuesday night to tell me he was at a luncheon ran by a group of vintners in the Dublin area at the weekend. The special guest speaker was Bertie Ahern who was introduced as one of Ireland's greatest ever politicians. What planet are these people living on?

Remember readers that Sean Fitzpatrick no less, went on national radio in 2008 and proposed that the government take the medical card off the over 70s! Remember too that AIB chief executive Eugene Sheehy said, also on national radio in 2009, that he would rather fold AIB

up than take any money from the Irish taxpayer. I was in a public house in 2007 in Roscommon town when a man at the counter asked how could the property boom continue the way it was going? The man was told to shut his mouth and not to be talking the economy down.

I would say that at most, about 200 people were solely responsible for the mess that we are in today. These people should be ashamed of themselves at what they have done to the country. But will they be ashamed? Not on your life. They will all get huge pension pays offs, be paid 40,000 dollars for after-dinner speaking engagements.

They will all travel to the South of France and

Portugal for their holidays while the rest of us work out how we are going to pay for the education of our children and worry whether there will be any chance of them getting work of any kind when they are finished.

This week Brian Lenihan said that he hoped that the action he was taking – costing about €80 billion – would stabilise the economy. His record at predictions is not great so far.

We can only hope he is right this time. But the reality is that we will be paying for this mess for generations to come. Remember too that there are still three hairshirt budgets yet to come. We are not near the corner yet, let alone around it.

Agreeing with Leo Varadkar

Seamus,

I disagree with your analysis of Leo Varadkar in last week's Roscommon People concerning Garret Fitzgerald.

Mr Fitzgerald, whilst leader of Fine Gael, surrounded himself with university cronies and he treated the rural constituency organisations of the party with contempt when he deemed it important enough to visit us with his outrageous demands for his travelling intellectuals.

I know because I was PRO of the constituency during that period. Don't forget that he left the taxpayer to pick up his £250,000 loan from AIB, which he borrowed to invest in Guinness Peat Aviation when he was on that board.

No, he was a very poor Taoiseach, could not make decisions, was out of touch with the ordinary worker and he left the party penniless when he resigned and that was the main reason for the Tallaght Strategy as the party was in no financial position to fight a general election when Alan Dukes took over. You can ask Eddie O'Reilly the General Secretary for verification of you want.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Scally,
Ballaghadereen

Agreement with unions is good news

I was glad to hear that the unions and the Government reached an agreement on the future of pay talks and conditions earlier in the week. If it was not for the banking scandal, that story would have got much more publicity.

It was also fantastic to see that Roscommon Town man Kieran Mulvey was at the centre of the successful pay talks again this time. Over

the years Kieran has become Ireland's most respected, skilful negotiator on industrial relations and his hard work and tenacity was praised by all concerned this week. The man from St Ciaran's Park has proven himself in the area many times in the past and this time he surpassed himself in bringing the two sides together.

Happy Easter

This will be a holiday weekend for most and I hope that people can take a few days to relax and have a good time. I know that a lot of people are in trouble and have very little money at the moment, but we would all go mad if we didn't have a little enjoyment in our lives and there will be plenty to see and do in the country over the weekend. So get out there and forget NAMA, the Government and the economy and have a little fun. The whole sorry mess will still be there on Tuesday morning I can assure you!