

Straight talking



with 'The Duke'

seamus@roscommonpeople.ie

Lots of noses in the trough

I have just listened to Terry Leyden on Morning Ireland telling a grateful nation that he was giving up his ministerial pension in line with the others who were browbeaten into doing so this week.

I fully realise that none of the people collecting these payouts were breaking the law, but we have some country and system in place that allowed this to happen in the first place. It goes to show that I am 100 percent right when I say here on a regular basis that there is a total disconnect

between the people who are serving in the Oireachtas and ordinary people and what a struggle it is at the moment for most of us.

Having said all that, there is massive hypocrisy going on at many levels in Irish society in recent weeks. Firstly we had the justified criticism of the massive bonus payments and pension top ups being paid to bankers. However who was making those criticisms? The politicians, many of whom are collecting fat salaries, huge expenses and pensions in some cases. Then we

had the correct criticism in recent days of those collecting the pensions while receiving a salary at the same time. A lot of that criticism came from RTÉ, where many of those making big statements against the politicians are themselves earning obscene salaries and claiming huge expenses paid for by the licence payers. So 'kettle', 'pot' and 'black' are the three words that easily come to mind here. There are far more people with their noses in the trough than one would imagine and that fact will never change. I listened

closely over the last few days as all these politicians announced that they were giving back their pensions to the state. Despite the fact that they were not breaking any law, you would think that they were expecting a people of the year award for their actions. It's a downright scandal that this situation should have been allowed to happen in the first place. Brian Cowen said on Tuesday that Máire Geoghegan Quinn's decision to give up her ministerial pension was a "gesture for Ireland". Pass the sick bag please.

Roscommon Roses in full bloom

The Roscommon Rose selection final last Friday night was a fantastic night and a great night for the county of Roscommon. The standard of the contestants was the highest I have ever seen and the venue was just fantastic.

From early in the day it was clear that this was going to be a very special night and everyone involved in the committee should be very proud of their efforts. The setting, the meal, the compere Ollie Turner, the atmosphere and the craic were top class and it was a pleasure to have been there. The national co-ordinator Anthony O'Gara (a Roscommon man) was there on the night and the Roscommon

Rose selection night is now the most prestigious and best organised event of its kind in the country.

The terrible thing

about these nights is that there can only be one winner. The standard was so high and I wish the winner Deirdre Lenehan, the best

of luck in the regional finals in June. She will have big shoes to fill as Maria Hoey was a magnificent representative for the

county last year and I'm sure Deirdre will be that too. It was brilliant again to meet so many confident well-educated and posi-

tive young people. What a shame that our generation have made such a mess of the country. They don't deserve it.

News from the frying pan

Two weeks ago I had a small piece in this column which read: "I was reading earlier this week that Ireland were to lend Greece €450 million to help it get out of its economic difficulties, surely that couldn't be true, could it?" It is true! I won't even comment any further.

Mounting litter problem

The litter problem in this country is one that is growing all the time and it was the subject of a long debate at Roscommon County Council earlier this week.

From listening to councillors from various areas all over this county, there is a huge problem of illegal dumping and litter that is not being properly tackled. There are only two litter wardens in the county and in truth it would take at least 22 to police the county properly so it is not their fault. Cllr John Kelly put forward the view this week that no more than 40 percent to 50 percent of people are using wheelie bins and I think he is close enough to the mark. There are many people who simply get waste bags, put them into a car boot, and dump them into a bog or on the side of the road in the middle of the night. It is ruining our country and something will have to be done about it.

The rest of us who have to pay huge sums of money for our waste service are subsidising the sins of others who could not be bothered. This is a very serious problem and it will have to be tackled on a national basis. The County Council will have to be properly resourced by central government if we want to tackle the problem once and for all. We might as well forget about tourism if we continue to allow the country to be ruined by litter as it is at the moment.



Left to right: Tony Waldron (Chairperson Roscommon Rose of Tralee), Ollie Turner MC, Caroline Leckey (Secretary), Maria McCahill (Treasurer), Niamh Feeley (PRO), Ursula Hanly (Committee Member), Steve Cronly (National Rose of Tralee Coordinator), Seamus Duke MC, pictured at the 2010 Roscommon Rose of Tralee Ball held in Kilronan Castle on Friday night.

Take part in the Lamb Festival

The best of luck to all concerned with the Roscommon Lamb Festival this weekend. It is the third year of the event and it is going from strength to strength. I hope that there is great weather for the weekend and that everyone has a great time at the various events.

Sad passing of Luke Daly

I was greatly saddened to hear of the death of Luke Daly at the weekend. I didn't know Luke that well but I played Golf with him on quite a few Sunday mornings in the past and he was great company. It's another very sad death of a young man in the prime of his life. To his wife and young family I extend my deepest sympathy.

Clegg the king-maker

The British general election campaign has been a fascinating affair and for those of us who love watching elections, it is going to be probably the most exciting British election in living memory.

What is happening there is also a warning to the main political parties here as to just what may happen here when we have our own general election. Before the campaign started, it was either Gordon Brown or

David Cameron for Prime Minister, but thanks to the major TV debates Nick Clegg of the Lib Dems has burst on to the scene and is now neck and neck with the two others in the space of three weeks.

The UK have experienced a recession but it is not nearly as severe as the one here, yet people in the UK are sick and tired of the main parties and they have latched on to this new face.

The same thing will

happen here when there is a general election. People are well sick of listening to Fianna Fáil, but there doesn't seem to be anything brilliant there to replace them.

A good friend of mine made the point last week that if we elect a load of independents where would we be then, and my answer is that we couldn't be any worse off than we are at the moment. It's too late, the damage is done. The number one prior-

ity here has to be jobs, jobs, jobs. However, back to the UK election, and tonight (Thursday) will see the final debate take place on BBC. The leading politicians there are warning against a hung parliament.

It would mean a coalition government. We have had to put up with that situation here for many years past. It would appear that Nick Clegg is the man who will be the kingmaker after the elec-



Nick Clegg

tion is over. Election day is tomorrow week. It will be a cliffhanger.