

Sunday Independent

972,000 READERS

CITY FINAL

IFRA QUALITY CLUB MEMBER

Vol. 103 No. 49

December 7, 2008

€2.50 (£1.40 in Northern Ireland)

O'Leary: 'Take them out and shoot them'

Ryanair launches stinging attack on rival's board in takeover move

RONALD QUINLAN

RYANAIR chief executive Michael O'Leary has vowed to sack the board of Aer Lingus should his €748m bid to buy the former State airline be successful.

While Mr O'Leary has issued an invitation to the serving Aer Lingus chairman Colm Barrington to join the board of Ryanair Holdings as part of his offer to buy out the airline, he makes it clear he will have no need for the services of other Aer Lingus directors if his approach to Aer Lingus is successful.

"They'll all be gone. If you look at the board of Aer Lingus, with a number of notable exceptions, the rest are just like the board of bloody Fas. They're all Bertie's pals, or political appointees or trade union representatives," Mr O'Leary says.

Mr O'Leary refers to them

as "Bertie's pals, political appointees or trade union representatives" who know nothing about running an airline.

Rounding off his damning assessment of Aer Lingus's directors, the Ryanair chief, in typically cavalier fashion, calls for the various board members — with a few notable exceptions — to be "taken out and shot" describing them as "useless".

Analysis, interview, pages 10 and 14

Special mention is given to ICTU general secretary David Begg and former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern's close friend and political confidant, Chris Wall, in this regard.

"What does David Begg know about running an airline? He may be a very distinguished trade union leader, but we are talking about run-

ning a business here; he hasn't got a clue. Chris Wall — one of Bertie's hangers on. What does he know about an airline? Nothing," Mr O'Leary concludes.

Elaborating on his comparison with the board of Fas, Mr O'Leary went on: "It's ministers' representatives, the trade union movement, representatives of the aged and the infirm and everything else. You want people there who can actually run an airline and make a contribution. What has their [the board's] contribution been in the last two years? Aer Lingus costs have gone up by 18 per cent per passenger, they've raised the fares, increased the fuel surcharges, all these ministers and government representatives. Just take 'em out and shoot them. Useless."

COUGHLAN AND THE RETAILERS LET THEM EAT CAKE!

THIS SECTION, PAGE 5



Cowen faces new backbench revolt

Calls grow for return of McCreevy

DANIEL MCCONNELL
CHIEF REPORTER
AND JEROME REILLY

TAOISEACH Brian Cowen will have to move decisively or face a backbench upheaval, according to senior party members speaking this weekend.

There is now grave concern that the dominance of the triumvirate of Mr Cowen, Finance Minister Brian Lenihan and Tanaiste Mary Coughlan, is severely damaging morale within the parliamentary party.

The *Sunday Independent* understands that a small group of backbenchers, concerned about the state of the party, met informally last week. At that meeting, recent disastrous opinion polls, the fallout from the Budget and the prospects for the forthcoming local and European elections were discussed.

It has emerged that a significant rump of those in attendance believe Charlie McCreevy should be brought back from Brussels to rescue the party's fortunes.

Several ministers have admitted to this newspaper that the party is now suffering from a major "communications crisis".

Analysis, Pages 8, 30

The reception for the Taoiseach at the €100-a-head Cairde Fail dinner on Friday night at the Citywest Hotel was extremely muted with his address receiving a tepid reception.

One backbencher, alluding to the muted applause accorded Mr Cowen at his first Cairde Fail dinner as leader muttered later: "Brian has lost the dressing room.

He's a dead man walking."

Mr Cowen is likely to come under major pressure from his Cabinet colleagues and members of the parliamentary party to make a state of the nation address to let the people know what is being done to deal with the recession and mounting job losses.

Speaking this weekend, former chief whip Tom Kitt criticised Mr Cowen in a TV3 interview saying he has suffered from "poor communications and consultation" and expressed his concern about the emergence of the triumvirate within the Cabinet.

I suppose at the moment, looking at it from my perspective, I can see where we need to maybe improve communications. There is talk of a triumvirate. Well, you hear that there's a group of three.