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Tuesday, February 3, 2009

## People 'outraged' by report, says DUP

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GERRY MORIARTY, Northern Editor

THE DUP MP David Simpson has stated that there can be no blurring of the line between terrorists and innocent victims of the Troubles after one member of the Consultative Group on the Past accused some unionists of being "almost duplicitous" in their comments on the Eames-Bradley report.

The report on dealing with the past, particularly the proposal to pay £12,000 to the families of everyone who died in the conflict, continues to spark anger and controversy inside and outside the Assembly chamber.

Eames-Bradley group member Jarlath Burns told BBC Radio Ulster that some senior unionists had been "almost duplicitous" in saying one thing privately to the group while saying another in public. "A lot of our politicians came up with a lot of the ideas which we had, but felt they couldn't really present them publicly or couldn't support us publicly," he said.

Mr Simpson, who tabled an Assembly motion yesterday condemning the element of the Eames-Bradley report "which equates perpetrators of violence with innocent victims", said people in Northern Ireland were "outraged" by the report.

"The DUP has been absolutely consistent in its view that there can be no blurring of the line between the terrorist and the terrorised," he said.

"There is certainly no duplicity on the part of the Democratic Unionist Party. The Shankill butchers cannot be placed on the same level as their innocent victims nor can the Shankill bomber be placed on the same level as those whom he killed.

"That has always been our position," added Mr Simpson.

"This is not a unionist versus nationalist debate it is a right versus wrong debate. This is a stark, black-and-white issue as far as the people whom I represent are concerned," he said.

During the debate SDLP leader Mark Durkan said that neither did he want a treatment of the past that blurred responsibility for the violence. He acknowledged that there were concerns over the €12,000 payment but added, "Let victims and survivors work some of these issues themselves without the rest of us savaging a report that has a lot more merit in it than some members have reflected."

Sinn Féin MLA Raymond McCartney said the proposals must be given careful consideration and that politicians must be careful in how they describe the report. They should avoid terms such as "repugnant and repulsive". "An objective of any process should be healing, both for the victims and society in general," he added.

Ulster Unionist Alan McFarland said he had respect for the members of the consultative group but feared "we are back again to a one-sided truth commission" because the onus would be on the British government to provide relevant official documentation while the paramilitaries would not co-operate with the search for truth and reconciliation.

This article appears in the print edition of the Irish Times

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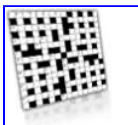
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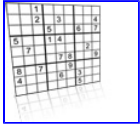
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