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MCGLONE: ASSEMBLY NO PLACE FOR SECTARIAN PING-PONG

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SDLP Chief Whip Patsy McGlone MLA said it is an abuse of devolution to turn the Assembly into an arena for sterile sectarian stand-offs and macho posturing.

Commenting on discussions in the Assembly Commission on the use of Stormont premises for commemorations, he said:

“The people out there are paying us to run the place, not to play divisive games which no one can win. The people who elected us want us to stand up for community rights, but not to shove them down the throats of anyone else.

“The proposals for both commemoration and counter-commemoration were frankly provocative by any standard and should never have been put forward. We can’t allow Parliament Buildings to be turned into an arena for the sort of sectarian ping-pong matches between Sinn Fein and the DUP that we have seen in Limavady and Banbridge. We have many sensitive and contentious issues which need to be dealt with, but we need a lot more commonsense and a lot less megaphone politics.

“All parties need to agree that the Assembly and all its facilities are the common property of all. No party has the right to hijack them for narrow purposes, no party has the right to deny them to anyone. We have a serious job to do here delivering better government and a better life for everyone. This sham fight is an ill-considered distraction at a time when we should getting on with the real issues such as job creation, education and housing.

“The interim proposal adopted by the Commission – that events organised in Parliament Buildings must have the support of three cross-community MLAs – is a sensible measure that will allow time to develop a permanent solution.”

ENDS

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