

SF is not entitled to power, says Micheál

MICHEÁL Martin has accused Mary Lou McDonald of having a sense of entitlement to power.

He also claimed the Sinn Féin president's address to her party ard fheis on Saturday evening lacked substance.

Speaking on RTÉ's This Week, the Fianna Fáil leader said she had given a 'flat speech' adding: 'There [were] no radical proposals or solutions contained within the speech. And there was a sense of entitlement that somehow Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael owed Sinn Féin power.' Mr Martin said that there was a sense 'that Sinn Féin and Fine Gael are all talk-

ing about power, getting into power, and not focusing on the key issues'.

Ms McDonald addressed a range of matters at the ard fheis, including homelessness and the CervicalCheck controversy. Sinn Féin has decided against tabling a motion of no confidence in Housing Minister Eoghan Murphy before the Dáil summer recess. Fianna Fáil's confidence and supply arrangement with Fine Gael is nearing the end of its originally agreed period. On Saturday, Ms McDonald said her party would not be excluded from government by Mr Martin or Leo Varadkar.

New Bill to crack the whiplash plague on premiums

MOVES are under way to tackle one of the major bugbears of our compensation culture – 'easy payday' insurance claims for whiplash injuries.

Whiplash injury payouts in Ireland are on average €15,000 per claim, which is vastly more than is awarded in the rest of the European Union.

In the UK, settlements are an average of €5,000, while in France and Spain compensation for injured motorists is capped at €3,000. What's more, whiplash cases make up 80% of injury claims here, but they account for

By Nick Bramhill

at realistic levels. The Fianna Fáil TD said: 'The Government has had various committees, reports, statistics, analyses and studies about this problem. But they still continue to prevaricate, and insurance companies still continue to profit.'

'In my view the basic reason for the high and increasing insurance premiums in this country is court settlements – the amounts being awarded by the courts.'

'The Government will have to introduce legislation which will provide a maximum amount that can be granted for a whole list of injuries in respect of which people go to court.'

He added: 'The people in this country are being robbed by insurance companies. Insurance premiums for people who've had no accident and no claims are rising inexorably... Control the level of awards and you will bring down the cost of insurance. That is the only way to do it. It's the honest approach and I am preparing legislation on that and putting it forward for consideration by the Government.'

Mr O'Dea's comments follow similar concerns raised recently by the AA's Conor Faughnan, following the findings of the AA Ireland survey back in early April.

Mr Faughnan said: 'The average motorist is still paying 20% to 25% more for insurance than they would have in 2015.'

A report last month found the cost of motor third-party injury claims below €250,000 rose 42% between 2011 and 2016 mainly as a result of claims for whiplash.

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just 3% of claims in France.

Now TD Willie O'Dea is behind drafting legislation which would bring Ireland's level of claims in line with the rest of Europe – a move he says would lower motor insurance premiums.

His Bill is separate from the Personal Injuries Amendment Bill which is currently working its way through the Oireachtas and is aimed at stopping fraudulent personal injury claims.

Mr O'Dea's initiative follows a recent AA Ireland survey that found that insurance premiums are still rising – with over half of motorists saying they were hit with a heftier bill this year.

The Limerick TD insisted the trend of rising insurance costs could be successfully tackled once whiplash awards are capped

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lives on concrete floors without bedding before they are slaughtered at eight months old for the European veal market.

Up to this point, they are deprived of iron to ensure their flesh remains pale and soft, the desired texture for the restaurant delicacy.

The Department of Agriculture has reviewed the footage and has fined several of the hauliers for failing to give the calves adequate resting time on their journey.

'Sanctions have been applied to those who were found to have breached regulations,' it said in a statement to the Irish Daily Mail.

The investigation – by the Eyes On Animals lobby group, whose footage was uploaded to YouTube yesterday – tracked thousands of newborn Kerry calves on their journey to Dutch veal farms.

According to the investigators, and documents released by the Department of Agriculture, many of the calves were transported from a collection centre in Killarney to the ferry at Rosslare last March. Some 4,500 calves were transported on 18 trucks that rolled onto the Rosslare-Cherbourg ferry.

The calves in question were still too young to eat solid food, and got water by sucking on rubber-covered metal nipples on the trucks.

The Eyes On Animals footage appears to support the group's

Didn't have enough headspace

claim in its report that the calves on the first level of the three levels on the trucks did not have enough headspace, with their backs almost touching the ceiling.

The young cattle remained on the trucks for the 19-hour ferry journey to Cherbourg in France.

They were supposed to stop at an unloading centre in Cherbourg to rest under European Union regulation 1/2005, which says that, after 19 hours of transportation, unweaned calves must be unloaded, rested and properly fed.

Some were taken off at Cherbourg in compliance with the law, but the majority were hauled an additional five hours to a large agriculture control centre in Abbeville in north east France, where the calves were unloaded.

After 12 hours, they were transported to a large veal farm near De Rips in the southern Netherlands. Their total journey time was 56 hours and 35 minutes – 13 hours more than the maximum transport time under the EU regulation.

The Department of Agriculture, which promotes Irish veal abroad, accepts that this is a violation of the law. However, several hauliers told Eyes On Animals that their journey log indicated that the control centre in Abbeville has been approved by Irish authorities.

This was also stated to the Mail by one of the haulage companies involved, which said there had 'never been a problem' and that it passed on documentation every month to the Department of Agriculture indicating that the calves' first stop was in Abbeville.

The investigation ends in De Rips

Irish veal calves' hellish 56-hour cramped journey to Dutch abattoir

Slaughtered yo

WHITE veal is meat from young milk-fed calves, usually aged between six and eight months.

To produce the desired white colour, calves are fed a restricted low-iron diet and a milk supplement.

The lack of iron in the blood keeps the meat white.

The calf is also discouraged from exercising to prevent the meat becoming tough.

The largest buyer of Irish veal

By Jane Fallon Griffin

calves is the Netherlands, where 70% of production is white veal, according to the European Commission.

In 2007, the EU introduced a ban on veal crates that limited calf movement.

Now they must be kept in individual pens in which they can turn around up to the age of eight weeks; afterwards they

in the Netherlands, where thousands of calves are unloaded into large industrial pens.

The exposé highlights how there is no bedding for tiny calves in these cramped pens, and their waste drops through slats into tanks below. Furthermore, the pens have no stimulation and the calves only have enough room to move a few steps. In the footage, many of

the calves can be heard loudly calling for their mothers, a sound known in agriculture as 'lowing'.

After several months of being huddled together, the front of the pens open and the calves are housed together until they are slaughtered at eight or nine months. They are fed a low-fibre, low-iron diet to keep their flesh soft and pale. White is the desired