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Podcast

Campaign
Literature

RSS Feed



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Policies

Peace Process

Elections

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SDLP – a rudderless ship without direction

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Sinn Féin Assembly Group Leader, John O'Dowd MLA has said that said that the current SDLP leadership is like a rudderless ship without direction and in danger of breaking up on the rocks of political reality.

Mr O'Dowd comments come as the SDLP voting pattern in the Assembly becomes more erratic and its relationship with its sole Minister becomes more estranged.

Mr O'Dowd said:

"When it was revealed recently by one of the Victims Commissioners, Mike Nesbitt, on a television show that new legislation was required to allow them to function fully, Margaret Ritchie sitting beside Mr Nesbitt vowed to move heaven and earth to ensure that the legislation was obtained and obtained speedily.

"However, when it comes to legislation, when it comes to a vote in the Assembly, where it matters, the SDLP vote against the necessary legislation and left Margaret Ritchie sitting on her own, to once again abstain on a bill she vowed to move heaven and earth to achieve. On the next stage of the Bill the SDLP abstained even though their party leader told the Assembly that his party sees no value in blocking the Bill.

"We witnessed a similar approach to the Budget, Programme for Government and Investment Strategy. Support by the Minister and the rest of the SDLP taking a different direction. The SDLP now tell us they did not support the recent RPA announcement though it appears the SDLP Minister did.

"On almost every issue the approach of the SDLP appears to be confused, obstructive and based on the lowest common denominator - negativity.

"Someone from within the SDLP needs to demonstrate at least some level of leadership because the current leadership is more like a rudderless ship lacking any direction and in danger of breaking up on the rocks of political reality." ENDS

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