

Mairead Dunlevy, director, Hunt Museum, John Hunt, whose family donated the Hunt Collection to the State, Mr Bruton and Michael Houlihan, chairman, Shannon development, at the reception to announce details of the grant aid to the museum.



Michael Noonan, Minister for Health, with James Reardon, chairman of the Limerick East FG constituency. (LL)



Mr Bruton with A Hotel.

Green light for Hunt Museum

By DYMPHNA BRACKEN

THE city's tourism plans received a major boost last weekend when the Taoiseach, John Bruton, announced the go ahead for refurbishment of the old Custom House.

The building will accommodate the Hunt Collection - one of the largest collections of its kind in the world.

Mr Bruton, on his first visit to the city as Taoiseach, announced that £2.9m will be make available through European Structural Funds, together with matching funds from the Corporation and the private sector, for the museum.

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The Hunt Collection is comprised of over 3,00 art objects ranging from neolithic and Irish bronze age to mediaeval figure sculpture and works by Leonardo de Vinci and Picasso.

Mr Bruton, who recalled first meeting the Hunt family in 1970 in connection with providing facilities for the public and private sec-

Mayor Sadlier claimed that Limerick, long recognised as the sporting capital, is now being recognised as the cultural capital of the country.

"This announcement is a major advance is ensuring that this recognition is consolidated." he said.

The chairman of the Hunt

Museum executive board, Dr Tony Ryan, said the refurbishment of the Custom House as the Hunt Museum will create a cultural tourism centre and will aid the economic development of the region.

Mairead Dunlevy, director of the Hunt Museum, said the Hunt family gave the people of Limerick not only an internationally important collection but also a unique approach to the study of material.

The Hunt Museum, she said, will remain faithful to that approach, and honour the Hunt family by encouraging an understanding in and enthusiasm for works created by our ancestors.

Michael Tiernan, chairman of the Hunt Museum executive committee, said the development of the Custom House will contribute greatly to the revitathe Collection, complimented them for their generosity in making the Collection available to the city, the country and the world.

He praised the enthusiastic volunteers involved with the project, and said their involvement will ensure that the Collection has meaning for everybody.

He thanked Dr Edward Walsh, president of the university, for providing a temporary home for part of the Collection over the last number of years.

John Hunt Jnr, described the announcement as a great day for the Hunt family after 20 years of a hard slog looking for a home for the Collection.

He particularly praised Deputies Des O'Malley, Jim Kemmy and the late John Kelly, who, he said, backed the project from the beginning.

The intervening period, he said, was fortunate in that it gave everybody concerned an opportunity to study how best the Collection could be made available to the public.

Mr Hunt said he was proud of the fact that the efforts of his family had received the support of both isation of that part of the city close to the historic King's Island.

Dr Edward Walsh, who was instrumental in securing the Hunt Collection for the region, confirmed that the university will continue its long standing commitment to the Collection through its programmes of education and research.

Michael Houlihan, chairman of Shannon Development, described the museum's location, close to King's Island, as of major significance to Shannon Development who have produced, with the Corporation, an integrated plan for the development of the area.

"We see the museum's role in this as pivotal in expanding the city's tourism industry based on, the heritage of the Island," he said.

Mr Bruton was later guest of honour at a private fundraising £80-a-head dinner in the Castletroy Park Hotel organised by the Limerick East constituency Fine Gael branch.

Later, he attended a second function in the Greenhills Hotel.

Jim Reardon, constituency chairman, complimented Mr Bruton for his commitment to the Fine Gael party.

"John Bruton silenced his critics," he said to loud applause.

Mr Reardon paid a particular tribute to Mr Bruton for his commitment to peace, and said the Taoiseach has worked tirelessly to maintain peace on the island.

Mr Bruton said he was happy to celebrate with his supporters in Limerick "the pride the party feel in being back where we belong".

"Our party stands for something distinctive. It stands for putting the country first," he said.

The party, he said, also recognises the need to listen to other viewpoints, which, he said, is particularly important in the peace talks. Introducing Minister for

Introducing Minister for Health, Michael Noonan, Mr Reardon said in relation to his introduction of the Abortion Information Bill "it was as good a performance from a Minister as I have ever seen".

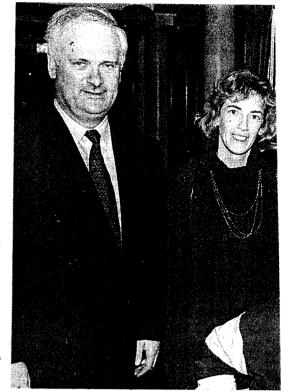
Minister Noonan said the Taoiseach's visit to the constituency was "an honour for all".

He thanked Mr Bruton for giving him the opportunity to serve again in Cabinet, and added: "It was generous of him to ask me".

In paying tribute to the Taoiseach, Minister Noonan said it is recognised by all shades of opinion "that he is doing a very good job".

"He was the real Taoiseach in America," he

On behalf of the constituency, the Taoiseach was presented with a piece of Irish Dresden, and Minister Noonan was presented with a briefcase.



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Nora O'Carroll, Ashbourne Avenue, makes a p



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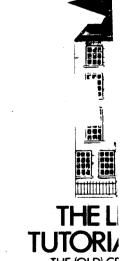
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