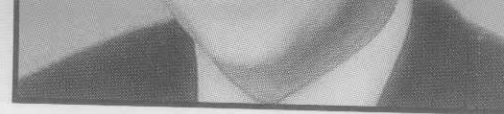


...tion called him a little word in his
ear from Enda Kenny.
Text: **Mark Brennock**



John Dillon

PUTTING THE WELLIE IN

Since taking over the presidency of the Irish Farmers' Association, John Dillon has ignored all advice not to alienate non-farming folk and has gone his own way, speaking his own mind.

For instance, he decided that his organisation should remain aloof from the political parties and the other farm organisations seeking a Yes vote in the Nice referendum. He told the Government that he would persuade the farmers to vote "Yes" and they did, which was a considerable achievement considering the difficult year farmers were experiencing.

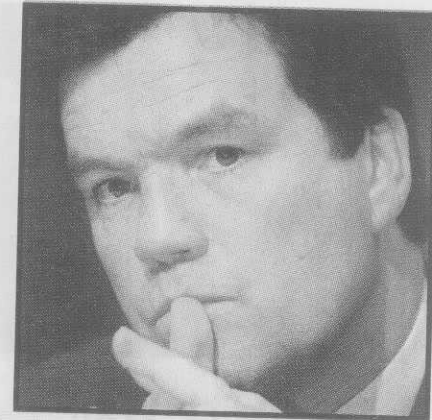
He also took on the meat barons in a series of

protests outside meat factories in the early autumn, and this ended up with farmers securing higher prices for their animals.

The Limerickman, who has not had a holiday in 30 years, refuses to compromise and believes that the public should see and hear the authentic voice of Irish farming. Beset by enemies within his organisation and critics from without, Dillon has nevertheless sailed through his first year at the helm of the IFA and is relishing the challenges of the New Year.

Text: **Sean MacConnell**

Photograph: **Dara Mac Dónail**



Noel Dempsey

A CLASS OF HIS OWN

A Minister with ideas, he seems to have the notion that office is not just about holding power but using it to bring about change. As Minister for the Environment in the last Government, his ambitious plans to reform local government and to boost TDs' role as legislators remained unfulfilled due to opposition from within his own party. Most recently as Minister for Education he has been shaping up to make third level students pay more. His view that third level education is a privilege to be paid for is controversial, but he argues it with conviction. Conviction? Yes some senior politicians have it and Dempsey is one of them.

Text: **Mark Brennock** Photograph: **Frank Miller**