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GENE

I'm not retiring, says O'Malley

By **EUGENE PHELAN**

PROGRESSIVE Democrat leader, Des O'Malley, this week dismissed any suggestions that he is contemplating retiring as party leader and contesting the European elections in 18 months time.

"No question . . . I haven't given that any thought," he told a press conference this week details of the PD national conference in Limerick

from March 26-28 were announced.

Around 1,200 delegates will converge the city for the weekend, spending over £250,000 during the conference, which will be held in the new Foundation Building at the University of Limerick.

"It is a source of great personal pride for me that this year's national conference of the Progressive Democrats will be held in my native city of Limerick. In previous years, our conferences have been held in Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Galway, but until now a suitable venue was not available here in Limerick," said Mr O'Malley, at the conference in the Castletroy Park hotel.

A function will be held in the hotel on the Saturday night with an attendance of 600 expected on Friday night in the Limerick Inn for the president's dinner.

"It is also extremely timely that the Progressive Democrats have finally been able to bring our national conference to Limerick in a year when the party hold the mayoralty of the city, with Cllr John Quinn, and the chairmanship of Limerick County Council," said Mr O'Malley.

He said that the conference was coming at an important juncture in their history, having emerged from their first ever period in Government.

The policy programme

will feature major debates on employment creation, tackling crime and vandalism, constitutional reform, and no fewer than nine policy workshops on a whole range of areas from health and education to culture and sport.

These workshops will be held in adjoining lecture theatres to the main 1,100 seater concert hall.

The conference will also afford the new parliamentary party a timely opportunity to consult with the general membership on the development of policy.

There will also be a social aspect, with the highlight being the performance of Dermot Morgan, the mimic supreme of Irish politicians.

