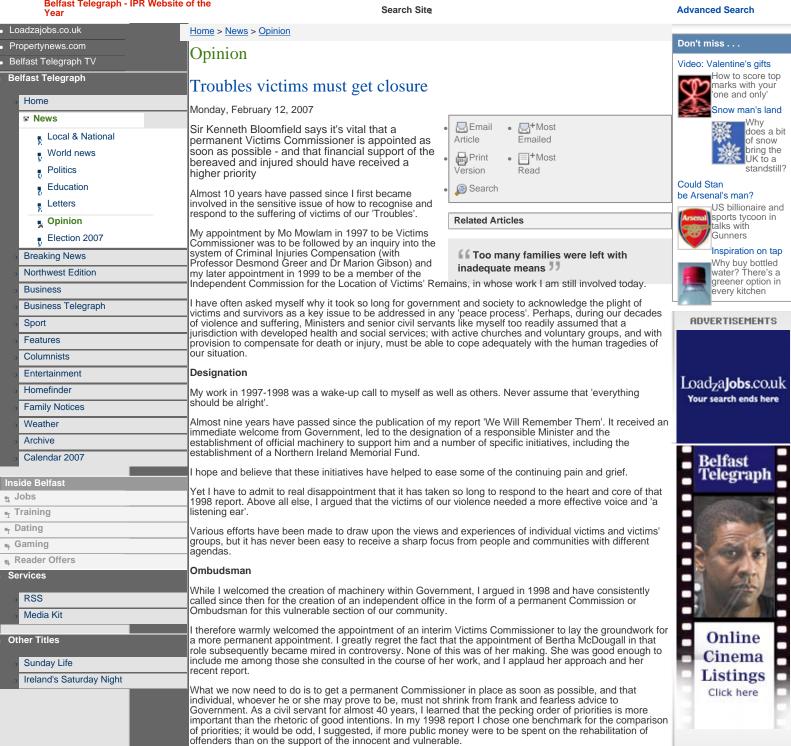
Tuesday, February 13, 2007 Weather: Hi: 7°C / Lw: 5°C Northern ADVERTISEMENT BELFAST TELEGRAPH tv

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Nowadays I reflect on the huge sums of money committed, or likely to be committed in future, to the

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investigation of specific episodes in our sad history.

There are strong arguments for every such initiative, but public expenditure is not 'a zero sum game', and I believe generous support of victims should have received, and should receive, a higher priority.

## Compensation

Mrs McDougall has returned in her report to a problem confronted in our Review of Criminal Injuries Compensation. The greater number of deaths and serious injuries occurred in the earlier years of the Troubles, yet at that time the arrangements for compensation were strikingly less generous than they would later become. We therefore called in our June 1999 report for action to provide "some form of financial assistance by way of the mitigation of the inadequacy of the original award of compensation."

Too many families were left with inadequate means after a 'once for all' settlement conforming to the law at the time, but far from being adequate, let alone generous.

With my current experienced colleague Frank Murray, the Independent Commission continues its efforts to recover the bodies of 'the disappeared'. These cases may be small in number, but huge in impact upon those concerned and the wider community.

Recently, with the help and support of Archbishop Brady, the Catholic Church across Ireland has added its influential voice to a renewed appeal for further information. We cannot, alas, guarantee success; but we are determined to show that no effort will be spared in seeking to bring closure to sorrowing relatives who have borne their terrible burden for so long.

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