



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Question being asked about head of Bank of Scotland in Ireland



Lord Laird

A member of the House of Lords is demanding an investigation into whether security checks were carried out before Phil Flynn, a former vice-president of Sinn Fein and former head of the Irish government's decentralisation committee, was appointed chairman of the Bank of Scotland in Ireland.

Lord Laird, an Ulster peer, is pushing for an inquiry on both sides of border into Flynn's tenure at the bank between 2001 and last February. Flynn stepped down from his position earlier this year after his home and business were searched by the Criminal Assets Bureau as part of a garda inquiry into alleged IRA money-laundering. Lord Laird expects to meet Bertie Ahern, the taoiseach, in Dublin. He is questioning how Flynn received clearance to take up chairmanship of both the Bank of Scotland and the

state-owned ICC bank, when he was known to have been arrested and charged in the 1970s in connection with republican activity and continued to maintain contacts with leading republicans. Laird wants to know whether Sinn Fein members or supporters borrowed money from the Bank of Scotland while Flynn was its Irish chairman.

Flynn resigned from the government's decentralisation committee and a number of private companies. It emerged he was on the board of Chesterton Finance, a money-lending operation in Cork which was at the centre of the garda's IRA money-laundering investigation.

Ruairi Quinn, the former Irish Labour leader and finance minister, has admitted that security clearance was not sought when Flynn took up an appointment as chairman of the state-owned ICC bank in 1996.

A spokesman for Bank of Scotland said they could not make any comment in relation to the former chairman.