



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### Britain sensitive to Irish feeling on UK 200th anniversary



**THE British government intends ignoring a significant anniversary in British history, the union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1800, because it may offend Irish people. Whether or not their ignoring of the anniversary will offend the 1 million Ulster Protestants who believe in the union is, as usual, of no concern to our government. The 200th anniversary of the creation of the United Kingdom will pass unnoticed due to concerns that celebrating the union of Ireland and Britain may ignite tensions in Northern Ireland.**

The Union was supported by Irish Roman Catholics because an unwritten part of the deal was Roman Catholic emancipation. As a result of the wheeling and dealing of William Pitt, which would rival anything that is presently being undertaken by Blair and Mandelson, agreement was reached and the union formed between Great Britain and Ireland.

Regarding the refusal by the British government to mark the occasion, Ulster Unionist member of the House of Lords, Lord Laird said: "I am not talking about a lavish celebration of the creation of the United Kingdom because I am well aware that many people do not see the Act of Union as something to celebrate. It should be officially marked because of the profound impact it had."

The Irish government has planned several projects to mark the bicentenary of the Act of Union, due to take place on January 1, 2001. An official said it had not asked the British government to play down any planned celebrations.