

## **Joint Committee On Agriculture, Food And The Marine**

### **Opening Statement Of John Moloney**

My name is John Moloney. I am Chairman of the Association of Irish Racecourses and last year retired as manager of Galway Racecourse. I have been on the Board of Horse Racing Ireland since December 2010.

I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you here today. I have two simple points which I would like to make.

Firstly there is no question in my mind of Ministers having intentionally been misled.

You have heard from our Chairman, Joe Keeling, so I would like to speak as one of the rest of the Board members. I have been on the Board throughout this process and it is worth noting that five of the current Board members were also members of the Board in September 2011 when the chief executive's previous contract was concluded. It is a board which represents all sectors of the industry.

From 2011, I was aware that there were outstanding issues with the chief executive's contract and was satisfied that the Chairman was dealing with the relevant Government Departments and would come back to the Board when he was ready to. The preference of the Board would have always been to get permission to extend the CEO's contract, however all options could be considered once the position of the Department was known.

The legislation is clear, it is a function of the Board to appoint the Chief Executive.

At our last Board meeting, the Chairman brought the Board through all the correspondence in relation to this matter, including the various letters and meetings with the Department of Agriculture .

I have read all of these letters and I am satisfied that they reflect the wishes of the Board. At our meeting on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September, the Board, agreed that there was no intention to incorrectly inform the Minister nor had the Board's views been misrepresented.

I am clear that I was not misled and I do not believe that the Board was misled. Definitely, the timing and communication could have been better and there are lessons to be learned from that.

The second point I would like to make is that there is no doubt in my mind that Brian Kavanagh is the correct person to fill the position at this time. I have worked with Brian for a number of years and have witnessed him doing his job at first hand. He has been particularly helpful to racecourses in securing new media rights deals and in helping to create racecourse capital development funds. The job is a complex one with many stakeholders and interests to manage and requires a knowledge and expertise of all aspects of the racing, breeding and betting sectors. Brian possesses this knowledge and experience and is well respected in international racing circles. His reappointment has been broadly welcomed within the industry.

We all regret that this situation has developed. There is no doubt that the process could have been done better but I would be confident that the measures that the Board has now put in place will ensure that this does not happen again.