



ST PATRICK'S DINNER  
QUEENSLAND IRISH ASSOCIATION  
TARA HOUSE  
14 MARCH 2002

**THE HON P de JERSEY, AC**  
**CHIEF JUSTICE OF QUEENSLAND**

Mr Chairman, Mr President, Your Honours, Your Grace, Bishop Smith, Dr Pitman, Parliamentarians, Consul-General, Deputy Mayor, Sir James Killen, ladies and gentlemen,

The Committee has been characteristically generous in inviting to speak, this evening, someone who can claim not even a pint of Irish ancestry: and I acknowledge I am much the poorer for that – though my daily close association with a Judge named Martin Patrick Moynihan provides some very considerable compensation.

Now it's an historically proven mistake on this occasion for a speaker to pretend to Irish roots, or to seek to eke out a mere scintilla of Irish origin into a firm skein of silken attachment. So I've been candid and I won't pretend – mind you, with the name "de Jersey" the pretence couldn't have lasted long.

It's an equal mistake, I think, for a speaker on this occasion to be lengthy – unless, that is, he possesses the rhetorical skills of Sir James Killen – which I don't. So I'll also be brief: brief, candid – but also, complimentary.

This annual event in these splendid surroundings provides yet another fine illustration of the Association's commitment to preserve and promote Irish cultural heritage – not only within the Irish community, but also through the wider Queensland community. I warmly commend the Association for that.

And I particularly salute you, ladies and gentlemen, and the countless Irishmen who enrich communities beyond their native soil. Indeed, as Chief Justice, I salute you for being part of the most law abiding, peace loving, good humoured and imaginative segment of the Queensland community!

Now St Patrick did many wonderful things for the Land of Saints and Scholars, including, as we know, banishing the snakes. St Patrick was not born in Ireland, although his 30 year Irish mission marked him indelibly as its saintly patron. And he'd be reassured to see the shamrock so evident here tonight, the shamrock he used to explain the concept of the Trinity.

Many things good in Ireland come in three's – faith, hope and charity, Guinness, Kilkenny and Caffreys! Even the rhythm of Irish storytelling is based on threefold repetition, to foster interest, intensification and exaggeration! Then there is that well-known Irish proverb: “three accomplishments are well regarded in Ireland: a clever verse, music on the harp and the art of shaving faces”.

Well the face is shaven; no harp I'm sorry; but a touch of verse?

May the road rise to meet you,  
And the wind stroke no few,  
There's Guinness for drinking, and that is our due!  
So, all my dear friends, though wanting to dwell,  
I must, I fear, now bid you farewell,  
For not being Irish, my own blarney's weak,  
And that warrants my now, resuming my seat!