



Bualadh bos . . . Gaeltacht goes global

DAVID MCKITTRICK - 18 APRIL 2007

A NEW Gaeltacht is being set up way out west. In fact, it is thousands of miles away across the Atlantic - in Canada.

A group of highly enthusiastic Irish-Canadians have gathered together to finance a little bit of Ireland about 130 miles from Toronto. They have combined to buy 60 acres of land near the small but aptly named village of Erinsville, whose first five mayors were Irish.

Aralt Mac Giolla Chainnigh, a lecturer at the Royal Military College of Canada, said: "In the first instance it will be a place where people can go at any time of the year and speak Irish with others.

"It's a place where they can go when they want to regenerate their cultural batteries and, especially, to come back into contact with the language. It will eventually be a focal point of Irish culture and heritage in all its forms - music, dance, literature, drama, sport, and art."

The new Canadian Gaeltacht will, of course, have links with Ireland, and plans to run courses for schools, colleges and adults, eventually erecting cabins to house around a hundred people. There are already Irish language "immersion weekends" run in various parts of Canada and the US, but this will be the first permanent institution to be established.

Mr Mac Giolla Chainnigh said: "To establish a viable future for Irish in North America, we must bring the language to our homes. Raising our children with Irish - as well as English, French or Spanish - expands their horizons, while at the same time passing the living language to the next generation."

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