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The statue of Robert Emmet in "Reservation 42."

Patriot's Park

By Ray O'Hanlon

It has bounced back and forth between the House of Representatives and Senate.

That's quite a trick for a bronze statue.

But now the little plot of land in Washington, D.C. that is home to a statue of Irish patriot Robert Emmet is included in a wide ranging Senate land bill, S.47, which had been under consideration by the Senate's Energy and Natural Resources Committee chaired by Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

The inclusion should ensure that the small park will finally, and formally, bear Emmet's name - though this after the House of Representatives matches the Senate's approval.

It will be a stunner if it doesn't.

The legislative language for the naming of the park after Emmet had passed muster in the House in 2016. It was hoped at the time that the Senate would then add its approval in the centenary year of the 1916 Rising.

It seemed like a simple enough task but other matters, more partisan than bipartisan, took precedence in what was a most highly charged election year.

So when Congress rose for the November election that presidential year the naming of the park in honor of Emmet fell by the wayside.

But not for too long.

The next Congress, the 115th, was asked again in 2017 to name a plot of land run by the National Park Service after Emmet, he of the immortal "speech from the dock."

Legislation to this effect was introduced by then congressman, Joe Crowley.

And it was backed by a repeat group of co-sponsors from both parties, Reps. Tom Rooney (R-Fla.), Chris Smith (R-NJ), Peter King (R-NY), Eliot Engel (D-NY), Richard Neal (D-Mass.), Mike Doyle (D-Penn.), Brendan Boyle (D-Penn.), Kathleen Rice (D-NY), and Jim McGovern (D-Mass.).

This combined force was successful and the House of Representatives duly voted unanimously for the re-naming.

The Senate awaited. And awaited.

Now it has finally embraced Emmet.

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Avoid both hard border and rush to unity

UNESCO WARNING



By Anthony Neeson

A new report has warned that a hard border in Ireland in the aftermath of Brexit would make a return to political violence in Ireland "inevitable."

The UNESCO report also warns that rushing into a referendum on a united Ireland would also result in conflict.

UNESCO, the United Nations Environmental, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is based in Paris.

The report, by Professors Mark Brennan and Pat Dolan, identifies one problem being that Ireland's older generation have not discussed the horrors of the Troubles with younger people.

"This lack of capacity to discuss in real ways what happened can unintentionally act in favour of those who would prefer to give youth (and particularly vulnerable and impressionable young people) a false, almost romantic, retrospection of the past up to and including a very sectarian analysis," the report states. It adds: "In as little as six weeks it is possible that a

hard border could materialize due to a no-deal Brexit triggering a return to violence in Northern Ireland."

The UK is due to leave the European Union on March 29. However, MPs at Westminster are at odds over Prime Minister Theresa May's deal with the EU, making a no-deal Brexit more likely.

Meanwhile, Tánaiste Simon Coveney has said that although Irish government plans are in place for the possibility for a no-deal Brexit it would have a "huge strain on the Irish economy."

The government's no-deal plans are due to be published on Friday, February 22.

"It is important to say that, while we have a huge amount of contingency planning in place, I wouldn't like to give the impression that we can easily manage a no-deal Brexit," said Coveney.

"It will put huge strain on the Irish economy. It will put a huge strain on agriculture and various sectors, but we are doing everything we physically can to ensure we prepare as best we can to protect Irish interests."

IAUC pitched Emmet to Murkowski

By Ray O'Hanlon

As the U.S. Senate prepared to consider a sprawling land management bill, S.47, the Irish American Unity Conference penned a letter to Senator Lisa Murkowski about a tiny piece of land.

Murkowski, who chairs the Senate's Energy and Natural Resources Committee, had introduced Section 2202 into the bill, the Natural Resources Management Act.

The IAUC, in its letter dated January 30, commended the Alaska Republican for that introduction.

"Section 2202 of S.47 provides the re-designation of National Park Service Reservation 302 as 'Robert Emmet Park.' Reservation 302 is the site of a statue of Irish Patriot Robert Emmet, who was executed by the British in 1803 for his advocacy of freedom for Ireland and is a hero to Irish Americans," IAUC National President, Peter Kissel, noted in his letter to



Senator Lisa Murkowski.

Murkowski.

Kissel wrote in part: "The IAUC submitted testimony to the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission in favor of the re-designation proposed in your bill.

"Jack O'Brien testified on behalf of the IAUC and AOH that naming the site Robert Emmet

Park will honor a selfless advocate for human rights and freedom, would be most gratefully appreciated by Irish Americans, and would also grace the parkland by bestowing on it a dignified name, rather than a mere number.

"It would thus encourage interest in the site and tourism by allowing for better publicity in brochures and reference books."

Kissel noted that the NCMAC had informed the House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources by letter dated November 29, 2016, that the commission members had noted that naming the park would be appropriate, and would not be inconsistent with the Commemorative Works Act of 1986.

"It is most appropriate that the small park on which the statue is located should be renamed in honor of Robert Emmet. We heartily endorse S.47 and we thank you for your sponsorship," Kissel concluded.

Emmet

Continued from Page 1

The Robert Emmet sculpture was donated to the Smithsonian Institute by Irish Americans in 1917 to commemorate the Irish struggle for freedom.

In 1966 it was moved to its present location on National Park Service land in Northwest Washington, D.C. near the Irish embassy in a ceremony attended by the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and cabinet officials.

The park, officially dubbed "Reservation 42" by the National Parks Service, was refurbished and there was a reopening ceremony in 2016.

The park is a small triangular piece of ground that, once the re-naming bill is approved, again, by the House, will be officially known as "Robert Emmet Park."

The Emmet statue was commissioned by the Smithsonian, funded by a group of Irish Americans, completed in 1916 by Irish sculptor Jerome Connor, and installed in the Smithsonian's U.S. National Museum.

President Woodrow Wilson, not a great fan of the militant version of the Irish independence struggle, spoke at the dedication ceremony, which was attended by many dignitaries.

On the 50th anniversary of that first dedication, in April, 1966, the Smithsonian loaned the Emmet statue to a small National Park Service site near the Embassy of Ireland.

It was duly rededicated.

The then-Speaker of the House of Representatives, John McCormack, presided over the ceremony, and remarks were made by, among others, the secretary of the Smithsonian and the ambassador of Ireland. President Lyndon Johnson conveyed his admiration for Emmet in a message that was read at the event.

The rededication event back in the spring of 2016, the second such, saw the now former Irish ambassador to the United States, Anne Anderson, and Rep. Crowley, presiding over a ceremony at the park site, which is at Massachusetts Avenue and 24th Street.

Ambassador Anderson said in part at that gathering: "Patrick Pearse, in particular, venerated Robert Emmet and gave expression to his admiration in stirring speeches he made in New York and Brooklyn during his U.S. visit in 1914.

"The parallels between the two men are striking: both understood heroic failure; both faced execution with stoicism and dignity; in both cases, their voices resonated more powerfully from the grave than they did in life. This statue we rededicate today is uniquely important. Although over a hundred years had passed since his death, this was the first statue of Robert Emmet created anywhere."

A separate statement from the Irish Embassy read in part: "The project encompasses re-landscaping the entire site and installing a way-side information marker. The National Park Service is working in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution, the Irish American Unity Conference and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, all of which have contributed resources to the project."

Congressman Crowley, who also spoke at the 2016 gathering, has a strong personal interest in Robert Emmet.

A portrait of Emmet given to him by his father was, before his 2018 election defeat, hanging in a prominent place in his office on Capitol Hill.

Rep. Crowley, in a statement following that last House vote, said: "For many Americans, the admiration for Emmet reflects a deep and abiding pride in Irish-American history, as well as the lasting worldwide influence of our own American history.

"I'm proud that this famed leader, whose work inspired a movement for Irish independence for generations, is a step closer to being honored with the designation of the Robert Emmet Park."

The campaign to have the park named for Emmet, executed by the British after his failed rising of 1803, has involved a number of individuals and organizations, but principally Jack O'Brien of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Irish American Unity Conference.

County Leitrim Society of New York



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