

## **We cannot accept being dragged out of Europe**

A PROMINENT Scottish politician has warned the British Government that there are no short to medium-term advantages to be gained from Brexit only short to medium-term pain.

Speaking at the inaugural Killarney Economic Conference, Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, Michael Russell, warned that there can be no legislative consent from Scotland without the required changes and the minimum demand was the retention of the single market and the customs union.

“We cannot accept Scotland being dragged out of Europe against our will. We are not reconciled to the inevitability of Brexit,” he told the gathering in the Brehon Hotel, Killarney.

Mr Russell warned that Brexit would lead to chronic labour shortages and, due to an ageing population, a continued reduction in population and services.

“There is no evidence of global opportunities of an unrivalled nature that will come from Brexit, none whatsoever. It makes no sense in trading terms or in economic terms,” he said.

In a speech that went down particularly well with the Killarney audience, Mr Russell stressed that every single area in Scotland voted decisively against Brexit yet there has been no compromise.

He predicted that if there was a second referendum the people would reject it by an even greater margin, with polls suggesting a rejection margin of to 70 per cent.

“A misunderstanding of freedom of movement is driving this issue rather than the issue itself. Freedom is movement is essential,” Mr Russell added.

“There will come a time, particularly in Scotland, when people will have to decide if what they didn't vote for is what they are prepared to accept or whether there is an alternative. The people of Scotland will have to make a choice between Brexit and another future and I think their future is in membership of the EU,” he remarked.