

Welcome to Healy-Rae country

A DUP politician who met former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern during dinner at the Killarney Economic Conference didn't expect the answer he got when he asked him if Kerry was a traditional Fianna Fáil or a Fine Gael stronghold.

"Neither my boy," Bertie replied, 'tis Healy-Rae country".

The anecdote from Jonathan Buckley, MLA, was met with howls of laughter at the high-powered two-day conference in The Brehon where many of the leading academics, politicians and economists had gathered to discuss the fallout from Brexit. "I think what he said is a political theory in itself and it might be worth exploring even further," Mr Buckley said.

His DUP colleague, Gary Middleton, said he was ashamed to admit that attending the conference was his first visit to Killarney – but he certainly intends to return.

The MLA for Foyle remarked: "I made the six-hour drive right down along the west coast to come here to Killarney. It was an absolute delight to go into the town and to see some of the sights, like Torc Waterfall.

"I will take back some of those things to the family and say this is a place where we should come on holiday," he told the gathering in the Brehon Hotel.