

Danger from nuclear subs in Irish Sea

A GROUP of peace campaigners bound for Faslane and the Holy Loch were made welcome in Stranraer last Friday.

The group — a combined delegation from Northern Irish and Eire CND were on a peace mission to the nuclear bases at Faslane and the Holy Loch. There were met at the ferry terminal in Stranraer by members of Scottish CND who were to act as their guides during the rest of their visit.

Labour Euro MP Mr Alex Smith also greeted and welcomed them to the South of Scotland constituency. He laid on a reception for the campaigners at Stranraer's North West Castle Hotel. Local solicitor and CND member Gordon Dangerfield, Wigtown District Councillor William

Scobie, jnr and piper John Harvey, who gave the visitors a traditional and rousing welcome, completed the reception committee.

A member of the group, Jane Dillon, a councillor from Dun Laoghaire, near Dublin, expressed delight at the warmth of the welcome provided.

The purpose of the group's visit, was, however, a serious one. A leader of the group, Deirdre Cantwell, was one of the schoolgirls who were exposed to a radioactive cloud from the Windscale plant many years ago. She has since been heavily involved in research into the disproportionate number of Down Syndrome babies born subsequently to her fellow students. She was trying to draw attention to what she sees as the considerable dangers which exist as a result of nuclear submarine activity in the Irish Sea.

"Over 30 lives have been lost in the Irish Sea in mysterious circumstances", she said. "We who live along the Irish Sea find this situation chillingly unacceptable. There is no doubt that those responsible for some of these incidents and tragedies left the bases at Faslane and Holy Loch.

"Ideally", she continued, "we look forward to a time when there will be no submarines lurking beneath the waters of the Irish Sea, but until that day comes, there are certain steps which the commanders of the bases at Holy Loch and Faslane can take to render the Irish Sea safer for those who use it.

"We ask that all submarines travel on the surface until they have left the Irish Sea, that submarines use sonar and radar while in traditional fishing waters and that fishing fleets be informed in advance on the location and duration of submarine exercises. We earnestly hope that the authorities will consider these requests and respond favourably to them".

Mr Smith expressed himself to be in complete sympathy with the desires of the campaigners. He said "It is a pleasure to welcome people of such commitment and integrity to the constituency and I hope that the authorities will take note of what our friends in the Irish movement have to say".

After leaving Stranraer, the delegation were welcomed the next day by Dumbarton District Council and Strathclyde Regional Council and received presentations from these councils and from Scottish CND. They handed letters to the commanders of the bases at Faslane and Holy Loch and said these were politely received.

