From the Belfast Telegraph this morning:

The debate on whether Northern Ireland would benefit from a reduction in the rate of corporation tax has been one-sided.

The virtual monopoly in the media for the proponents of a reduction in corporation tax raises questions about the objectivity and neutrality of the media in Northern Ireland and whether the public are well-served by what can only be described as a partisan approach in favour of the influential pro-business lobby.

The case against a reduction in corporation tax is well-articulated, but effectively sidelined.

The main critical analysis of the issue is contained in the publication Pot of Gold or Fools Gold, Richard Murphy's report for the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

More recently, the Wilberforce Society - a body with no particular axe to grind - has published a report concurring with Murphy.

There has been no intellectual challenge from the pro-business lobby to these critical voices - except that the case for a reduction in this tax is now being nuanced to suggest that, while it may not now be characterised as a silver bullet for our economic ills, it is very much a necessary central plank in the 'strategy' to invigorate our local economy.

I think the point in the last paragraph is key: there has been no intellectual response to the challenge I and the Wilberforce Society have raised to this absurd proposal. Mantra seems to be enough.

My fear is that the same will happen in Scotland.

And as Brian Campfield who wrote the article noted:

The former chairperson of the CBI in Northern Ireland, when questioned by Lady Sylvia Hermon at the Northern Ireland affairs committee, admitted there were no guarantees a reduction in corporation tax would create jobs. We are playing roulette with public

funds and hoping for a win.

But the hope is against hopeless odds.

So why are we doing this if it is not to provide further subsidy for business owners at cost to everyone else?