

BRITAIN'S National Audit Office has accused the government of producing figures purporting to show the profitability of farming which were incomplete and unreliable. These figures are used to calculate the scale of subsidies that are paid to farmers — yet they exclude non-farm incomes, for example. The NAO suggests that "it would be relevant to policy information" to discover how much of farm subsidies passes into other hands through higher land prices. Public cash support for farming is about one-third of the annual net product of £4.3bn.

GOVERNMENT FARM PROFIT

FIGURES 'UNRELIABLE'

Market fight hope for Crotty

IRISH academic Raymond Crotty's legal battle to prevent his country from ratifying changes to the Treaty of Rome goes on — see story below.

Mr Crotty is a staunch anti-common marketeer who believes that Ireland should not be a member of the EEC.

By fighting all the way to the Supreme Court in Dublin, 61-year-old Mr Crotty succeeded where others, including the Danish Parliament, all 10 regional governments in West Germany, and Lord Denning in Britain failed.

For seven weeks, he blocked the Irish Government's attempts to complete the formalities needed to bring the treaty changes into effect.

Mr Crotty brands these changes as an attempt to bind the Irish people firmly into a federal European state.

Defiantly, he says that federation may be sensible for the continental countries but against the interests of Ireland. "Historically and economically we are part of the Third World," claims Mr Crotty, a lecturer at Trinity College, Dublin.

"It was predictable that joining the EEC would prevent us from facing up as we had for 50 years already to what we wanted to do with our independence. Ireland's fate in the EEC is to be permanent lap-dog, a permanent beggar."

Critics have tried to dismiss Mr Crotty as an eccentric, but the facts are on his side. For Ireland



● Raymond Crotty

PAUL KNIGHT REPORTS

was told that, by joining the EEC, she would reap the benefits of being a member of a huge market. The reality is different.

- After 14 years membership, Ireland has a third fewer farmers, 15 times more farm debt and lower net agricultural production *per capita* than at any time since the potato famine in the 1840s.

- Far from creating new jobs, there has been a drop in employment to the point where there are now fewer people in work than at any time since the 18th century, and with a massive outflow of workers to the United States — many of them as illegal immigrants. Forty thousand leave the

shores of Ireland every year.

The principal beneficiaries have been the owners of farmland — the inevitable consequence of Common Agricultural Policy subsidies, according to Mr Crotty, for whom land value taxation is the cornerstone of his proposal for reform of the tax system.

By mounting a campaign based on legal and economic arguments, Mr Crotty succeeded in obtaining a High Court injunction restraining the government from lodging proof of its ratification of the treaty changes.

The High Court finally rejected his claim that the changes would irrevocably damage his rights under the constitution of the Republic, a decision that was overturned by the Supreme Court.

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NOW A REFERENDUM

RAYMOND Crotty's dogged action in the courts has forced the Dublin government to stage a referendum.

The Supreme Court eventually ruled in Mr. Crotty's favour. By a three-two majority the judges decided that ratification of the Single European Act would be unconstitutional.

The government cannot now adopt policies to expand European co-operation on foreign policy.

Mr Crotty's solicitor, Mr Joe

Noonan, said the court's decision meant that under the Act Ireland would be giving away its right to decide its own foreign and security policies.

The Prime Minister, Charles Haughey, was forced to reconvene his parliament, the Dail. He needed a law passed which would enable the government to stage a constitutional referendum.

The voters can now pass judgment on 14 years membership of the Common Market.