

**a
better
future**

**■ fine
gael ■**

Let the country win



Garret FitzGerald.

Let the Country win

What the country needs now (and has not been getting) is a Government which will be prepared to govern. Fine Gael will give Ireland such a Government. We must tackle rising prices and unemployment particularly among our young people. New incentives must be given to industry and agriculture. We need a firm and clear position on Northern Ireland a problem which we must face together without ambivalence.

Fianna Fail's attempts in all these areas have, unfortunately, failed.

Decisions made and actions taken by our Government will be directed towards making the country win rather than any sectional interests. My resolution about this is unshakeable.

Being prepared to govern may involve shunning the easy way. Our actions will be taken in the national interest, not designed purely to please any one group or based on short-term expediency.

Ireland is entitled to demand now of its leaders that they gather together in one community what has been unwisely scattered and divided, that they replace strife by co-operation, that they honestly measure and justly administer our resources.

It is not seriously disputed among disinterested people - amongst the public at large, indeed - that our social economic and financial affairs need rapid and decisive action. Our Programme sets out

what that action must be. It is directed primarily towards planning and securing a future for our community based on firm foundations.

Our Programme summarises the results of some, though not all of the work or policy completed during the last couple of years by Fine Gael. It describes the strategy we have decided on and makes clear the direction in which we will move.

As a nation, we now realise that, in what it does, a Government is, of course, partly affected by events which have not yet happened and cannot be foreseen. The needs created by these events may dictate actions in the national interest which we cannot as yet predict.

But in all we do the country will come first.

As we face into the uncertain future, let us remember that the country has come through worse times. It will do so again. The future which many foresaw for a free democracy was very gloomy in Ireland 60 years ago. Yet by the operation of a unique Irish gift for political action, a civil war was ended. In a remarkably short period of time there emerged Irish institutions to which we all now give allegiance and this took place by the work of people of both traditions arising from our terrible Civil War, as well as the Labour Party. In the '70's there has been a falling away in this

allegiance, partly due to the failure of these institutions to give adequate participation to all sections of the community as well as to their failure to respond adequately to a rapidly changing society. This must be altered.

No doubt we will have a hard fought political campaign.

But when I form an alternative administration I want "the country to win". I want to bring to an end an era which though it started brightly in the sixties, is now ending sombrely as we enter the eighties.

There can be no minimising the gravity of our situation. People of all parties who think and speak in sincerity and truth want an honest, realistic approach to our problems. I hope that all our parliamentary parties whether in Government or in Opposition will share afterwards in the solution to our problems by a process of open debate. I hope that out of all our efforts will come a modernised Ireland strengthened in its place among the nations by a people whose enterprise and native drive in the proper interests of their own families will be multiplied for the good of all by a matching compassion for others.

Garret FitzGerald

ECONOMIC PREFACE

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The public investment programme is now on a very large scale. Though some of the components of this programme may be criticised as not yielding an adequate return either financially or in terms of social benefit (e.g. jobs) it cannot be denied that heavy public investment is needed by our economy at this time.

However, none of the capital for this investment is provided out of current revenue, as is done in many other countries. On the contrary, in addition to borrowing the whole of the capital needed for investment, our current expenditure needs are also being financed by large-scale borrowing. Allowing for obvious under-estimation in the Budget and additional commitments entered into since, it now seems that this borrowing for current purposes may amount to as much as £800m. in 1981. This is a staggering figure, implying total borrowings by the State and State bodies in excess of £200m. or over 20% of our national output.

Taken in conjunction with the Central Bank estimate of an external payments deficit of £1,300 m. for this country in 1981, these borrowing figures mark a grave economic crisis, and threaten the longer-run stability of our currency.

In these circumstances no responsible political party can legitimately put forward a programme involving current expenditure commitments in the next couple of years that are not matched by a clear statement of how the revenue to meet these commitments will be raised.

At the same time there are tax reforms that urgently need to be undertaken to remove disincentives to initiative or effort or for reasons of equity. And there are productive sectors of the economy which need urgent State aid in order to induce growth, without which none of our problems can be solved. There is also the urgent need to ensure that our present generation of young people is not deprived for purely financial reasons of the opportunity to qualify themselves to play their role in the future development of our country.

Fine Gael recognises these needs. In this Programme it attempts, within the limits imposed by the financial chaos left (by Fianna Fail) to meet them. But it does so responsibly, setting out, both in relation to its proposed tax reforms and in relation to proposals involving increased expenditure, how it proposes to raise the necessary money. Whatever

the conventional wisdom may say about the political risks of this approach, any other approach would in present circumstances deserve to be, and would, we believe, be rejected. Our people have been sickened by the politics of promise, and by the accumulation of an unsustainable level of borrowing which they and their children will have to repay.

Our proposals, by stimulating economic growth, will increase tax revenue and reduce the financial burden of unemployment payments. If the current budget deficit were of the scale set out in Fianna Fáil's Budget Estimates viz. £515m. — it is likely that a majority, although not all, of the current deficit could be bridged in this way. If, however, as seems to be the case, the true current deficit is much larger than Fianna Fáil have admitted, only a minority of it might be met by buoyancy deriving from growth. Much will of course depend, in either case, upon the trend of the world economy.

We cannot ignore the fact that this current deficit is unlikely to right itself without specific government action. We shall not follow the Government in its deliberate decision to ignore this fact.

In Opposition we cannot however assess the scale of this problem or the kind of measures that will be needed to deal with it. We can, however, indicate an approach to tackling it in office.

First, the current deficit will be phased out over a five-year period. Second, in choosing between measures to achieve this objective we shall give preference to reduction in public expenditure — which in the meantime must be tightly controlled — as against tax increases, especially in view of the sharp increase in the burden of taxation in the present years. Waste and duplication will be prime targets for Government action.

Finally, this is a problem that will have to be faced whatever Government is in power. Economic, financial and business opinion — reinforced most recently by the Central Bank itself — is unanimous that our currency cannot maintain its value if action is not taken. Fine Gael differs from Fianna Fáil in being prepared to state the truth about this, and to take whatever action may be necessary to deal with a problem which is threatening the future of all our people, their jobs, their living standards, and, ultimately, the political stability of our State.

Finally Fine Gael believes that significant oil and gas deposits exist in the seas around our coasts, including the Celtic Sea as well as the Porcupine Bank, and to an extent under our land. These new resources will start to become available to us within about four years. They must be prudently used. We must plan for the best use of these new resources. This means that these resources must not be frittered away on current spending or used to justify further borrowing, but must be put to use in developing the neglected infrastructure of our country. In the decades ahead this infrastructure will have to accommodate the development needed to provide employment for the massive increase in our labour force. Fine Gael pledges to use these resources in this way for the nation's benefit.

Fine Gael believes that, in spite of international uncertainties, we can plan ahead as a nation. It will start by establishing a five-year planning system for Government activity itself linking all spending programmes with clear targets for achievement.

FINE GAEL ECONOMIC PROGRAMME

The Economic Crisis

The Problem: The country is in grave economic crisis. Unemployment and short time working are major problems which are causing hardship to many families, uncertainty in the minds of others, and increasing the need for taxation. Farm income has fallen dramatically with job losses in the processing sector. There is a need to use our resources and industrial capacity to the full, so as to increase employment, and reduce the costs of unemployment. The Fianna Fáil Government refused to recognise this and has accordingly failed to develop a programme to reverse the difficulties.

Rising prices and costs are destroying the livelihood of our people, and are increasing the cost of our products to the point where they cannot compete at home against imports. This in turn is causing employment to drop in Ireland. This inflation is largely caused by Government mismanagement, as is evidenced by the lower rate of price and cost increases in other countries hit equally hard by rising energy prices. Ireland's prices are increasing twice as fast as the rest of the EEC. These cost increases have affected farm incomes most of all, because the prices secured for agricultural produce are set by the needs of our EEC partners. Fine Gael believes that both **unemployment** and **inflation** must be tackled immediately.

The Anti-Inflation Programme

An 18-month Anti-Inflation Programme along the following lines will be introduced:

1. Fine Gael will establish an independent Economic Commission, to set a level of cost increases to be known as a "price norm", which will allow us to sustain our competitiveness. Taking productivity into account, the Commission will provide the Government with guidelines as to the resources available for pay demands.
2. The Government will use these guidelines in pay discussions.
3. State Bodies will be required to adopt the price norms in their domestic price policies.

4. Excise duty increases other than any required as part of the tax reform, will not exceed the appropriate price norm.
5. Those who do business with the State will be held to the appropriate price norm.
6. Businesses exceeding the price norm with their prices will be subject to investigation by the Prices Commission.
7. Dividends and non-pay incomes will be held to the pay norm except in expanding firms which increase employment. Such firms will be allowed to use the rise in their total pay bill arising from increased employment as a guideline.
8. To increase the 'take home' gain from pay increases Fine Gael will reduce the tax rate for most workers to 25%. New child benefits in respect of dependent children will further increase after-tax gains.
9. Fine Gael will subsidise foodstuffs to the extent that price increases of bread, sugar, butter, milk, cheese and flour will not exceed half the price norm during the Anti-Inflation Programme.
10. By reforming industrial relations Fine Gael will help the maintenance of pay agreements and the avoidance of destructive unofficial strikes.
11. By reducing foreign borrowings and phasing out the current Budget deficit in a planned manner over a four-year period, Fine Gael will defend our currency against the risk of devaluation, with its consequent inflationary dangers.
12. Fine Gael will strengthen Restrictive Practices legislation to eliminate uncompetitive practices which artificially increase prices.

This programme is designed to reduce inflation to EEC levels. Everyone will benefit from this, with real growth in resources replacing a hopeless spiral.

The Fine Gael Solution

THE EMPLOYMENT EXPANSION POLICY

Reducing costs and prices for industry (and thereby making our products competitive) Measures are needed to increase rapidly the capacity of our industry to become competitive (and therefore take on new employees.) By concentrating on export industry or import-competing sectors at home we can ensure that the benefits are real.

1. Fine Gael plans to reduce from 10% to 8% the employer P.R.S.I. contribution made by the manufacturing and tourist industries/
2. Fine Gael will reduce the 1981 Budget tax increase on industrial fuel oil by 50% to make manufacturing more competitive/ (For financing of this see Costing Section).
3. Fine Gael will increase the production of beef and milk/ to raise employment in the food and agri-business sectors./
4. Fine Gael will introduce a tax credit for employers to encourage them to increase employment/
5. Fine Gael will abolish disincentives causing absenteeism.
6. The I.D.A. will be encouraged to set up joint ventures with private interests mainly in advanced technology.
7. The public sector will be encouraged to develop and diversify on a basis of fair competition with the private sector.
8. Existing State Agencies will be encouraged to develop with private investors any practical innovations which they find arising from their activities.
9. By providing new housing finance sources Fine Gael will increase construction investment.
10. Fine Gael will reduce the marginal tax rates for the great majority of taxpayers to 25% to increase the incentive to work/

These proposals will create productive employment/ instead of temporary "make work" jobs/ because they are targeted towards sectors which can sustain development/

The cost of the 2% reduction in P.R.S.I. in manufacturing and tourism will be financed by a 1% increase in P.R.S.I. in other sectors/ and the Tax Credit for employers increasing employment will be paid for by the consequent reduction in unemployment benefit and additional P.R.S.I. revenue.)

AGRICULTURE

The Problem

Farm incomes have declined drastically, and production has fallen. Moreover as a result jobs outside agriculture are being lost. There is need for an urgent plan to revive agricultural production and increase livestock numbers.

The Fine Gael Solution:

(Note: Some of these schemes require EEC sanction and in the case of a number of them EEC aid will be sought).

Re-Stocking Incentives – A Four-Year Programme

1. £100 will be paid per additional cow up to a maximum of 40 extra cows in any one herd. The additional £100 per cow payment will be made in two instalments one in the first year of the herd increase and the second two years later. These payments will be in addition to the existing headage payments and beef cow subsidies where these apply.

2. To secure expansion of the national breeding herd — cows, ewes and sows — assistance will be offered based on an interest rate subsidy of 5% over a five-year period on capital expenditure involved in adding extra numbers to the basic herd. This scheme will be operated through the Co-Ops, Banks and ACC.

3. A scheme analogous to the Italian calf subsidy scheme will be sought. This will take the form of a £22 per calf subsidy, payable up to one year old, to a limit of fifty calves in any one herd. Pending agreement on such a scheme, Fine Gael will introduce a special calf-rearing subsidy of this amount to be paid in herds not covered by the two preceding proposals.

4. Fine Gael will introduce a ewe subsidy equivalent to £10 per ewe in the Disadvantaged Areas and in the Designated and Mountain Sheep areas, up to a maximum of 150 ewes per farm.

5. A breeding stock tax allowance at the rate of 110% on all additional breeding stock will be given as an incentive to increasing herd size.

Fertiliser and Silage Aids

6. In order that basic fertilisation of the land be brought up to the minimum desired level Fine Gael proposes a subsidy of £4 a tonne for lime.

7. A grant of £4 per tonne, up to a maximum of 50 tonnes, will be paid to first time silage makers. This grant will also be extended to those 14,000 who were first-time silage makers in 1980, provided they construct a concrete silage slab.

Interest Subsidies

8. Many farmers who borrowed substantial sums of money for farm development purposes in recent years at moderate interest rates are now in financial difficulties as a result of substantially increased interest rates and lower profit margins. Fine Gael proposes that a 5% interest subsidy will be paid in these cases of need up to a maximum of £50,000 borrowings.

9. A special interest Subsidy Scheme other than those referred to above will be operated to assist young farmers developing farms taken over from their parents.

Land Reclamation

10. All reclamation in the twelve western counties will qualify for grants of 70% of the cost — cost to include not only drainage and levelling, but also ploughing, cultivation, fertilisers, stone picking and reseeding.

Disadvantaged Areas

11. Fine Gael will abandon the DED unit as a basis for submissions to extend the area to which Disadvantaged Areas Schemes apply and will submit to the EEC proposals based on parts of DEDs where the land is poor.

Rates Abolition

12. Fine Gael will abolish Agricultural Rates on all full time farmers who draw up an agreed programme of expansion over a 5-year period with their ACOT adviser or other authorised agency.

Farm Taxation

13. Fine Gael will sympathetically examine the application of the manufacturing tax rate of 10% to farm profits retained in the farm enterprise. Only distributed profits would then be taxed as income.

14. The threshold for Capital Acquisition Tax which affects the handing on of family farms will be restored to its real 1975 level, and indexed thereafter.

15. In order to ensure immediate substantial transfers of land to young trained farmers, stamp duty on such transfers will be suspended for a two-year period.

16. A reduction of the VAT rate on contractor charges to 3% will be introduced to encourage and retain agricultural contracting services in all rural areas.

Disease Eradication

17. Subject to the overriding need to maintain access to export markets, the period of the 30-day pre-movement test for brucellosis and T.B. will be extended to 60 days, for animals sold within the State. The 30-day period will apply to animals for export.

Dog Control

18. Legislation on dog control will be up-dated.

Planning

19. Fine Gael will introduce a five-year plan for agriculture to be implemented through County agricultural planning teams co-ordinating the activities of all relevant State agencies in each county/ and setting production targets for each county.

20. Fine Gael will set up a special committee composed of representatives of the farmers' organisations, co-operative societies and the Government to draw up plans urgently for expansion and development of the food processing industry.

21. Fine Gael will also examine the handling of the grain harvest with a view to securing the maximum EEC aid available in relation to it.

TAXATION

The Problem:

Our present income tax system operates as a disincentive to initiative and as a stimulus to inflationary pay demands by taking too large a share of every extra £ earned. There is a widespread feeling, which undermines the social cohesion required to put our economy back on a growing path, that the system is inequitable with substantial scope for avoidance and evasion. The income tax system has become increasingly deficient in making provision for larger families, penalises widows and widowers, offers no recognition of the role of the spouse working at home and is unfair to people living in rented accommodation. The Social Welfare contribution system places an undue share of the burden of paying for the costs of unemployment on those with modest incomes, as compared with those on higher incomes. Similarly the widening gap between revenue from health contributions and the cost to the Exchequer of the free hospitalisation scheme arises in part because those on higher incomes make a relatively smaller contribution.

Reforms in the Capital Gains Tax, where anomalies exist which reduce Exchequer revenue, are needed.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. To reduce the standard tax rate to 25% and to apply this to incomes up to £15,000 for married couples (£7,500 for single people).
2. To reduce the maximum tax rate to 55% with an intermediate rate of 45% for incomes between £15,000 and £20,000 for married couples (£7,500 - £10,000 for single people).
3. To replace the present personal tax allowances by a tax credit of £1,000 for a married couple (£500 for a single person), which at the proposed 25% rate is the equivalent of a personal allowance of £4,000 for a married couple (£2,000 for a single person). (A tax credit is a remission of tax due to be paid; thus a married couple with £5,000 a year, 25% of whose income would be £1,250, would have £1,000 tax remitted and would pay only £250 tax as against £559 at present).
4. Half of the married tax credit will be payable directly to a spouse, normally the wife, working in the home, unless she (or he) opts to have it used as a credit against the working spouse's tax liability.

- 51 10 5. The married tax credits and tax bands will be applied to all widows and widowers, and to single parents with dependent children.
- 51 10 6. A new Child Benefit as a Parents' Allowance will be payable through the post office (or designated bank) at a rate of £3 per week for each child and £4 per week for the sixth or later children.
- 10 51 7. The benefits of the present various compassionate allowances) as well as reliefs in respect of interest, life assurance, pension contributions, medical insurance, repairs to residences, etc. will be carried over into the new scheme so that no individual will be worse off.
- 17 17 8. A temporary employment levy, operating until unemployment falls below 6%, designed to help finance present costly government measures to create employment and alleviate unemployment, will be payable on the portion of income that exceeds £8,500 a year. The levy will be equivalent to the present P.R.S.I. rate of 3.75% for employees which is payable on income up to £8,500 a year.
- 21 9. The Health Contribution will be raised to 2½% and the income limit will be removed.

- 10 10 10. Capital Gains Tax. This tax will be reviewed to remove anomalies) but the principle of taxing only **real** Capital Gains, viz. increases in Capital values over and above the rise in prices generally, will be maintained.
- 9 11. Fine Gael will explore methods of giving recognition to the role of small businesses in particular in collecting taxes through VAT and P.R.S.I.

10 10 These tax reforms will be financed by a once-and-for-all shift towards expenditure taxes, which will be somewhat less than the increases in these taxes in recent budgets. As these expenditure tax increases will be part of a tax remission scheme offering net benefits to all but the highest income brackets, they will not be an appropriate basis for additional pay claims. Adjustments in social welfare payments will, however, be made to take account of cost of living increases affecting these groups, which will not benefit from tax remissions. The effect on lower income groups will be minimised by the choice of expenditure taxes to be increased.

43 43 Details of the costing of these tax changes will be found in the Costing Section together with details of how Fine Gael propose to finance certain additional expenditure to aid agriculture, industry etc.

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE AND BORROWING

The Problem:

21 Government expenditure and public borrowing are out of control.

The Fine Gael Solution:

43 Fine Gael will restore order to the public finances by means of a comprehensive economic and social plan, which will be published within four months of assuming office. This plan will include the 1982 Budget Estimates and five year projections of revenue and expenditure. The plan will provide for:

1. The elimination over a four-year period of the present current budget deficit.
2. The reduction over this period of foreign borrowing by the Exchequer.
3. Expansion of the Public Capital Programme with total emphasis on **measurably** productive investment.
4. The maximum delegation of responsibility within the public service.
5. The publication in September each year of the Budget for the following year and its discussion by the Dail over the following two or three months.
6. A Deficit Budget Reporting System.

43 A crucial element in the plan for the restoration of sound public finances, will be the independent Economic Commission already referred to in connection with the Anti-Inflation Programme, which will have the task in connection with each annual budget of assessing the Government's projections (revenue and expenditure) and estimating the probable rate of growth of the economy and of the Exchequer income under the Budget proposals.

43 Under the new Budget arrangements a Deficit Budget Report will be published within a month of any Budget proposals involving a deficit. This Report will set out the economic implications of the planned deficit, the structure of domestic and foreign borrowing required to finance the deficit, the debt repayments arising from the proposed borrowing and the implications for future taxation of the service charges.

12, 43 As part of a concerted plan to eliminate wasteful public expenditure, Fine Gael are committed to the introduction of a scheme for rewarding civil servants and other public sector employees who devise systems or methods for reducing such wasteful expenditure.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Problem:

The present state of industrial relations in this country is a matter of concern to everyone. The effects of strikes fall not only on those directly involved but on the consumer and the general labour force. Even in the absence of strikes, poor industrial relations lead to reduced productivity and a loss of competitiveness.

The Fine Gael Solution:

Fine Gael published their proposals on industrial relations in March 1980 under the title "Working Together - A Charter for Labour Peace". This policy includes:

1. Proposals for strengthening trade unions by introducing a licensing system which would guarantee their negotiating status while providing them with the right to substantial benefits.

2. Giving legal protection to I.C.T.U. arrangements for "All Out" pickets and "particular" pickets.
3. Extending legal protection to picketing at all places of employment, but **only** at these places.
4. Providing for cooling off periods in essential public utilities.
5. Enjoyment of legal protection by pickets of licensed trade unions only.
6. Establishment of a statutory Worker Participation Agency which would include representatives of I.C.T.U. and F.U.E.
7. Exemption from income tax of any shares issued to workers under a worker shareholding scheme.

Fine Gael proposes to initiate discussions with employer and trade union organisations on measures for improving procedures and practices of industrial relations and personnel management.

ENERGY

The Problem:

1. Ireland's present dependence upon expensive imported fuels, especially oil;
2. Lack of an energy policy specifically suited to Ireland's needs and resources;
3. Over-centralisation of energy supply in a very few power stations;
4. The enormous cost and potential hazard of nuclear power stations.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. Pending a significant Irish oil find no further oil-only generating stations will be built. Dependence on oil will be reduced to one-third of total generating capacity. A swing to coal-fired stations will be directed.
2. Fine Gael will establish a pilot combined heat-and-power station near residential and industrial areas of appropriate size e.g. not less than 4,000 to 5,000 households.

3. The establishment of a small-scale hydropower plant industry and a solar cell industry will be investigated.
4. A long-term, short-rotation forestry programme will be introduced in order to exploit efficiently one of our most plentiful national resources.
5. Refuse will be used as a fuel for electricity and/or heat production.
6. A Cork-to-Dublin gas main for Kinsale gas will be constructed.
7. The 300 mw. E.S.B. link with Northern Ireland will be repaired and protected.
8. Regulations will be introduced to enforce minimum standards of insulation in new housing.
9. Fine Gael is opposed to any use of nuclear power stations for Ireland's energy needs, as long as any doubt remains about their safety, or concerning a safe method of disposing of nuclear waste.
10. A national award scheme for energy saving houses will be introduced.

INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

The Problem:

In spite of substantial I.D.A. investment, employment in manufacturing industry is scarcely above the level of seven years ago. In addition there is an increasing concentration of employment in foreign owned enterprises as domestic Irish enterprises have failed to prosper. This foreign concentration is even more marked in the grocery distribution sector and poses a considerable threat to our food manufacturers and, ultimately, through excessive concentration, to domestic consumers.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. The Fine Gael Anti-Inflation Programme will provide a major boost to industry by ensuring that the rise in prices and costs is in line with our major trading competitors.)
2. The reduction in the employers' P.R.S.I. contribution in manufacturing and tourism industries will improve those industries cost position.

3. A rebate of one-half of the fuel oil tax imposed by Fianna Fáil in the 1980 Budget will be made available to manufacturing industries.

4. In order to halt the growing concentration of large supermarket chains – the majority of which are foreign owned – legislation will be introduced to prevent any single concern controlling more than 30% of the market or any five (or less) concerns controlling over 45% of the market.

5. Further legislation will license new retail outlets that include grocery sales, whose sales area exceeds 5000 sq. feet.

6. Below cost selling – which is a temporary and predatory practice designed to create a dominant position by eliminating rivals with less financial backing – will be prohibited in order to protect the existing competition in the retail grocery sector.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The Problem:

To maintain stability and growth in this labour intensive industry.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. Fine Gael, in consultation with the Industry, will regulate the issuing of public capital contract works so as to ensure a steady flow of work for this industry thereby allowing it to plan ahead and to build up and maintain its specialised workforce.
2. Fine Gael will ensure adequate monies will be allocated to servicing large tracts of land so that

in conjunction with the mortgage grant incentive scheme the pay-related and top-up loan mortgage scheme and the shared-purchase scheme, a significant stimulus will be given to the house-building section of the industry.

3. Fine Gael will provide the framework and encouragement for involvement of the Construction Industry in provision of major revenue-generating facilities such as toll roads, city centre multi-storey or underground car parks and recreational facilities, for the Local Authorities.

4. Fine Gael will designate specific areas for special tax allowances and incentives so as to encourage re-development.

STATE ENTERPRISES

The Problem:

Some State bodies have generated enormous losses a number of which – though by no means all – have been due to bad management or fundamentally unrealistic strategies. There nevertheless exists in many of these bodies a fund of enterprise and initiative which is not being tapped.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. Fine Gael proposes to overcome this problem through mobilising the entrepreneurial capacity in the public sector by encouraging it to operate commercially. This will be subject to safeguards to ensure that no State Enterprise competes unfairly with the private sector.

2. A minority shareholding in such potentially commercial enterprises will be made available to the private sector, to help ensure a commercial approach to expansion plans and to release State capital for further public investment.

3. A Public Enterprise Board will be established to hold the State's shares in these public enterprises, and to appoint directors to them, thus reducing the area of patronage that exists at present. This body will also have available expertise to ensure against a repetition of the kind of mistakes that have been made.

4. The salaries of the Chief Executive of public enterprises will be determined by their Boards, and will be such as is necessary to attract people from the private sector.

TOURISM

The Problem:

Tourism, an area of major concern in the Irish economy, is in a depression. International competition for tourists is extremely active. Petrol, drink and cigarette prices in Ireland and the costs of transportation generally are a source of concern for the tourist industry. Apart from the necessity to attract foreign visitors it is recognised that many Irish people go abroad for holidays who might well be attracted to remain here by imaginative selling and direct competition with package holidays abroad.

The Fine Gael Solution

1. Fine Gael will reduce the Pay Related Social Insurance Contribution levies on employers in the tourist industry from 10% to 8%.

2. More Bord Failte funds will be diverted to smaller resort hotels and guest houses. 70% of our hotels have under 30 bedrooms and this is our most vulnerable sector of the industry.

3. Excise duty increases will be limited as indicated in the Anti-Inflation section of the Programme.

4. Fine Gael will initiate a programme by the Department of the Environment to improve roadways, clear up beaches and provide picnic areas with proper facilities.

5. Fine Gael will embark upon a critical examination of transportation in order to improve the facilities available to tourists.

6. Fine Gael recognises, with serious concern, the difficulties of pollution and the problem of lack of cleanliness. Our rivers and streams must be cleaned up, not merely of visible debris, but also made pollution-free.

7. Fine Gael will launch a campaign which will have as its central theme the recognition of the importance of maintaining our environment.

8. An incentive scheme to encourage courtesy towards tourists will be introduced.

TRANSPORT

The Problem:

There is a need for a National Transport Policy. No such policy exists at present. The problem in Dublin and other urban areas is particularly acute. Congestion has risen and bus services have deteriorated.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. Fine Gael will remove responsibility for National Primary roads from the Department of the Environment and locate it in a Department of Transport.

2. Fine Gael will establish a National Transport Authority. The new N.T.A. will develop and execute a national transport policy.

- 19, 43 3. The National Transport Authority will give clear guidelines for C.I.E. and other transport companies.
- 18 4. Fine Gael will move to modify restrictions which impede efficient road haulage.
- 18, 43 5. A Dublin Transport Corporation will be established.
- 18 19 18 18 6. Several measures proposed by the Transport Consultative Commission will be implemented. These include bus lanes, increased investment in new buses and the strict enforcement of No Parking regulations on major roads.
- 18 43 9 7. Investment in off-street car parking facilities will be promoted. These will be self-financing, private enterprise being encouraged to undertake the provision of the facilities.

- 18 8. Heavy investment in rapid rail transit facilities is needed. Fine Gael will continue to fund the construction of a rapid rail transit system between Howth and Bray, and in addition will introduce commuter services on the existing main lines that run through or near the outer Dublin suburbs.
9. Fine Gael will provide the capital required by C.I.E. to implement within the next five years the sections of its Rapid Transit Rail Scheme to provide rapid rail services from Tallaght, Clon-dalkin (Ronanstown) and Blanchardstown to the Heuston and Broadstone stations, and to establish a busway from Dundrum to the centre city along the track of the old Harcourt Street line.
- 18 Further stages of the Rapid Transit Rail Scheme will be considered by Fine Gael in Government.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- 18 Fine Gael fully recognise the vital importance of efficient Postal and Telecommunications Services to the economic and social life of the nation. Fine Gael will proceed as rapidly as possible with the restructuring and streamlining of these vital national services.
- 18 18, 43, 40 Fine Gael will give statutory authority to An Bord Telecom and An Bord Phoist after full consultation

with Staff Associations and Trade Unions representing all employees in the existing Department of Posts and Telegraphs.

- 18 We fully recognise the serious problems confronting those who operate the country's Sub Post Office services and the urgent need to find appropriate solutions to those problems. We will take action accordingly.

GAELTACHT

An Fhadhb — agus an Réiteach

- 30 Glactar leis go bhfuil géar ghá le polasaithe agus ath-eagrú chun an Ghaeltacht a chaomhnú agus a neartú. Sé an Ghaeltacht foinse agus údar do ghnéithe tabhachtacha dar gcultúr Gaelach, an teanga ach go h-áirithe, Ní mór forbairt na Gaeltachta a ath-réimniú agus tá céimeanna pholasaí á moladh chun an fhorbairt seo a chur chun cinn.

Moltaí Fhine Gael:

- 10 30 1. £1,000 d'ardú ar an deontas ata ann faoi láthair.
- 10, 30 2. Ardófar deontas Gaeltachta go £6,000 dóibh siúd atá ag ceannach tí don chéad uair.
- 30 3. Beidh an scéim deontais do thithe móra solúbtha dóibh siúd a d'fhág an Ghaeltacht agus d'fhill ar an Ghaeltacht ó thíortha thar lear agus atá anois pósta le duine ón gcoigríoch.
- 10 30 4. Ardófar deontas mhná tí i gcóir Coláisti Samhraidh go leibhéal réalta, sé sin, to £300 bunaithe ar chostaisí 1981.

- 30 5. Ardófar deontas scoile ó £10 go £20 agus cuirfear an bhéim ar líofacht teangan.
- 30 6. Iarrfar ar Bhord na Gaeilge dul i gcomhairle le hUdarás na Gaeltachta agus tuarascáil ar a n-imeachtaí a chur ar fáil don Udarás.
- 30 7. Fanfaidh comhdhéanamh an Udaráis féin mar atá, i.e. le móramh na mball tofa go daonlathach ag pobal na Gaeltachta.
- 30 8. Beidh tionchur ag baill an Udaráis ar reachtáil cúrsaí polasaí.
- 30 9. Caithfear teangmháil níos mó a bheith ann idir baill agus feadhmanaigh an Udaráis agus cuirfear fochoiste ar bun chun gach gné d'imeachtaí an Udaráis a scrúdú agus tuarascáil a thabhairt do na baill.
- 30 10. Cuirfear coiste faoi leith ar bun chun an réim gríosaithe atá ar fáil do thionscnaimh a scrúdú. Déanfar na deontais níos solúbtha chun iad a chur in oiriúint do fhorbairt úsáid achmainní nádúrtha na Gaeltachta.

- 11. Toisc go bhfuil titim i dtarraingt na ngríosaithe tionsclaíochta atá ag Udarás na Gaeltachta le h-ais eagraisí forbartha eile, ceadófar gríosaithe breise don Udarás láithreach.
- Ina measc siúd, beidh na gríosaithe breise seo a leanas –
- Na scéimeanna deontais ata ar fáil faoi láthair a dhéanamh níos so-lúbtha sa chaoi go gcuirfear in oiriúint iad do fhorbairt acmhainní nádúrtha na Gaeltachta i dteannta bunú agus meadú tionscail déantúsaíochta.
- Deontas úis a chur ar fáil ar iasachtaí airgid atá riachtanach chun tionscnaimh a bhunú nó a fhorbairt.
- Chun na Gaeltachtaí a dhéanamh níos tarraingtí do thionsclóiri an réimse socmhainní atá i dteideal deontas a leathnú, áiseanna bunstruc-túir, iompair agus cumarsáide san áireamh.

- Scéimeanna agus deontais oiliúna agus traenála a leathnú sa chaoi go gcuirfear ar chumas mhuintir na Gaeltachta sprioc phostanna ard-bhainistíochta a líonadh sna tionscail Gaeltachta.
- An scéim iompair oibrithe atá i bhfeidhm faoi láthair a fhairsingiu.
- Déanfar comhordú ar eagraise forbartha tionscal le cinntiú go mbainfear an toradh is fearr astu le fostaíocht a chur ar fáil do thionscail Ghaeltachta.
- Déanfar athnuachaint ar scéimeanna deontais do mhiontionscail tar éis mion-scrudú a dhéanamh ar a n'éifeacht.
- Tabharfar príomhacht i leith dul chun cinn na gComharchumann Gaeltachta atá ag plé le forbairt eacnamaíochta agus cultúrtha na Gaeltachta.

FISHERIES

The Problem:

To secure an exclusive fishing zone around Irish coasts and privileged access for Irish vessels in more distant waters; to control effectively illegal inroads into our fisheries; and to develop the Irish fishing industry.

The Fine Gael Solution:

- 1. Despite the 'sell-out' by the new Fianna Fail Government in 1977, which lost Ireland the possibility of an exclusive zone that might have run up to 30 miles from our coasts, to negotiate in the EEC for an exclusive zone of at least 12 miles, with dominant preference for Irish vessels in our 200 mile economic zone.
- 2. To strengthen the law against fishery offences by foreign trawlers by examining and revising legislation relating to arrest, detention and fines.

- 3. To take steps to prevent the evasion of the law in relation to Irish fishing rights by controlling the registration of foreign vessels as Irish.
- 4. To seek from the EEC grants to cover part of the operational costs of Irish fishery protection vessels which are being built to protect our 20 mile zone.
- 5. Duplication in research will be met by ensuring co-ordination under the auspices of B.I.M.
- 6. The mariculture industry will be promoted in conjunction with local co-operatives and other interests.
- 7. Gradual acquisition of fishing rights will be undertaken by the Central Board of Fisheries as they become available for sale, so that their full potential may be realised on behalf of the people.

FORESTRY

The Problem:

Exceptional opportunities for Forestry development which exist in Ireland are not being exploited.

The Fine Gael Solution:

- 1. Fine Gael will encourage private investment in forestry.
- 2. Aspects of Social Welfare legislation will be examined relating to income disqualification which militates against the availability of land for afforestation by making it unattractive to let land.

- 3. A review of existing tax legislation will be undertaken, to ensure that long term investors are equitably treated for tax purposes.
- 4. Subject to the retention of amenity aspects Fine Gael will consider selling smaller forests or parts of State forests to private investors.
- 5. Fine Gael will encourage the maximum activity in government and Semi-State bodies in the commercial exploitation of forests.
- 6. A long-term, short-rotation forestry programme will be introduced in order to exploit efficiently one of our most plentiful national resources.

Social Policy and Social Reform

24 Fine Gael believes that economic advances and increased material prosperity must be accompanied by a national community effort to create a socially just and caring society.

24 24 24 24 24 24 The weak in our society such as the elderly, the young couple seeking adequate housing, the poorly paid worker with a large family, the ill and disabled, lose out when a Government is unwilling to protect their interests *vis a vis* other strongly-organised groups seeking to promote their claims on the public purse and public policy.

24 24 24 24 24 Only a coherent social policy framework with a commitment to a number of clear and achievable goals is capable of establishing the necessary national commitment to share the fruits of our increasing economic prosperity with all the members of our society, organised and unorganised, rich and poor, weak and strong.

17 25 Resources are limited and will remain so even with the attainment of the economic growth potential that Fine Gael believes is possible. Therefore a social policy for the next five years will have to concentrate resources on a number of high priority areas. Fine Gael believes that these areas include:

25 25 25, 51 — The provision of increased resources for large families, especially where the bread-winner is relatively lowly paid, and increased recognition of the vital social rôle played by mothers in the family home.

25, 46 25 25 — The ending of the present unsatisfactory retirement prospects facing many workers who, after a lifetime of employment, can face catastrophic declines in income on retirement because of an inadequate old age pension scheme.

23 23 — Ensuring increased access to education for all children, especially access to higher education for children of families with modest means.

52 10 24 — The creation of a genuine housing policy which will provide an opportunity for young couples with no more than average incomes to acquire a home of their own without excessive repayments, and which will also deal with the problem of insanitary and overcrowded housing conditions.

24 24 — The introduction of wide ranging legislation protecting children in Irish society and removing important disadvantages and sources of deprivation.

24 24 — The introduction of new approaches to health care at community level which will remove the present divide between public and private medical treatment.

24 24 24 24 24 35 17 24 These specific measures, designed to establish the social priorities of Fine Gael, will be supplemented during Fine Gael's period in office by a number of other measures detailed below. All policies are designed to create a caring society, a society where equal opportunity is not a slogan but a daily reality and where the widening gulf between the materially better off and the poor in our society is narrowed. Without such policies there can be little hope of obtaining the national cohesion necessary to ensure the continued growth in the Irish economy and the growth in resources required to establish a truly just and caring society.

Housing

The Problem:

- 10 10 10 1. The inadequate supply of good quality housing and of house purchase finance to meet the annual demand.
- 10 2. The cost of mortgage repayments in the initial years.
- 10 3. The gap between the maximum loans and new house prices.
- 63 10 4. Failure in the enforcement of planning regulations; delays in completion of housing estates.
- 24 5. Absence of protection for tenants.

The Fine Gael Solution:

- 25 25 1. **For those on the Housing List: Adequate Public Housing.**
Fine Gael will ensure that an adequate number of publicly built houses will be provided.

2. **For Local Authority Tenants and those on the Housing List who want to buy their own house: 'No Deposit' Shared House Purchase Scheme.**

10 10 10 10 10 10 Fine Gael will introduce a shared housing purchase scheme with no deposit, designed to assist Council tenants or applicants to buy a share in a private house of their choosing. Loans will be repaid as normal together with a rent element for the balance. **Grant incentives for first time purchasers will apply whether the house is new or not, and will be applied directly to purchasing additional shares of the equity for the occupant.**

3. **For House Purchasers Through Existing Agencies who have Deposit Problems: Top-Up Loans.**

10 10 The pay-related mortgage will operate in conjunction with the other sources of funding for

house purchase. Fine Gael will arrange with Building Societies that a new pay related top-up mortgage can be used to bridge the deposit for these borrowers. As it is pay-related, this top-up loan will bear far less heavily in the first few years than any other source of borrowing used to fund deposit shortfall.

4. **For those who wish to purchase a House but who cannot afford the repayments through Existing Agencies: Pay-Related Mortgage Scheme.**

Fine Gael in Government will establish a **Housing Finance Agency** which will lend up to four times a borrower's income to first-time house buyers.

5. **For those seeking Housing in the Gaeltacht: Gaeltacht Grant Incentive**

First time eligible purchasers in Gaeltacht areas will receive a further £1,000 over and above the £5,000 package now available to first-time house purchasers there.

6. **For the Elderly: Purchase and Lease-Back**

Fine Gael propose, through the Housing Finance Agency, to introduce a new scheme whereby elderly people on low or fixed incomes, who nevertheless own substantial dwellings, could improve their circumstances by selling their house to the Housing Finance Agency while continuing to live there for the remainder of their lifetime. They would be paid **either** a cash sum, which they could then use or invest, or a guaranteed income which would help solve their weekly cash worries whilst still allowing them to live in the home.

7. **For first time buyers:**

Fine Gael will implement the £4,000 scheme presently available for first-time buyers.

8. **Home Improvement and Energy Saving Grants**

Fine Gael will introduce a special £1000 (or $\frac{2}{3}$ of the cost whichever is the less) Grant for work carried out to conserve energy/or provide solid fuel central heating. The grants will apply where the work is done by a registered contractor and where the PLV doesn't exceed £30 and where no grants have been received in the preceding 5 years.

9. Fine Gael will introduce £1000 (or $\frac{2}{3}$ of the cost whichever is the less) grants to provide water and sewerage and extra bedroom accommodation to relieve overcrowding in owner occupied homes.

10. **Other Housing Measures**

(a) Fine Gael will enable potential house purchasers to insure against the risk of redundancy for at least a two year period.

(b) Fine Gael will ensure protection of widows living in mortgaged accommodation. Mortgage Protection Insurance will be incorporated in all mortgage schemes.

(c) More aid, including technical advice, the provision of developed sites and work supervision will be provided for co-operative housing.

(d) Fine Gael will ensure that Local Authorities provide serviced sites at low cost to individuals and small builders.

11. The phasing-in of the new house finance schemes outlined above will be closely co-ordinated with the Construction Industry with a view to ensuring an expansion of housing supply to meet the additional demand thus created, and in this way preventing the kind of escalation of house prices that followed the introduction of the £1,000 grant in 1977.

12. **Land Servicing, Land Prices and Compulsory Acquisition**

Fine Gael will give priority to increasing the supply of serviced land. New provisions will be introduced for land acquisition by public authorities which will fully compensate owners, particularly farmers for disturbance. However, such compensation will not be such as to impose an unfair burden of site costs on owners or renters of dwellings built on this land as at present. The current situation whereby land owners adjacent to serviced land are compensated for **not** developing their land will be altered to remove this anomaly. Compulsory acquisition procedures will be amended to speed up the process, providing maximum periods for the various stages of the process.

13. **Grants towards Uncompleted Housing Estates**

Fine Gael propose where all legal or planning control measures have failed to introduce a scheme to pay to Councils the full cost of carrying out the work necessary to take over these estates.

14. **Housing Estates**

Fine Gael will extend the measures existing to ensure the completion of public and private housing estates on time. The effect will be that developers will be required to carry out work by a specified deadline. To ensure full accountability, details of the ownership of development companies will be required before work is embarked on. The law will be extended so as to enable Local Authorities to repair properties which are health hazards and charge the owner with the cost of repair work.

15. Rented Accommodation

- 19 (a) A Fair Rents Tribunal will be established to set rents which will be fair, both to tenant and landlord. In the event of the present rent restriction legislation being held unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, Fine Gael will introduce legislation to ensure fixity of tenure for existing tenants, and where rents fixed in rent-controlled accommodation are beyond the means of the existing tenants a rent subsidy scheme will be introduced for tenants in possession.
- 19 (b) Fine Gael will give the right to a written lease: no rent will be payable until the landlord fulfils this requirement.

- (c) Fine Gael will introduce a new tax credit for private tenancies up to a maximum of £1,000 rent.

16. Planning and Fire Regulations

- 45 (a) Penalties for breaches of planning regulations will be increased so as to be an effective deterrent to such breaches.
- 45 (b) The draft building regulations will be put into force immediately and new and effective legislation on fire safety will be enacted.

HEALTH

The Problem:

- 25 (a) Inadequate hospital facilities.
- 43 (b) A cumbersome administration of health services.
- 24 (c) Discrimination against some categories of patients or non-recipients of benefit.
- 24 (d) Lack of facilities for particular types of patient e.g. the mentally ill.

The Fine Gael Solution:

- 43 1. Fine Gael will immediately review the performance of the eight Health Boards.
- 25, 51 2. During its period of office, legislation will be introduced to secure that wives of insured workers who are working at home will receive free dental and optical benefits.
- 24 3. Fine Gael will concentrate staff and facilities in areas of greatest need, encouraging day treatment of patients with minor illnesses. It is the policy of Fine Gael to place emphasis on patients' needs and rights, particularly the need of children to have their parents with them especially in the early stages of hospitalisation.
- 43 5. Hospital outpatient treatment will be improved with a system of realistic appointment times and opening of outpatient departments outside normal hours to facilitate people at work.
- 24 6. A review will be undertaken of the distribution of orthopaedic facilities, taking into account the areas where such facilities are especially lacking at present. The employment of specialists from outside the public service to help to catch up with the backlog will be undertaken and similar action will be initiated in the dental and ophthalmic services.
- 25 43 7. Local hospitals will be developed fully so as to maximise access by relatives to the sick.
- 47 8. Fine Gael will devise a long-term plan for a standard design multi-purpose social services centre combining: clinic, employment office, social welfare office, library, information centre, pre-school/creche facilities, meeting rooms etc.

- 25 Similar plans will be devised for mobile clinics equipped with medical and dental surgeries to bring services to remote areas and to develop the schools' medical and dental screening system.
- 25 9. There will be a gradual reduction in the period that doctors must wait before being eligible to participate in the General Medical Services Scheme.
- 10 10. Special incentives will be introduced, whether by way of tax reliefs or payment of locums, to enable doctors to participate in post-graduate or other relevant courses.
- 25 11. Fine Gael will create the post of Dental Auxiliary or Hygienist to supplement inadequate dental facilities. Such auxiliaries will be used in a programme of dental education in schools.
- 25 12. The schools' medical services will be extended to the age of 16.
- 25 13. Fine Gael will move to include chronic asthmatics and arthritics and coeliacs in the long term illness scheme.
- 40 14. Greater authority will be delegated to the Management Boards.
- 43 15. There will be a complete review of the psychiatric hospitals including a public enquiry, with a view to radical reforms of the present system.
- 25 16. Fine Gael will provide assistance to families with mildly mentally handicapped children in order to supplement the care received at home.
- 25 17. Fine Gael will introduce a strict control of the over-use of expensive proprietary drugs.
- 72 18. Fine Gael is unalterably opposed to the legalisation of abortion and in Government will initiate a referendum to guarantee the right to life of the unborn child. Fine Gael recognises that a pro-life policy places an obligation upon us to support the single mother.
- 32 51 Fine Gael proposes to do this for example by treating single parents with dependent children as married persons for taxation purposes and by other social measures.

DISABLED AND HANDICAPPED

The Problem:

There are serious defects in the provisions made in Ireland for the disabled and handicapped. These exist both in the facilities which are available and in training and job opportunities.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. Fine Gael will guarantee the disabled their full rights as citizens of our country.
2. Fine Gael dedicates itself to achieving in government the aims and objectives of the Rehabilitation International "Charter for the Eighties".
3. Fine Gael will ensure that all new public buildings are made fully accessible for disabled persons.

4. The implementation of the 3% quota for the employment of handicapped persons in the public sector will be rigorously pursued.
5. Fine Gael will examine measures to provide for the residential needs of the mentally handicapped.
6. The Disabled Persons' Maintenance Allowance, Disability Benefit, Blind and other pensions and benefits on which the disabled depend, will be reviewed and protected against inflation.
7. Fine Gael will ensure that the disabled in Vocational Training will be accorded full equality with their able-bodied peers in respect of allowances and other benefits.
8. Greater support for voluntary effort in relation to the mentally handicapped and the autistic.

SOCIAL WELFARE

The Problem:

- (a) The Social Welfare system has become de-personalised and over-centralised.
- (b) There are long delays in the administration of the service which impose severe hardship on socially disadvantaged groups.
- (c) The persistence of poverty in Ireland is a blight on our society.
- (d) The development of a modern Social Welfare system has been retarded by the lack of innovations in this area over the last four years.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. Fine Gael has as a priority the decentralisation of the system so that Social Welfare payments can be made locally. As a first step Fine Gael will establish offices in Cork, Limerick, Galway, Waterford, Castlebar, Cavan, Tullamore and Kilkenny.
2. Fine Gael is committed to index-linking of social benefits while at the same time continuing the process of raising the real level of these benefits, especially for those that are long-term beneficiaries.
3. Fine Gael will introduce realistic home-heating provisions for the elderly.
4. Fine Gael will immediately re-establish and fund the National Poverty Committee, in accordance with our long-term aim of eliminating poverty in Ireland.
5. Fine Gael undertakes to examine the possibility of speeding up the payment of sickness benefit by allowing approved employers to make these

payments, and offset them against their liabilities to the Department of Social Welfare.

6. An independent appeals system against decisions refusing benefit will be introduced.
7. Improvements in the Supplementary Benefits Scheme, including the retraining of field staff engaged in its implementation, will be undertaken.
8. Fine Gael undertakes, as a matter of urgency, to consider major improvements in the child allowance element of a single parent's benefit in order to make it easier for such a parent to remain at home.
9. Fine Gael will provide that all widows and widowers and single parents with dependent children shall be treated as married persons for tax purposes.
10. Fine Gael will undertake a study of the possibility of freeing pensions up to a certain figure from taxation in place of the present tax exemptions on pension contributions.
11. There will be an extension of the free telephone scheme to include elderly couples living together.
12. Incentives will be provided to people to retire early, thus leaving posts free for unemployed people or school leavers. There will be a reduction of the Social Welfare pension age to 65 within the Government's first term of office.
13. A scheme of social insurance for the self-employed, designed to meet their needs, and to phase out social assistance gradually, will be worked out.

CARE OF THE ELDERLY

The Problem:

24 Many of those who have spent their lives working in and for Ireland are too often forced to spend their old age suffering needlessly. Hunger, lack of proper nutrition, inadequate heating and accommodation, 24 poverty and loneliness are social evils which must be eliminated.

The Fine Gael Solution:

- 24 23
1. Poverty among the elderly will be urgently investigated by a National Poverty Committee which Fine Gael will establish immediately upon assuming office.

- 26 2. Maisonettes and bungalows will be provided for the elderly in new housing estates, so that they 25 may be near their married children and grandchildren.
- 25 3. Realistic home heating provisions will be introduced for the elderly.
- 24 4. The free telephone scheme will be extended to cover elderly couples.
- 25 5. There will be a reduction of the pension age to 65.
- 25 6. A scheme will be introduced for elderly people, with limited means but substantial dwellings, owning their own homes, who may wish to sell their homes to the proposed new National Housing Agency in return for a cash payment or guaranteed income, while continuing to live there for the remainder of their lives.

WOMEN

The Problem:

7 24 1 24 Women have not yet achieved full equality in Irish society/ Discrimination still exists against women in our legal and social codes./

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. Women as Wives and Mothers

- 51 24
- 51 24
- 51 25
- 51 25
- (a) It is the intention of Fine Gael to ensure that both partners to a marriage have rights to the home, assets and income of the family.
 - (b) Legal anomalies such as criminal conversation and dependent domicile will be removed as a matter of urgency.
 - (c) During its period in office Fine Gael will ensure that wives of insured workers who are working at home will receive free dental and optical treatment.
 - (d) Fine Gael will take steps to provide financial support for wives and mothers who work at home.

This will be done in three ways:

- 51 25
- (i) By replacing the present Children's Allowance by a child benefit of £3 per week per child and £4 per week for the 6th child and more.

- 51 24
- 51 25
- (ii) By paying Social Welfare Dependency Allowances to the dependent spouse, who is normally the mother;
 - (iii) By paying half of the £1,000 married person's tax credit directly to a spouse working at home.

2. Women in Rural Ireland

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A far-reaching study will be undertaken into the needs of women in rural Ireland. The revision of Capital Acquisition Tax thresholds (see Agriculture) will be important in this connection. Steps will be sought to end the isolation of many farm wives.

3. Women in the Workforce

24 51

(a) The Employment Equality Agency will be given increased funding to assist it in monitoring and improving progress towards equal pay and equal opportunity for Irish women workers.

- 51 18
- (b) A much wider use of the EEC Social Fund will be sought for the re-training of women who wish to re-enter the workforce.

4. Special Areas needing attention

- 51 (a) Tax arrangements will treat widows and widowers, and one-parent families with dependent children, as married couples.
- 51 (b) State regulation and registration of **Play Groups and Creches** will be undertaken early in the new administration.
- 51 18 (c) **Single Women** who have left paid employment and have remained unmarried in order to care for elderly relatives will receive priority in retraining for work, As resources permit, the age limit of 57 for the allowance, introduced by the National Coalition, for such women will be lowered.
- 51, 18 (d) The special **health needs** of women will be given a separate unit within the Health Education Bureau.
- 51 24 (e) **Education** — Fine Gael will undertake to eliminate sexism where it exists in school text books.

- 51 24 (f) **Women in Industry** — Fine Gael is aware and concerned about the lack of women at the higher levels of industry. Fine Gael will arrange for the appointment of an Equality Officer to all semi-state bodies, to be responsible for the implementation of Affirmative Action programmes, so that women employees will secure promotion to higher management positions.
- 51 (g) Fine Gael will actively help voluntary groups dealing with various social issues.
- 51 24 (h) The legal situation concerning contraception is unsatisfactory and means that many women have neither information about, nor access to, full family planning advice and facilities.
- 51 24 Fine Gael will therefore improve this important area for women.

CHILDREN

The Problem:

Reforms are urgently necessary on a wide variety of fronts if the ideals of either the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child or the Proclamation of Independence of the Irish Republic are to become a reality. Fine Gael is conscious of the disadvantages and deprivation which exist in relation to many Irish children and the necessity to have a comprehensive and integrated social, economic and legal policy.

The Fine Gael Solution:

- 24 1. New child benefits — £3 per week for each dependent child and £4 per week for the sixth or later children.
- 43 24 2. A new Children's Act will be introduced to replace the Children's Act 1908 and other outdated children's legislation to give statutory effect to the Fine Gael proposals.
- 24 43 24 3. A unified structure of Children and Family Courts, with specially trained personnel attached to them, will be provided.
- 24 43 24 4. The Act will permit Care Orders to be made in respect of children being neglected or deprived, and who are in need of care and attention.
- 24 43 24 5. Statutory powers will be conferred on the Courts to make paternity declarations and for the use of scientific tests in Affiliation and Paternity proceedings.

- 24 6. With the abolition of the concept of illegitimacy, the child's succession rights and maintenance rights will depend on the fact of parenthood, not on the circumstances of birth.
- 24 7. Changes will be introduced to the Adoption Laws to ensure that children are open to being adopted where they have been abandoned or grossly neglected.
- 24 8. Statutory minimum standards of registration, practice and procedure for all adoption agencies will be introduced.
- 24 9. Greater legal protection will be afforded to long-term fostering arrangements.
- 24 10. The age of criminal responsibility will be raised, at least to 14 years.
- 24 43 11. The Juvenile Liaison Scheme of the Garda Síochána will be extended and given a statutory basis with greater and more specialised in-training and resources.
- 24 43 24 12. A National Council for Child Welfare will be established to report on the operation and development of the relevant services and to inaugurate and develop research in the area of child welfare.
- 24 24 13. Children in need of care will be catered for in small units within or adjacent to their local community, combining open and secure facilities, and child care policy will take full account of the recent work of the U.C.D. Sociology Department.

YOUTH

The Problem:

Irish youth has had to bear the brunt of the impact of the present economic collapse. This is particularly true in the areas of Unemployment, Education and Housing. The result is dissatisfaction and apathy. The cost to the nation of this alienation is enormous in terms of lost input and participation.

The Fine Gael Solution:

Fine Gael is committed to:

Consultation:

1. To bring representatives of young people into consultation on the whole range of national policies on a par with the other social partners.
2. To appoint young people to the boards of state-sponsored bodies such as ACOT, ANCO, RTE and Bord na Gaeilge, whose activities concern them.
3. To set up an informal Oireachtas Youth Affairs Consultative Committee. This body will include youth representatives comprising the Chairman of the three standing committees of the National Youth Council, the President of the U.S.I. and Macra na Feirme and a representative of the youth section of the Trade Union Movement.

Employment:

4. To establish a Youth Employment Agency which will provide for the integrated development of the concept of "youth employment schemes".
5. A register of young unemployed will be prepared in order to provide information to ascertain the real extent of the problem relating to the youth unemployment.
6. Fine Gael will ensure that information on employment prospects or opportunities for enterprise is readily available.

Youth Programmes:

7. Youth Organisations so vital for the needs of young people will be supported in many aspects of their work. Recognising the benefits of voluntary provision of services Fine Gael will increase grand-aid to voluntary youth organisations.
8. Fine Gael will provide a special Research and Evaluation Grant to the National Youth Council so that youth programmes will be adequately researched, monitored and evaluated.
9. Additional youth development officers will be employed to work in areas of social disadvantage and poor community spirit.

Education:

10. A radical revision of the third-level grants scheme will increase the maximum maintenance grant to £1,000, raising the income limit to £12,000 or £14,000 in the case of fees only, and replacing the VEC Scholarship Scheme

for RTC's by means and academic criteria as in the scheme available to university students.

11. Removing the distorting effect of third-level requirements on second-level courses.
12. Establishing an Independent Curriculum and Examinations Board with terms of reference to include school assessment as well as exams.
13. A statutory role for students in the running of third-level institutions.
14. Incentives to schools to respond to modern needs by expanding their curricula, to include, among other things courses preparing young people for their role in society. (For further details see Education Policy Section).

Housing:

15. For flat-dwellers:
 - A Fair Rents Tribunal.
 - A right to a written lease.
 - A tax allowance for private tenants up to a maximum rent of £1,000.
16. For those seeking to purchase a house:
 - New schemes to provide:
 - Top-Up loans on a pay-related basis to accompany mortgages through existing agencies.
 - A no-deposit part-purchase scheme, with the right to buy out the local authority interest gradually over a period at the option of the part-owner – the £4,000 grants to count towards the purchase of part of the house.
 - A pay-related mortgage scheme under which a house costing up to four times income could be repaid by 20% of earnings throughout the purchase period.
 - (For further details see Housing Policy Section).

Radio:

17. Licensing of local radio, to be provided by community-based groups, with the opportunity for existing local radio stations to participate.
18. Re-examination of the proposed switch from AM to FM for Citizen Band Radio.
19. **Car Insurance**
Fine Gael will ensure that young licenced accident-free drivers are not unfairly levied for insurance.
20. **Sport and Leisure:**
Fine Gael will seek to encourage the healthy recreation of citizens. By increasing support for minority sports and encouraging non-competitive participation in sport, greater opportunities for relaxation and healthy pursuits will be created.
21. The provision of special assistance to encourage the improvement of International competition performance in amateur sport will be considered.

EDUCATION

The Problem:

- 27 (a) Education has for too long been low on the list of government priorities;
- 24 (b) Equality of access to education has not yet been achieved;
- 27 (c) School courses and examinations are not sufficiently relevant to the real needs of students and society;
- 33 (d) Grants are inadequate; where they exist, they have failed to keep pace with inflation, especially in Third Level Education;
- 27 (e) Parents have insufficient influence in the present education system, given their rôle as the primary educators of their children;
- 24 (f) There is inadequate provision for the educational needs of the handicapped;
- 20 (g) Adult Education and education through the medium of Irish need greater funding and more detailed structuring;
- 28 (h) Control of education is overcentralised in the Department of Education.

The Fine Gael Solution:

Fine Gael will, within three years of assuming office, introduce an Education Bill in Dáil Eireann to achieve its goals and ensure the highest standards in education.

- 43 1. Fine Gael will establish an independent Curriculum and Examinations Board the terms of reference of which will include school assessment to supplement the exam system.
- 27 2. The present Examination system will be reformed to reduce the pressure on students caused by the Leaving Certificate Examination. The present points system for entry to university, while being fair and unbiased, is distorting second level education and having an adverse educational effect on school curricula. To overcome this problem, Fine Gael will give urgent consideration, in consultation with third-level institutions, to the introduction of a National Matriculation Examination. This examination would be used as a basis for entering third-level education and would be designed so as to be quite independent of the Leaving Certificate.
- 43 3. Parents and teachers will be given a positive rôle in the running of schools.
- 27 4. To alleviate the hardship caused to many communities, grant aid will be made available on a sliding scale to fund site purchase for primary schools.
- 27 5. The reduction of class size in primary schools will be treated as a top priority. Classes in excess of 40 pupils will be eliminated over a period of four years and classes will be progressively reduced thereafter.

- 27 6. Additional guidance counsellors and remedial teachers will be appointed and the school psychological service will be extended to primary schools.
- 27 7. Fine Gael in government will recognise the special needs of handicapped pupils.
- 24 8. An Educational Welfare service will be established on a nationwide basis in place of the school attendance service.
- 43 9. Fine Gael will undertake to provide incentives to schools to respond to modern needs by expanding their curricula. The development of scientific and technological education and ensuring that girls have an equal opportunity of studying all subjects will be a priority.
- 10 10. The school transport system will be reassessed and maintained in accordance with the needs of the growing schoolgoing population.
- 27 11. New Irish-speaking primary schools will be established on a planned basis. Efforts will also be made to establish new Irish-speaking post-primary schools especially in areas where Irish-speaking primary schools are in operation.
- 30 12. Fine Gael in Government will extend the Higher Education Grants Scheme.
 - 27 (i) The maximum maintenance grant will be increased to £1,000 a year in the case of students living away from University towns.
 - 27 (ii) For larger families the income limit for fees and maintenance grant will be raised to £12,000 and fees will be payable in such cases up to an income limit of £14,000.
 - 27 (iii) Even for the smallest family a fee and maintenance grant will be payable up to an income of £8,000 a year, and fees up to £9,000.
 - 27 (iv) The VEC Scholarship Scheme for Regional Technical Colleges with its objectionable quota system will be replaced by means and academic criteria, as in the Higher Education Grants Scheme available to university students.
- 43 13. The Higher Education Authority will be reconstituted and given wider powers in relation to the overall development of third level education, which will be expanded to meet rapidly growing needs in this area.
- 27 14. Fine Gael is committed to expanding and developing adult education and recognises that a major national initiative is essential.
- 27 15. Fine Gael will reform the overall administrative structures of Education by lessening the control by a centralised Department of Education and by devolving administrative responsibility to local educational authorities.

JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Problem:

The huge increase in serious crime.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. To make better use of modern technology in assisting the Gardai to cope with the appallingly high crime rate now prevailing in our country.
2. Implement a policy of Neighbourhood Policing with greater emphasis on foot patrols and on contact between the Gardai and the public.
3. Introduce measures providing for a greater involvement of the community in crime prevention including the establishment of a Garda Community Relations Council on a national basis and Local Community Relations Bodies in each area.

4. Provide the necessary manpower and resources to contain the growth of illegal drug-taking in our society.
5. Establish a Police Authority to which many of the functions of the Department of Justice will be transferred.
6. Ensure regular consultation with the Garda Representative Bodies so that frustration and friction will be removed and a high morale established in the force.
7. Update the laws and procedures where necessary while maintaining the delicate balance between police powers on the one hand and individual rights and liberties on the other.

DEFENCE

The Problem:

To promote an efficient defence force, integrated with the community.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. The roles and duties of the Defence Forces will be critically examined.
2. All unsuitable married quarters will be replaced over a specific period; co-operative housing will be promoted.
3. The concept of a new military complex in the Dublin Area will be examined.

4. The expansion plan for the Naval Service will be implemented.
5. Regional sub-bases for the Naval Service will be established.
6. A comprehensive welfare service for members of the Defence Forces will be set up.
7. The level of expertise in the Defence Forces, which could help develop for them a social role in the community, will be expanded.
8. The reserve forces will be developed.
9. A National Military Museum will be established.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Problem:

For many years now most rural areas have been suffering a demoralising decline in population and services. Generally the attitude of Government appears increasingly to favour centralisation rather than decentralisation)

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. A plan will be prepared which will aim:
 - (i) To give every community the opportunity to develop.
 - (ii) To correct the imbalance in population distribution caused by rural depopulation.
 - (iii) To develop the various regions of Ireland.

2. Regional Development Authorities will co ordinate the work of Local Development Agencies which will have a committee of management representative of various interests in the area.
3. The Regional Development Authorities will:
 - (i) Promote and develop small industry.
 - (ii) Build and lease small factory units.
 - (iii) Provide managerial, financial and marketing advice for small industry.
 - (iv) Promote the development of new co-operatives and encourage the existing larger co-ops to become involved in village development.

- 43 (v) Co-ordinate the development of industry based on fishing and forestry.
- 17 (vi) Facilitate the development and marketing of craft industries.
- 17 (vii) Develop tourist amenities.
- 18 4. Local leadership will be developed through training and back-up services.
- 3, 3, 5. Steps will be taken to ensure that local radio is controlled within the local community.
- 17 6. Local Authorities will be encouraged to build more houses in rural villages.
- 38, 17 7. Every community should be entitled to retain a small primary school if it so desires. Consideration will be given to the establishment of Kindergarten schools.
- 17 8. Consideration will be given to the preservation of some of the "great houses" on country areas for use as adult education and training centres.
- 19, 9. Fine Gael recognises that a good rural transport system is an urgent requirement.

ENVIRONMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Problem:

There exists at present no comprehensive policy on the urban environment, the rural environment or the delicate balance between development and the environment. Planning machinery is inadequate and existing provisions in relation to building regulations and fire protection need a thorough review.

The Fine Gael Solution:

Planning to Preserve our Heritage:

Fine Gael will develop a comprehensive plan which will ensure that economic development does not injure our cultural heritage or our relatively unspoilt environment and at the same time that development is not hindered by unreasonable opposition. Action is urgently needed in such areas as air pollution, oil pollution, protection of nature reserves, etc.

Planning Law Reforms:

Planning law will be revised in order to make it more effective as a restraint on unauthorised development (the penalties for which are clearly inadequate); to limit "windfall" benefits to owners of property whose value has been enhanced by the expansion of urban areas or by the provision of services by the public authorities; to eliminate the legal anomaly under which people may have to be compensated out of public expense for not developing their land and other abuses; and, with full regard for the public interest, to speed up certain processes which are inhibiting development.

Fire Legislation:

The public are only too tragically aware of the dangers of fire in places of public resort. Fine Gael will take the following action:

- (a) Immediate implementation of draft building regulations.

- 44, 43 (b) Immediate passing of a Fire Services Bill.
- 43 (c) Introduction of adequate regulations for all furniture to ensure it is fireproof.
- 43 (d) Adequate installation and inspection of "fire doors" to prevent the spreading of fires.
- 43 (e) Sprinkler systems will be mandatory.
- 22, 43 (f) Extinguishers must be not only available but adequate.
- 43 (g) Consideration of autonomous status for the Chief Fire Officer.
- 43 (h) Uniform by-laws for all Local Authorities will be compulsory.
- 22, 43 (i) Legislation concerning electrical standards and the nature and frequency of inspections will be updated where necessary.

Toxic Waste Dumps:

- 22 Toxic waste dumps to be sited in isolated areas, away from centres of population.

Derelict Sites:

- 22 Councils will be given power to require derelict sites to be developed or maintained in an environmentally acceptable condition, failing which they will acquire them compulsorily.

Architectural and Archaeological Heritage:

- 39 Fine Gael will legislate to protect our architectural and archaeological heritage.

Autonomy for Developing Towns and for Boroughs in Dublin:

- 40 Fine Gael will encourage meaningful control of local affairs through such measures as the granting of appropriate status to developing towns such as Leixlip, Greystones and Shannon. It will also create new local government units in Dublin City and County, similar to Dun Laoghaire, with autonomy in local affairs and personal services, where control at a metropolitan level is not necessary.

LAW REFORM

The Problem:

There has been a failure by successive Governments to recognise the importance of keeping the law up-to-date. Delays in the legal process threaten to undermine public confidence in the administration of justice. Crime is threatening the lives of ordinary people, often the weakest in our community.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. The Courts:

(a) A Small Claims Court to deal with disputes of minor nature will be established. Cases will be presented there without the need for legal representation.

(b) The jurisdictional changes proposed in the Courts Bill will be revised both in relation to Family Law matters and civil claims.

(c) Additional High Court and Circuit Court judges will be appointed.

2. Legal Aid:

A scheme of Civil legal aid inspired by the proposals of the Pringle Committee will be proposed.

3. The general conditions in Courthouses will be improved, particularly in the Children's Court.

4. The recommendations contained in the "Report of the Committee to Recommend Certain Safeguards for persons in Custody and for members of An Garda Síochána" will be implemented.
5. Fine Gael will abolish the concept of illegitimacy in the law.
6. Steps will be taken to increase freedom of information.
7. The law of bankruptcy will be reformed.
8. Fine Gael will initiate a review of the Companies Act 1963.
9. The Law Reform Commission has published a number of reports with little action having been taken on them. A select Committee of the Dail and Seanad will be established to consider the reports of the Commission and to draft appropriate legislation.
10. Fine Gael will establish an all-Party Committee of the Oireachtas, with appropriate support staff, to report and recommend on the problems of the protection of marriage under modern conditions, and of marriage breakdown.

THE REFORM OF THE DÁIL AND SEANAD

The Problem:

(1) Because of out-of-date procedures the Oireachtas plays little effective part in either the making of laws or even the expert criticism of them. (It is the Government not the Oireachtas that exercises power.)

(2) National decision-making is in many instances the result of confidential bargaining by Government with representatives of major interest groups in the community. Thus, in contrast to the democratic theory that decisions be taken in the open in a popularly elected parliament, they are nowadays being taken in private in consultation with groups whose mandate is limited and not governed by law.

(3) The public does not get the full facts and simple issues are often made artificially complicated.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. The status of all-Party committees should be raised, and they should play a far larger rôle in the legislative process.
2. On major Bills a special committee will be appointed to take evidence from members of the public and interest groups.
3. The present unsatisfactory procedure for the consideration of Government spending in the Dáil will be altered so that spending proposals for each year will be introduced and published in the September of the previous year.
4. The Capital Budget and borrowing plans for each year will be specifically debated in the Dáil in the same manner as Estimates.
5. Fine Gael proposes that written Questions to Ministers will be allowed while the Dáil is in recess.

- 43 6. A Joint Committee of the Oireachtas, with similar powers to the existing one on commercial bodies, will be established in relation to 57 State Sponsored Bodies which are currently classified as "non-commercial" bodies.
- 40 7. More Private Members' Bills will be afforded time for discussion. It is proposed that any group of seven members be allowed to present a Bill and have it published. Fine Gael will withdraw the power of the majority in the Dáil to vote down the order for the second stage of a Private Members' Bill.
- 29 8. In view of the enhanced powers of the Dáil its members will in future be required to enter in a special register a list of enterprises or activities in which they or their spouses have a financial interest.
- 43 9. The procedures for the presentation, format and debate of the Annual Reports presented to the Dáil will be tightened up considerably.

- 29 10. A code of practice of access to official information, to be applied to Government documents of the future will be drafted. The enforcement of the code will be the responsibility of the Ombudsman.
- 49 11. Broadcasting of the proceedings of the Dáil will be introduced on an experimental basis, starting with the open sessions of All-Party Committees.
- 43 12. The procedures of the Seanad will be reviewed with a view to improving the joint operation of the Houses of the Oireachtas.
- 40 13. The panel system of election to the Seanad will be reviewed with a view both to introducing direct election by certain bodies and with a view to ensuring access to the Seanad for people who may not be qualified as candidates under the present system, e.g. housewives and young people.

ARTS, CULTURE AND LEISURE

The Problem:

A contributory factor in the neglect of art, culture and leisure is the division of responsibility among a large number of State Departments. A concentrated and comprehensive plan is required to redress the neglect of these areas in the past.

The Fine Gael Solution:

- 3 1. A **Department of Culture and Leisure** will be established under the Taoiseach to be administered by a Minister of State.
- 30 2. The new Department will have transferred to it, from ten different Departments, responsibility for:
 - 30 (a) The promotion of the Irish language in the Public Service.
 - 30 (b) An Gúm and the Language Institute of Ireland from the Department of Education.
 - 30 (c) National Monuments and the Office of Public Works.
 - 23 (d) The National Library, the Irish Manuscripts Commission and Coimisúin Béaloideas Eireann.
 - 23 (e) An Chomhairle Leabharlanna.
 - 23 (f) Public records and archives.
 - 22 (g) National Parks.
 - 43 (h) The National Gallery and the National Museum.

- 13 x 43 23 (i) An Chomhairle Ealaíon including its new Aosdána scheme, and the National Concert Hall.
 - 23 (j) The Irish Film Board and National Film Studios of Ireland.
 - 23 (k) The Cultural Relations Committee.
- In addition, responsibility for grants to cultural institutions such as the National Theatre Society will be undertaken by this new Department.
- 10 3. Tax reliefs will be made available for owners of significant buildings, worthy of conservation, which are in danger of being sold, or falling into disrepair.
 - 20 4. A percentage of the cost of each new public building will be set aside for artistic embellishment by the purchase of works by Irish artists.
 - 51 23 5. A scheme will be introduced to aid young people in the plastic arts, in return for a proportion of their work accruing to the State.
 - 23 6. Fine Gael will encourage the development of regional cultural centres to cater for festivals of arts, films, opera, theatre, ballet etc., together with the display of works from the National Gallery and material from the National Museum.
 - 23 7. Cultural ties with Northern Ireland will be encouraged, in recognition of the common roots of the various traditions of the country.

NORTHERN IRELAND

The Problem:

The peaceful resolution of the problem of the relationship between North and South.

The Fine Gael Solution:

1. In government Fine Gael will pursue — as it has done in Opposition — the policy of establishing and maintaining relations with both sections of the community in Northern Ireland, which have been allowed to disintegrate under Fianna Fail, as well as maintaining the momentum of the discussions and joint studies with the United Kingdom Government that have recently been initiated in accordance with 1979 Fine Gael proposals. In line with its past policy Fine Gael will also continue to press British political leaders to give public expression to the private consensus that exists amongst most of them that the ultimate solution must involve a coming together of the two parts of Ireland. This public expression would remove the illusions which at present bolster up intransigence amongst sections of the Loyalist population in the North. Fine Gael will, however, be particularly concerned not to distort or exaggerate the significance of the Anglo-Irish discussions in a manner that could strengthen extremist forces in the North and increase tension there, creating additional risks in particular for the beleaguered Nationalist community.
2. Fine Gael (The United Ireland Party), is the only Party to have published a policy on Northern Ireland and the only Party to have made the objective case for the benefits that would accrue to Northern Ireland through political association with the Republic, for example in the form of a Confederation. It is the only Party to have established and maintained contacts not only with the Nationalist community but also with sections of the Unionist community in

Northern Ireland. If a majority for a form of Irish unity is ever to emerge it can only be through a proportion of this section of the Northern Ireland community coming to understand and accept the benefits of political association with the Republic.

3. At the same time Fine Gael has maintained especially close and cordial relations with the SDLP and has been uniformly supportive of the efforts of this Party to maintain its rôle even in the face of a political vacuum in this area during the past five years. Fine Gael has been recognised by leaders in both communities in the North as the Party that has shown the most consistent concern with the problems of Northern Ireland and has won the respect of people within both sections of the community there.
4. Fine Gael has always advocated peaceful unification of the country. In 1969 it adopted and published its policy of Unity by Consent. This policy has since been adopted by the other two main Parties. Fine Gael has further developed this approach culminating in its 1979 Policy document "Ireland, Our Future Together".
5. Under no circumstances will Fine Gael seek to use these negotiations or other issues relating to Northern Ireland as a weapon to secure political support in the domestic area. No Party pursuing such a course of political expediency deserves the support of the electorate.
6. Fine Gael advocates a pluralist society. Such a society in the Republic can alone provide the kind of environment here that would eventually attract support from that minority of the Unionist population on the scale required to create the necessary majority in Northern Ireland for an agreed Ireland. Fine Gael will remain true to the tradition of Tone and Davis and will seek to establish in the Republic a State founded on just principles common to the peoples of both parts of the island.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Problem:

- 7a (1) To re-establish Ireland's active and positive rôle in the EEC, which was a feature of its early years of membership.
- 6 (2) To maintain Ireland's neutrality within the European Community.
- 7a (3) To ensure that Ireland plays a more positive rôle in international affairs, based on our EEC membership and our neutrality and long-established links with many parts of the world.
- 7 (4) To increase development aid to the Third World.

The Fine Gael Solution:

- 7a (1) Ireland will support the further development of the European Community.
- 7 (2) We shall, while consciously part of the free world and overwhelmingly opposed to any idea of an extension of Soviet power beyond its present sphere of influence, preserve Ireland's neutrality, outside military alliances.

- 3 (3) We shall maintain a sympathetic attitude towards the process of de-colonisation and the problems of newly independent States.
- 7 (4) We shall support actively the UN position on Namibia.
- 7 (5) We shall actively oppose apartheid in South Africa.
- 7a (6) Within the EEC we shall join with countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands in supporting increased aid to and a more positive relationship with the Third World.
- 7 (7) We shall expand our Official Development Aid on a basis that will increase the share of national output devoted to this; and so that each year it will constitute an additional .05% of GNP until the UN Target of .7% of GNP is reached.
- 7 (8) We will consider introducing a system whereby individual taxpayers may voluntarily opt to have a sum deducted each year from their income for the Third World, through the tax system. Such contributions would be matched by an equal amount contributed by the State itself, and made available to Third World projects.

COST OF THE PROGRAMME

FINANCING OF ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE

ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE:		ADDITIONAL REVENUE:	
	£mn		£ mn
x Agricultural Programme	49	x E.E.C. Contribution to Agricultural Programme	14
x Oil Tax Reduction	10	x Capital Gains Tax Changes	10
x Third Level Grants Increase	5½	x Additional 1% P.R.S.I. on Sectors other than Manufacturing and Tourism	33
x 2% P.R.S.I. Reduction Manufacturing And Tourism	29	x Employment Contributions on wages and salaries in excess of £8,500	25
x New Energy Saving and new Overcrowding Reconstruction Grants	6	x Saving in Estimates through Fianna Fáil Discontinuation of Reconstruction Grants	19
x Completion of Estates	¾		
x Gaeltacht Grant Improvements National Poverty Committee etc.	¾		
	<u>101</u>		<u>101</u>

Notes:

- 43 21 1. The tax credit for employers to encourage them to increase employment will finance itself out of reduced unemployment payments and additional P.R.S.I. contributions.
- 43 21 2. The tax allowance for private tenancies is estimated to yield, in additional tax revenue from unregistered landlords now evading tax, mainly at the higher rates of tax as much as it will cost in tax reductions to tenants, mainly at lower rates of tax.

COST OF TAX

REFORM

PROGRAMME

	£ mn
Income Tax Concessions *	178
Additional Cost of Child Allowance	62
	240
Add Cost of Compensating Social Welfare Increases	23
	263

or less than 3½% of 1982 Consumer Spending

(to be financed by additional expenditure taxes)

* Net of receipts from additional Health Charge and Employees' Contribution to Employment Fund Levy.

Appendix A

TAXATION Single Person:

Income p.a.	Tax Saving *	Tax Cut as ** % of Disposable Income
	£	%
4000	139.75	4.5
5000	224.75	6.1
6000	309.75	7.2
7000	394.75	8.0
8000	458.25	8.5
9000	419.50	7.0
10000	435.5	6.8
12000	349.75	4.8
15000	312.25	3.7
20000	249.75	2.4
25000	187.25	1.5
30000	124.75	0.9

* Allows for additional health contributions and Employment Fund.

** Disposable income excludes income tax and social welfare contributions.

Appendix B.

Married Couple, No Children, Wife Not Working

Income p.a.	Tax Saving *	Tax Cut as** % of Disposable Income
	£	%
5000	234.5	5.6
6000	319.5	6.6
7000	404.5	7.5
8000	489.5	8.1
9000	550.75	8.3
10000	588.25	8.1
12000	663.25	7.7
15000	892.75	8.6
20000	797.25	6.2
25000	643.25	4.3
30000	580.75	3.4

* Includes additional health contributions and Employment Fund.

** Disposable income excludes income tax and social welfare contributions.

Appendix C

Married Couple, 1 Child, Wife Not Working

Income p.a.	Tax Saving* £	Tax Cut as** % of Disposable Income %
5000	252.75	5.9
6000	335.25	6.9
7000	420.25	7.7
8000	505.25	8.3
9000	566.50	8.4
10000	604	8.2
15000	889	8.5
20000	774	5.9
25000	610.25	4.0
30000	547.25	3.2

* Includes additional health contributions and Employment Fund plus additional child benefits.

** Disposable income excludes income tax and social welfare contributions.

Appendix D

Married Couple, 2 Children, Wife Not Working

Income p.a.	Tax Saving* £	Tax Cut as** % of Disposable Income %
5000	252	5.8
6000	315	6.4
7000	400	7.2
8000	485	7.9
9000	546.25	8.1
10000	583.75	7.9
15000	849.25	8.0
20000	714.75	5.4
25000	541.25	3.5
30000	478.75	3.1

* Includes additional health contributions and Employment Funds plus additional child benefits.

** Disposable income excludes income tax and social welfare contributions.

Appendix E

Married Couple, 3 Children, Wife not Working

Income p.a.	Tax Saving* £	Tax Cut as % ** of Disposable Income %
5000	251.25	5.8
6000	294.75	5.9
7000	379.75	6.8
8000	464.75	7.5
9000	526.0	7.7
10000	563.5	7.5
15000	809.5	7.6
20000	655.5	4.9
25000	472.25	3.1
30000	409.75	2.4

* Includes additional health contributions and Employment Fund plus additional child benefits.

** Disposable income excludes income tax and social welfare contributions.

Appendix F.

Non-Taxable Direct Payments to Women at Home Whose Husbands are at Work*

	Per Week
No Children	£ 9.60
1 Child	£12.60
2 Children	£15.60
3 Children	£18.60
4 Children	£21.60
5 Children	£24.60
6 Children	£28.60
7 Children	£32.60
8 Children	£36.60

* On basis of husband earning £77 per week or more.

