

# **MAKING** **IRELAND** **WORK**



**A TWO-PART PROGRAMME**

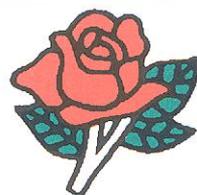
***TO PUT JUSTICE INTO  
ECONOMICS.....***

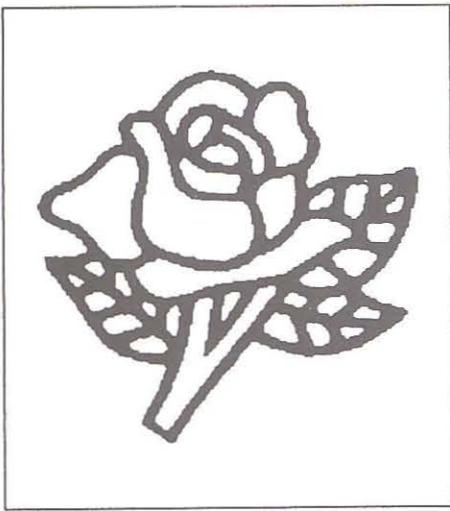
***&***

***TRUST INTO POLITICS***

**Justice Into Economics**

**THE LABOUR PARTY**





### **Ireland deserves a fresh start.**

It must be about putting justice back into economics, and trust back into politics — about making Ireland work again.

There are many constraints. To use the language of the recent American election, "tax and spend" policies will not solve our problems now. But "trickle-down economics" — the politics of greed and indifference — is dead.

Trickle-down economics is a set of policies which is based on the belief that removing economic and social controls on free market forces will eventually benefit even the most defenseless and vulnerable. This is the approach which has motivated Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats, supported for most of the time by Fine Gael, since 1987. It has been a betrayal of people.

### **We need a new vision.**

We need to tap into the spirit, the energy, the imagination, the dynamism, and the co-operative spirit, that exists in abundance in our community. Politicians need to grow up, and to face challenges with the same maturity the people show.

There is one issue within Ireland, and one above all, which demands the highest priority from the entire political system, and indeed from the whole community.

**That issue is unemployment — and its counterpart, the creation of employment.**

Unemployment is at the heart of our social problems. It is at the heart of the grinding poverty that too many families have to endure. It is at the heart of inequality. It is eating into the heart of our people. Above all, it is robbing thousands of hope.

That's why the whole of this document is devoted to putting justice back into the economy.

But it's not the only issue. The people of Ireland are ready. Ready to respond to a new vision. Ready to re-discover that caring for each other, high standards of service, profit based on ethical behaviour, honesty and openness in public life, can be compatible. Ready to find a new sense of purpose, even of excitement, in rebuilding our society.

The second part of our programme, dealing with that issue — the issue of trust in politics — will be published separately.

Bringing back hope is the principal objective of our programme. It doesn't promise easy solutions, or contain easy promises. It is not based on any entrenched positions, or hostility towards any contributing sector of the economy. But it is firmly anchored in human values.

It's about the public and private sectors working together; about the freedom of individuals to use the market place to exercise choices; about rebuilding a mixed economy where rights are respected and given expression.

**What we are doing is setting goals — goals for ourselves, and for Ireland.**

The mandate we are seeking is a mandate for fundamental change, to put the values which have made Ireland respected throughout the world back on our own agenda.

We are asking the people to vote for a fresh start. Ireland works best when it works together. Let's work together — and make Ireland work again.

**DICK SPRING**  
*Party Leader*

## **Putting Justice into Economics: The Role of Borrowing**

Ireland voted freely and overwhelmingly for the Maastricht Treaty. That Treaty sets parameters for future borrowing, and targets towards which we must aim. We have yet to reach all of those targets — but we are moving in the right direction, unlike, for example, Germany and the United Kingdom.

We have a heavy national debt already. No prudent Government, with the long-term interests of its people at heart, would set out to increase that debt by borrowing recklessly to finance day-to-day spending.

These are important constraints. They cannot be ignored.

The President of the European Commission, among others, has advocated a massive re-investment programme for Europe — a programme which is essential if Europe is to come to grips with unemployment, and reap the benefit of economic growth.

As part of that approach, it has already been proposed, and is under consideration by the Commission, that borrowing for infrastructural development should be exempt from the overall target parameters.

And there is a wide range of areas of productive infrastructural development where careful and prudent borrowing, capable of producing an economic return over time, is entirely justified.

In addition, the European Commission will itself support projects, on a matching basis, for which we will have to supply the domestic investment (including some of those listed below). There have been too many instances where Ireland has failed to draw on this support, simply because we were unwilling to make the investment necessary to attract the matching funds.

In short, the stale and orthodox approach of the last few years, which condemned many good projects to oblivion or, at best long delays, will have to end.

There is a place for careful borrowing to finance investment in an economy which has a strong credit rating, whose basic attributes are sound, but where there is a lot of rebuilding to be done. Such borrowing can and must be undertaken in such a way as to enable the debt/GNP ratio to continue to fall, and will therefore be dependent on growth and additional activity.

A new and prudent approach would enable work to begin now on a host of essential projects, and would create thousands of jobs in the process — all of them priorities for Labour, including the following:

- *Light Rail for Dublin*
- *The Tallaght Regional Hospital*
- *National Sports Facilities — a Stadium, and a Swimming pool*
- *Our deteriorating county roads, and the national primary network*
- *Investment in access transport by sea and air*
- *Further upgrading of our telecommunications systems*
- *Tourism projects at regional level*

In addition, Labour is proposing that projects planned for inclusion in the public capital programme over the next three years should be brought forward at an ever accelerating pace. Schools, health and community centre projects, training centres, and capital investment in facilities for people with a mental handicap must be brought forward, and delays eliminated.

A number of commercial semi-state companies — Aer Lingus and Bord na Mona are two examples — cannot undertake commercially sound investment because of the state of their balance sheets.

**The Labour Party would put equity in to strengthen their balance sheets, to free their potential for producing substantial new employment through profitable investment.**

This restructuring of balance sheets would not affect the achievement of the debt criteria set by Maastricht, as the semi-state borrowing is already Government guaranteed.

Finally, Labour is proposing a substantial public housing programme, dealt with in more detail later. Significant funding for such a programme could come from diverting money away from the subsidies paid to private landlords for inadequate rented accommodation for the homeless — £20 million this year alone by the Eastern Health Board, for example.

## **Putting Justice into Economics: Monetary Policy and Interest Rates**

Irish interest rates are far too high. They inhibit investment, they damage otherwise sound busi-

nesses, they make housing unaffordable, they create hardship in families.

They must be brought down. Labour has advocated, and will continue to pursue, the right mix of policies to achieve that goal.

Our target is to get them below 10% in the short term.

Clearly, the key issue in terms of European politics is a reduction in German interest rates. Ireland must take a lead in persuading other countries in Europe that this is the number one European priority. With its unique standing in the largest group in the European Parliament, and in the Confederation of Socialist Parties in Europe, Labour is particularly well-positioned to forge alliances with other parties, in Government and in opposition, in other countries towards that end.

At home, several policy changes are urgently needed:

- The right mix between domestic and foreign borrowing, and the right mix of currencies in which such foreign borrowing is undertaken, would greatly ease the pressure on our currency and reduce the need for higher interest rates. The mechanisms are in place to change the composition of our borrowing virtually at a moment's notice — we need to use those mechanisms far more effectively that we are doing.
- Even in the absence of exchange controls, the Central Bank has many powers available to it to curb the export of money for speculative purposes. Those powers, if used rigorously, would make speculation against the currency far less attractive.
- The Governor of the Central Bank pointed out recently that the rash of currency speculation, although it made millions for a few, generated no worthwhile economic activity within the economy. If taxation policy were geared toward securing a tax yield from such speculative profits, it would act as a considerable disincentive for such damaging speculation.

In the short term, the impact of interest rates on families must be eased. Recently the government allocated a sum of fifty million pounds to help businesses affected by the sterling crisis. It was done with the approval of the Dail, and without breaching borrowing targets.

- Families must be helped in the same way.

We advocate an increase in the amount of mortgage interest that can be claimed as tax relief, to 100% of £5,000 in the case of a couple, and 100% of £2,500 in the case of a single mortgage-payer. We propose that this increase should last until the recent 3% increase in mortgage interest rates has been fully reversed.

## ***Putting Justice into Economics: The Contribution of Social Partnership***

The role of Social Partnership has been undervalued. It has not been a challenging process. It has not drawn in the unemployed, the agencies who cope with poverty, the wider public.

Too often, the image of "social partnership" that is conjured up in the public mind is a picture of powerful people, meeting in private to solve pay disputes and little else. It is not an accurate image, but it has inhibited the concept of social partnership from playing the role it could play.

In short, we have a good model in place. But it has failed to build the solidarity necessary in the community.

We need to strengthen and deepen the model, to make it inclusive, and to set it the most challenging targets.

That's why Labour proposes the establishment of

### **THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FORUM.**

The NESF we propose would be far more inclusive, far more independent, and would have Government as an equal partner.

It would have the following key ingredients, missing from all previous applications of the model, and essential to enable the FORUM to function dynamically as a consensus-building apparatus:

- It would be inclusive. The existing Social Partners would be represented, and so would the Oireachtas, women, organisations representing the unemployed, agencies engaged in social analysis, and others. Government would be a full partner.
- The FORUM would have an independent Chairperson, a permanent secretariat, and a budget to enable it to commission independent research.

- It would meet in plenary session in public, and engage in searching analysis and debate in preparing its reports.
- Except where confidentiality is necessary, as in the case of certain aspects of the Budget, all major Government policy proposals (including Green Papers) on economic and social policy would be submitted in the first instance to the FORUM for its consideration.

The FORUM that we envisage would be a lively, participative, challenging and influential process. Its terms of reference would not be confined to the issue of unemployment, but would cover a wide range of economic and social activity.

But it would have a special target in relation to unemployment. The FORUM should be set the challenge of addressing the policy issues, and building the national consensus, around the target of a reduction in the Live Register of 125,000 throughout the decade.

Achievement of such an ambitious target will require a range of economic, fiscal, industrial policy, and labour market interventions.

Above all it will require a dedicated sense of national purpose. A National Forum will be a major instrument in shaping that purpose.

## ***Putting Justice into Economics: Industrial Policy***

### **AT EUROPEAN LEVEL:**

One of the crucial instruments necessary to translate European ideals about convergence into reality is a European industrial policy. Labour is well-placed, as a result of its alliance in Europe, to lead a campaign for a Europe-wide assault on unemployment.

European industrial policy in this context should not be taken to mean the sort of discredited mandatory planning regime that passed for industrial policy in some parts of the world in the past. Neither does it mean the unfettered regulation of industrial activity by industry itself.

Instead, the industrial policy that is necessary would involve a partnership between the state and industry, where both sides recognise and understand the role of the other.

The role of European industry in this model is to take advantage of an environment which encour-

ages growth and investment to develop its competitiveness, to lead the world in research and development, and to produce and deliver goods and services of the highest quality, using production methods which preserve rather than threaten the environment.

The role of the state (and in the European context "the state" is that unique mix of national Governments and the European institutions) is to ensure that the requirements of society are met, by encouraging the development of an industrial base which will promote and sustain employment, maintain the social system, and enhance the quality of life of all citizens.

The model of industrial policy that would flow from these general principles would be one based on consensus. It would have to take account of a number of ingredients:

- the development of a base of knowledge and education, together with high standards of research and development;
- a regulatory framework to ensure both efficiency and profitability, on the one hand, and proper accountability on the other;
- a taxation framework to assist in providing incentives and in ensuring the wise distribution of wealth created;
- and the basic legislative framework to ensure that state aids and trade policy were fair and equitable.

Above all it would have to recognise that there is disadvantage in some parts of the Community at present, and it would have to promote special measures to combat that disadvantage in the interests of equality throughout the Community.

If we here in Ireland were to demand that the Europe that is developing every day should start addressing the issue of a European industrial policy, in addition to the other items on its agenda, we would be doing a service for all Europeans, and particularly for the Irish people, both South and North.

### **AT NATIONAL LEVEL:**

Irish industrial policy must be energised, and quickly. This election hopefully will end the bickering between members of the Government that has disgracefully held up some of the central recommendations of the Culliton report.

We know that the radical changes in industrial

policy that are needed cannot be achieved overnight. It will take a medium term programme to build up a strong indigenous manufacturing sector in Ireland, based on the concept of added value, and involving a dynamic public sector working side by side with a competitive, profitable, quality-conscious private sector.

But what we want to see is a political recognition now that our industrial policy to date has been a failure, and a political commitment to begin the process of change.

Labour believes in a major role for public enterprise; this can find expression in stand alone situations, in joint ventures with the private and co-operative sectors, and in other forms of co-operation where risks are shared.

State participation must not be structured so that public capital investment in traded enterprise or in potentially commercial situations stands exposed to most of the risks while owners of the private capital are allowed to retain or distribute most of any profits that may arise. In joint-venture situations, state and private capital must be mutually reinforcing elements — sharing in the benefits and the risks.

Enterprise in the sense of combining land, labour and capital into industrial activity, and adding them all to skill and flair, is central to industrial development. The economy needs more enterprise; public, private and co-operative.

The state, through companies and agencies, has and must retain a significant capacity to generate and control traded enterprises on its own. It must also be given an active developmental role in conjunction with private and foreign enterprise. There must be adequate reward for achievement — coupled with penalties for failure.

Finally, there must be a regulatory role which applies with equal firmness and fairness to all enterprises public, private, cooperative and mixed. The era of scandals must come to an end — now.

The semi-state sector has been clouded in the last couple of years by scandal. In the eyes of some, the scandals that affected Greencore and Telecom enhanced the case for privatisation, and weakened the argument for any involvement by the State in the creation of wealth.

This is a dangerous and foolish approach. The private sector in Ireland has not shown itself to be less in need of regulation, or less prone to scandal.

And it is clear to anyone with eyes to see that we cannot rely exclusively on that sector to solve the jobs crisis — history alone shows that. Furthermore, the private sector does not even claim an explicit objective or responsibility for job creation.

The argument that only free market forces will ensure growth and efficiency is not universally valid either historically or in terms of modern experience. The economies of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan were not built on this basis over recent decades, although they are generally based on free market principles.

There were major elements of planning and intervention, much state ownership of key resources, and commercial direction of the business sector.

### ***Putting Justice into Economics: Privatisation***

Labour is opposed to the privatisation of public utilities and state companies in the traded sector as a general principle.

The thrust of Labour's approach to industrial policy is to create and retain value added inside Ireland, and to achieve this by a judicious mix of private sector growth, state participation and appropriate taxation policies.

Labour's policy is to enable state companies to grow — not to sell them off to native or foreign individuals, institutional investors or speculators.

Because Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats all subscribe in varying degrees to the notion that only the private sector could safely be allowed create new employment, the role of state companies as potential "national champions" has not been taken seriously.

Yet some striking successes, such as Airmotive and later TEAM, shows what might be possible in a discriminating and entirely selective industrial policy.

A number of the public companies now face difficulties, largely as a result of the neglect of policy by a Government which has had no interest in their development.

Labour is committed to the protection of these companies, and to putting them back on a growth path.

In the case of the current difficulties in Aer Lingus, the Labour Party will stand firmly

behind the efforts of management and workers in the company to address current problems. We strongly believe that if additional equity is required as part of a package of measures to revitalise a company which has made an outstanding contribution to Ireland's development, no new Government should be allowed to shirk that responsibility.

### ***Putting Justice into Economics: Additional Investment***

Labour is committed to securing additional investment in Irish jobs. The approach we put forward in 1988 in "Labour's Alternative" has been more than vindicated by the Culliton Report.

- Labour will press for the speedy establishment of FORBAIRT, as a separate company with the capacity to invest on a long-term basis in the development of indigenous enterprise. It must be organised sectorally, with regional boards overseeing development of their areas.
- Based on a full review of the Business Expansion Scheme, to ensure the elimination of potential abuse, we would propose two new measures to make private sector investment in jobs more attractive. The cost of these measures in tax foregone would be more than compensated by the additional activity generated.
- Labour would slash Capital Gains Tax to 10% for BES projects in manufacturing industry — provided the investment is for five years, and related directly to manufacturing. Alternatively, we would allow roll-over relief, provided that the gains realised are re-invested in another similar BES project.
- Labour would raise the ceiling for BES projects from £500,000 to £3 million.

Labour's alternatives in 1988 document, has already proposed that a number of Employee Investment Funds be established, and that tax incentives should be available to workers to invest savings in such Funds. The funds would be empowered to invest only in firms or co-operatives in designated sectors of native manufacturing industry and traded services.

The funds would be a supplementary source of capital within the framework of policy as executed by the new State agency responsible for the devel-

opment of indigenous industry. FORBAIRT would be empowered to bring investment options to the attention of the Fund trustees and managers on a continuing basis.

The establishment of such funds, which could provide many millions of pounds of additional resources for investment, would require a detailed legislative framework.

### ***Putting Justice into Economics: Tax, Justice, and Incentives for Job Creation***

The single greatest priority in personal tax reform is the easing of the tax burden on low and middle income earners, through a sustained expansion of the standard rate band.

The target of policy, to be implemented as fast as economic conditions allow, and consistent with the overall financial parameters outlined in this document, should be to arrive at a point where no single taxpayer earning £12,500 per annum, and no married couple earning £25,000 per annum, should be paying more than the standard rate of tax.

The level of personal allowances should be increased as a means of reducing the tax burden on those with incomes up to average industrial earnings.

Child Benefit should be increased to £40 per month per child. The Government, in the person of the Minister for Social Welfare, has already recognised Child Benefit as the most effective weapon he has in the battle against poverty. Of course, he hasn't done anything about it. The optimum policy is to reach £40 per month target by the year 1996. The unemployed and those on low incomes will benefit most from this change.

To help pay for this change, Child Dependent Allowances should be phased out, and the adult rate of payment for Unemployment Benefit/Assistance should be increased, so that together with Child Benefit increases, the unemployed with dependants will be better off. This will remove the so-called "Poverty Trap". At present, forty five per cent of children in families of four or more have parents out of work. The poverty trap they face would be helped by making child payments neutral as to the work status of the parents.

The changes made by Government in relation to

the DIRT tax will have to be fundamentally reassessed, in light of the postponement of the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, and the adverse effect on the incentive for productive investment.

Labour would propose the introduction of "green taxes" imposed on activities that cause environmental damage. These could be used to encourage polluters towards less damaging methods, to promote energy conservation, and to fund environmental projects.

#### SHORT TERM TAX MEASURES TO HELP PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT CREATION:

We would see a number of ideas as being worth examination, as potentially important and useful in the short term. We do not envisage many of these ideas becoming permanent features of the taxation system — rather we see them as a response to the emergency that exists. The proposals include the following:

- Additional Labour Cost Relief, to encourage employers to hire extra staff through allowing them to offset twice the increase in payroll costs against tax liability;
- Tax credits for start-up businesses, related to the number of employees hired, and enabling employers to generate profits to the extent of the credit;
- Roll-over relief from Capital Gains Tax for people who sell businesses or property, provided the profit is invested in a new business in Ireland.

### ***Putting Justice into Economics: Labour Market Interventions***

#### EDUCATION — THE LONG-TERM SOLUTION

Low educational achievement is perhaps the biggest supply side factor contributing to the expansion of long-term unemployment.

The prevention of future unemployment lies in a concentration of resources in expanding the extent and quality of education for the whole population, but particularly for socially disadvantaged groups. This must begin at preschool level for the latter. In addition, there must be a major emphasis on second-chance education, to enable people who are long-term unemployed to expand the range of choices open to them.

The objective should be to raise the school leav-

ing age to 17 years, and to increase the proportion of school leavers in third level education.

A sustained expansion of education for vulnerable disadvantaged children will in time reduce the flow into long-term unemployment in the under-25 age group.

Given the chronic labour surplus which will persist until after the year 2000, an expansion of resources in education is the key strategy for improving the future mobility of labour market entrants to other E.C. countries.

**A National Language Training Programme should begin for all children aged nine and upwards to include at least two European languages other than Irish and English.**

The expansion of educational services must be state-led and funded, with an important although subsidiary role for the market sector, particularly in language training.

The aim for the year 2000 should be a shift of resources towards education which will improve the work options in Europe for all school leavers. Opening up more choices to school-leavers, however, should not be seen in the same light as the recent hidden policy of encouraging as many of our school-leavers as possible to emigrate. Language education is fundamentally important to our future ability to compete in the European marketplace, as well as contributing to the life skills and choices of young people.

#### JOB PLACEMENT AND TRAINING

A National Job Placement and Training Scheme for the Long-Term Unemployed is absolutely essential to reduce long-term unemployment to approximately 25,000 over the next decade. It should have the following features:

- Targeted at the filling of any vacancy and not additional vacancies (as in the new Employment Subsidy Scheme);
- Confined to those who have been out of work for 12 months or longer or are currently on Training/Employment Schemes, having been twelve months out of work;
- Employer subsidies which are realistic: £132 pw in 1st year; £120 pw in 2nd year; £120 pw in 3rd year; £2,500 cash grant to employers retaining the long-term unemployed in employment for a further minimum period of two years.

- Have an agreed quota of vacancies (25%) reserved for the unemployed in the public and private sectors by agreement with Employers and Unions;
- All long-term unemployed taken on under the scheme to participate in FAS funded training where necessary;
- A national Pre-Return to Work counselling service which all those recruited under the scheme would attend.

Funding for a scheme along these lines would qualify under the EC Structural Funds Programme and would be largely self-financing in the medium term.

#### FAS — A NATIONAL LABOUR MARKET AGENCY

Given that skills training will increase for those in work, it is crucial that FAS retain quality training programmes for the long-term unemployed.

By linking training with substantial job placement subsidies, the balance of disadvantage which otherwise will increase for the Long-term Unemployed can be tilted in their favour.

The role of FAS as the National Labour Market Agency should be strengthened on a regional basis and employers should be required to register with each regional office.

#### WORK-SHARING: LABOUR'S INITIATIVE IN IRELAND

The National Voluntary Work-Sharing Scheme we have already published, which aims at creating 75,000 additional vacancies in the period 1993-1995, has already received a measure of support from both Employer and Trade Union organisations.

**The Scheme is aimed at encouraging people at work, through a combination of tax incentives and shorter working hours, to share their jobs with people who are unemployed.**

The detail of the Scheme is readily available. Eligibility, the scope of the scheme, conditions of service, holiday and sick leave, superannuation, promotion, overtime and other conditions would be in line with approved existing job-sharing schemes in the public and private sectors.

The potential of the scheme and its take-up would depend on the degree to which government, employers and trade union organisations would agree to promote it. To ensure a good take-up the commitment of employers, Government and the

ICTU would be essential to bring long-term unemployment down to 25,000. The speed of progress in reaching this target would be determined by the employment growth in the economy and throughout the European Community, but above all by the commitment of the Social Partners.

However, for work-sharing to open a significant number of additional vacancies and contribute to a reduction in unemployment *it is obvious that the greater the percentage of the labour force which participates in worksharing the greater the number of vacancies on a net basis, over and above new job creation and job losses, which will be generated.*

#### CURBING VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY

The Labour Party Work Re-Organisation Scheme published in 1988 aims at reducing voluntary redundancies and countering the cash incentive for individual employees to "sell" their jobs when rationalisation of costs are necessary.

Approximately 40-50% of redundancies arise in situations other than the closure of companies or reductions in the public service.

Had the Government made available the £120m.. spent in the period 1987-1990 on so-called voluntary redundancies in the Public Service, it is possible that employment in the Public Service through voluntary work-sharing could be 15,000 higher today at no extra cost. And additional vacancies would be available each year for labour market entrants.

What we have developed in Ireland is a tax regime which gives employers and employees a strong incentive to opt for redundancies in the face of a downturn in revenue for either the Government (public services) or companies in the market sector. This is a very rigid form of response which is totally inappropriate with high unemployment.

The Redundancy Payments Acts and related tax-free treatment of redundancy payments were introduced when unemployment was relatively low. Redundant workers in the 1965-1975 period in particular could expect to be reemployed in a relatively short space of time. The average time on Unemployment Benefit increased substantially in the 1980-1990 period, with a substantial increase in the proportion of long-term unemployed.

Total redundancies in the period 1980-91 averaged 21,318 per annum. Approximately 8-10,000 per annum were due to "rationalisation" rather than

closure. If the level of redundancies due to rationalisation had been instead spread across the remaining workforce through re-training and redeployment, a fair proportion of that total of 100,000–120,000 jobs could have been retained.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT, DIGNITY AND CHOICE

For too many people, unemployment means a sentence of economic death. It is a fact that the longer unemployment lasts, the harder re-entry to the workforce becomes.

To a considerable extent, the structures and rules relating to unemployment compound that problem. In particular, the requirement that unemployment assistance is only payable to people who are unemployed and available for work, militates against the chance of unemployed people pursuing a range of personal goals. This rule has been relaxed to some extent, in respect of part-time work, voluntary work and some education courses.

**We believe it should be abolished entirely. Anyone who is unemployed, and who wishes to take up a programme of further education (at whatever level), or to get involved in voluntary work in their own community, should be supported, rather than penalised.**

People who opt for this form of activity can be taken off the Live Register until such time as they wish to re-enter the world of work.

At present, anyone unemployed must sign on once a week. It is no longer clear why this is necessary. It represents a considerable indignity for the unemployed person, and involves thousands and thousands of staff hours (including thousands of Garda hours in rural areas) in carrying out a meaningless exercise. It is completely ineffective against fraud.

**The "weekly signing-on" ceremony should be abolished, and replaced by a system where people sign on at the start of a period of unemployment, and off at the end. This would free up thousands of staff hours, which could be used in two ways — first, to assist in better detection of fraud, and second, to be used in better services for the unemployed.**

In addition, the present requirement whereby anyone in receipt of Supplementary Welfare Allowance must make regular visits to their local health centre should also be abolished. It is a demeaning requirement, entirely reminiscent of

the work-house, which serves no purpose other than to make the recipient feel dependent and under continuous scrutiny by an unfriendly bureaucracy.

All such payments can be made and processed through the existing state banking machinery, ultimately using "cashless" methods of payment.

**The key to better services is the concept of the "one-stop shop". There is no reason why a person who is dependent on social welfare should not be able to secure all his or her entitlements, and be registered for alternative employment possibilities, in the same location.**

### **Putting Justice into the Economy: The Banking System — Should We Expect More?**

**Labour proposes a detailed, thorough, independent examination of banking practice, and of the operations of the financial sector, in Ireland.**

Some years ago, the Commission on Taxation put the subject of tax on the top of the agenda. There is a case for a similar Commission on the Financial Sector, which would have as its starting point the question "what role should the financial sector play in a developing economy like this?"

For most of us, the financial sector is a closed and mysterious world. That mystery ought not to be allowed to prevent us from examining fundamental issues. The kind of issues that need examination include the extent to which the banks and other financial institutions are contributing to, or inhibiting, economic development; the extent to which they are operating free from any effective regulation; the extent to which practices more appropriate to cartels or monopolies are allowed to pass for standard banking practice.

There is, for example, ample evidence to suggest that the banks operate credit policies which are more suited to their own needs than to the needs of the wider economy. While no-one would argue that the banks should engage in imprudent or reckless speculation, it is not going too far to suggest that in recent years, Irish economic development, in so far as it is dependent on the credit policies of banks, has been a victim of poor investment policies by the banks.

In short, there is evidence to suggest that Irish customers are paying for poor foreign investments by

Irish banks. And one has to ask — should the Irish economy be put in a secondary position to adventures that depend on economic growth in Maryland, New Hampshire, or anywhere else?

For years — all over the world — it has been a truism to say that when the economy is growing, the banks open up for credit business — often to such an extent that they contribute to over-heating in the economy. By the same token, the banks traditionally begin operating a squeeze on credit whenever the economy slows down.

And in doing so, the banks are accountable to no one but their own shareholders. There is no need for them to justify, explain, or even admit to a credit squeeze, no matter how damaging it is to any prospects for economic recovery.

There are three basic reasons for this:

- customers have no effective voice;
- there is no effective statutory regulation;
- there is inadequate competition.

Bank customers, whether individual or corporate, are entitled to legal protection, and to the assurance that in any case where they feel unfairly or arbitrarily treated, they will have recourse. At present, the Central Bank will investigate complaints by customers, but it is a procedure without teeth.

We are proposing the establishment of a statutory basis of regulation or protection, which would be empowered on an independent basis to investigate complaints, make recommendations, and have a range of sanctions at its disposal to ensure that bank customers are treated fairly and equitably.

#### A BANKING THIRD FORCE

The issue of competition in banking needs to be addressed. While it might be hoped that the operation of a more competitive market on its own will induce a greater awareness of the needs of customers and the economy as a whole, there is nothing in the history of the banks' operation to suggest that this is anything more than idealistic.

That is why the time has come to consider the development of a third force in banking. The State runs two banks, ICC and ACC. Part of the mandate of those banks is to contribute to economic and industrial development.

In addition, the State has considerable influence in the operation of the Trustee Savings Bank. And the State runs a nation-wide network of branch offices,

all equipped for at least basic banking purposes, in An Post.

Labour proposes the development of a State banking system, based on a combination of ACC, ICC, the Trustee Savings Banks, and An Post, possibly on a joint venture basis with a major European bank.

Such a bank could initially draw support from the thousands of transactions, and hundreds of millions of pounds, involved in State business, ranging from Social Welfare payments to investments by semi-State companies. It would of course have to operate according to the highest standards of prudential banking policy, but it would also take a much greater account of the economy in which it operated.

A State banking system would provide a valuable third source of savings, credit, and investment. By ensuring more effective competition, it would transform the banking and financial services sectors generally. And it is in the banks' own interests to become more fully involved in the economy in which their depositors and their borrowers, and indeed their shareholders live.

At present, of course, the Government is proposing the privatisation of the existing State banks, ICC and ACC. This is a silly, short-sighted, and cavalier approach. Labour will continue to oppose it resolutely.

### **Putting Justice into Economics: Jobs, Justice, and Imagination**

In 1977 the Government introduced a 3% quota for those with a physical or other disability for employment in the public service.

The idea was a recognition that in the open labour market an active discrimination in favour of a group which otherwise would experience massive discrimination was essential. Unfortunately, this 3% target has been honoured in a largely token manner.

Only 545 people in 1990 were employed in the Public Services, which out of a total 179,000 employment was considerably below 3%.

Unemployment amongst people with disabilities now is estimated at 80%. The long-term unemployed fall into the same social category as the disabled in the labour market. They are out of sight and out of mind.

In practice, the disabilities they suffer from are social — age, education, sometimes health-related, number of dependants and lack of a recent employment record.

In any programme targeted at the long-term unemployed, the Irish Government and society in general should first address the shameful neglect of the most vulnerable group to discrimination — those with physical disability or mental handicap. The 3% quota should be given the place it was originally accorded and met in earnest.

The Government can give a lead by honouring its own pledge in the public sector, and serious consideration should be given to legislation for a quota throughout the economy. At the very least, this issue should be high on the agenda for any future talks between Government and the Social Partners.

#### **JOB THROUGH OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT AID**

Ireland must recognise the growing plight of the 400 million inhabitants of the continent of Africa who are in danger of drought, famine and disease while the countries of the North continue to prosper. There are, of course, many countries of the Third World outside of Africa who also need key personnel and aid.

**By increasing Ireland's commitment to ODA from the current shameful level of 0.2% of GNP to 0.7% by the year 1996 we could provide professional trained personnel free of salary costs to developing countries for up to 6,000 Irish people.**

This would create vacancies for the period these personnel were employed in the Third World and make a real contribution to the Third World. We already have agencies in place with the skills necessary to train and place people in the Third World. All they lack are the resources.

There are hundreds if not thousands of people willing to volunteer for this work. Incentives should be put in place to make it a practical proposition. No-one undertaking service in the Third World should lose out in the Social Welfare system, for instance, and there should be a guarantee of further education for anyone returning home if they want it.

As a first step, the Agency for Personal Service Overseas should be asked to produce an urgent study on how we could contribute personnel and expertise if the resources were put in place to do it.

Development in this area could be as readily funded if individuals and business willing to contribute to recognised Third World agencies, working in co-operation with the Government, were able to regard such contributions as tax deductible.

#### **THE COMBATTING OF CRIME**

One of the most worrying features of modern Ireland is the upsurge in crime. Especially in our cities and towns, there are increasing fears among old people and people living alone. Drug-related crime, and crimes involving illegally held weapons, are a particularly frightening feature.

In addition, there is clear evidence that highly sophisticated white collar crime is on the increase in Ireland.

Changes in laws and in policing techniques are necessary to counteract both of these developments. But in the final analysis, there is only one effective measure to provide the reassurance that people need in the face of rising crime.

**Labour would propose to increase the number of Gardai progressively over a reasonable period of time, by 2,000, including the recruitment of a number of professional people to assist in the fight against fraud and white collar crime generally. This will be done by a combination of recruitment, redeployment, and better utilisation of existing resources.**

Obviously, serious regard will have to be paid to the public expenditure implications of this step, and recruitment will be determined at least to some extent by the availability of resources.

#### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IRISH FILM INDUSTRY.**

Labour will be publishing a separate policy paper on the development of an Irish film industry, using grants and tax incentives.

The employment content in film is very high. But the indirect benefits that have flown from films like "My Left Foot", "The Field", "The Commitments" and "Hear My Song", in terms of the promotion of Ireland abroad, are immeasurable.

And the development of a film industry will have enormous downstream benefits for the arts generally in Ireland. Writers, actors, musicians, and a whole host of professional people in the technical aspects of film are already highly respected abroad, and under-utilised at home.

## **Putting Justice into Economics: The Food Industry**

While a great deal of government time has been taken up with privatisation legislation, the failure of the government's one real attempt to actively promote on a selective basis the growth of a large indigenous manufacturer may have profound implications for the prospects of the Culliton Report's recommendations in this regard being implemented by any government in the foreseeable future.

The food industry, and in particular the dairy co-ops, has a long way to go before it is transformed into businesses of sufficient scale to compete successfully, and to thrive in Europe.

While the IDA has been engaged in company development programmes since 1985 with a number of food companies, the critical issue of reaching the minimum turnover threshold of two billion pounds to compete in Europe has now been put on the back burner. While mergers among food co-operatives in France and Holland have prepared them for the Single Market, the Irish food industry is still not fully ready to exploit the opportunities, and to build on Ireland's reputation as a "green" producer.

There is a serious danger that the distraction of a great deal of government energies in privatisation of part or all of the remaining state assets may see a neglect of the development of even one large indigenous food company. The Culliton Report's apparent urging or encouragement for foreign investment in the food industry would appear to be at best a second best strategy in addressing this dilemma.

A small number of companies, including Greencore and the dairy co-ops, now represent the best option as indigenous food companies with the potential to develop into Irish international food companies.

**What is urgently needed is an integrated development plan which clearly spells out to the co-ops that state support will be supplied to encourage support of mergers among them in respect of their European operations.**

Competition policy considerations would restrict their development if applied in a mechanistic fashion. But the reforms currently being considered of CAP price supports should if anything speed up the process.

The Labour Party

It is somewhat alarming that the Culliton Report, excellent in so many other respects, comes to the conclusion of the need for foreign acquisition of Irish food companies as a means of securing market outlets for Irish food products.

While employment may to some extent be stabilised in the food industry, long term export of profits by our food industry would be a feature of such acquisitions.

Labour believes that one of the first responsibilities of FORBAIRT should be the drawing up a blueprint for the food industry in consultation and agreement with the major interests in the sector.

## **Putting Justice into Economics: The Tourism Industry**

Our tourism industry has a great deal of unrealised potential. It needs a range of policy measures to remove the barriers to tourism growth, which include the seasonality factor, profitability that is too low, and a limited range of tourism products. In addition, the necessary investment in access infrastructure remains to be made.

Above all, tourism needs a plan. A National Tourism Plan should not be handed down from on high. Its development should include the industry as equal partners, and it should be addressed as much at motivating the industry as at solving immediate problems.

**Labour proposes the publication of a Green Paper on the Tourism Industry, leading to widespread consultation with the industry prior to the publication of a development plan in the form of a White Paper.**

Morale in the industry is low, as a direct result of Government policies which have paid lip service to tourism, but haven't actually been supportive at all. The fragmentation of State involvement, and the undermining of structures vital to co-ordinated development, have been features of the last few years.

An industry which contributes 7% of GNP, which provides thousands of jobs, and which is essential to the balance of payments, cannot be ignored any longer.

The key components of a National Plan must include the following ingredients:

- Increased Resources for Marketing, including

EC Support;

- Ways of attracting and financing new investment;
- Training;
- Research;
- The need for tax incentives;
- The need to make Irish tourism more affordable to visitors, particularly in such areas as access and internal travel.

Clearly, capital investment in infrastructure will be required. In order to encourage more private sector investment, consideration must be given to the following:

- Re-introduction of a modified BES scheme;
- Designation of areas where tourism is of central economic importance;
- More attractive capital allowances.

### ***Putting Justice into Economics: Housing***

Over the last three years the FF/PD Coalition has systematically cut council house building to an all-time low. At precisely the same time, private house prices have rocketed. It now takes an annual income of £22,000 a year to afford the average house price in Ireland, £25,500 per annum to afford the average house price in Dublin.

**This is the AFFORDABILITY TRAP. The gap between council house building, and affordable private houses, has never been wider in the recent history of this State.**

On average, a mere one thousand council houses per year have been built at a time when the official waiting list stands in excess of twenty thousand and the real housing list is closer to thirty thousand people — and growing rapidly.

Annual Council house building under the FF/PD Coalition is currently only one fifth of the average annual figure for the last twenty-five year period. And average private house prices have risen in the last three years:

*From £40,000 in 1987 to £63,000 now in Dublin; From £37,900 in 1987 to £51,600 now in Ireland as a whole.*

New council house building has come to a virtual standstill in all our major cities. To take just one example out of the many available, Dublin City has over 4,000 families on the waiting list. In 1989

the Corporation built a mere six new houses. In 1990 only 35 houses were built. The number increased slightly, to 95, in 1991, but there have been only 32 completions so far this year.

**Labour demands that at a minimum, new housing starts in the public sector should be quadrupled immediately, to 4,000 a year. Over time, the target for house building must be such as to eliminate waiting lists. It is a scandal and a tragedy that we should have to start all over again to tackle a housing crisis that had almost disappeared — but start we must.**

With nearly 7,000 council houses without a bathroom or indoor toilet, our local authorities are among the worst landlords in the country. Many local authorities are renting houses which are statutorily unfit. They are often rented to elderly tenants and their very existence in 1992 is a national scandal. The FF/PD Coalition Government has provided a totally inadequate sum to meet this urgent provision. At the present mean rate of funding, it will take over thirty years to provide these basic sanitary facilities.

As a community we cannot ask any council tenant — especially an elderly tenant — to wait until the year 2020 before he or she can avail of a simple bathroom and an indoor toilet. Providing such basic bathroom and toilet facilities is a housing priority for the Labour Party.

**Labour believes that there must be a five to ten year crash programme to eliminate this scandal.**

The main Fianna Fáil contribution to council housing was to build the so-called "low-cost" houses so favoured by the then Fianna Fáil Ministers. In fact, they built our biggest housing disaster. Today, thousands of tenants and tenant purchasers are being asked to pay half the cost of repairing these Fianna Fáil housing mistakes. To them, the "low cost" house is proving a very expensive mistake.

Thousands of families have been sold council houses with basic structural faults. They bought their homes in good faith with hard-earned money, believing them to be structurally sound.

Their houses are now proven to be structurally defective. Typical faults range from defective chimneys to failure of structural panels, from failure of waterproof joints to faulty roofs. Labour in Government stopped the building of "low cost" local authority houses. Through design competitions and the encouragement of improved council

house design, Labour built instead the high quality council houses which highlighted our 1982-87 term in office.

Labour wants an all-party agreement on a Structural Guarantee Scheme for all purchased council houses.

### ***Putting Justice into the Economy: Government Structures and Jobs***

The task of putting justice into the economy, which is spelled out here, must be complemented by a new sense of urgency at Government level. It is no longer enough for a monthly Government statement accompanying the Live Register figures, or for occasional announcements of packages of cosmetic measures, to substitute for Government action.

Steady progress towards the goals in this document require a total effort.

We are calling for the creation of a new Department of Enterprise and Employment. It would have responsibility for all the action aspects of industrial policy, including planning, the development of new plans for indigenous industry, energy policy, and for implementation of the labour market measures outlined here.

The regulatory aspects of business and industry (including the monitoring of EC funds allocated to industries such as the food industry), and responsibility for industrial relations and protective legislation, would also be vested in the Department of Enterprise and Employment.

In addition, the Department would be charged with the promotion of consensus in industry (at national level and on the shop floor), with the development of competition in every sector of enterprise, and with consumers' rights.

This new Department will be ordered to work closely with the Departments of Food and Marine, in drawing up the most comprehensive plan ever

seen in Ireland for the development of our natural resources, underpinned by, and reconciled with, a total commitment to conservation and the environment. The potential contribution of the food, fisheries, and energy sectors has never been fully tapped.

Secondly, we are seeking the creation of a specialist Department of Trade. The main responsibility of this Department would be selling Irish goods abroad.

We want a radical new focus. Instead of marketing alone, structures and incentives need to be put in place to ensure that there are more Irish salesmen in the field to increase the export sales of Irish goods in all world markets.

While the promotion and marketing of Irish goods in export markets has been an appropriate emphasis in Irish trade policy over the years, there are insufficient numbers of highly-motivated, language-trained, hands-on salesmen in export markets selling Irish goods and services. The new focus and priority of this policy, backed up by top-level political support, must be to overcome this deficiency.

These two new Departments would replace the existing Departments of Industry and Commerce, Labour, and Energy. A re-orientation of the structures of Government would give a much needed impetus and concentration to the task of promoting and developing the sort of economic drive we need.

The Ministers responsible for those Departments would carry ultimate accountability for the successful development and implementation of policy — a situation that is totally lacking now.

Such a re-orientation would also provide a real focus for broadening the social partnership model which is now in place. It is integral to all our proposals that unions, employers, farmers, women, and the unemployed should have a real say, as of right, in the future development of the economy, globally and in the workplace.



### FINANCIAL PARAMETERS OF LABOUR'S PROGRAMME

	CAPITAL BORROWING (EXCHEQUER)	CURRENT BUDGET (DEFICIT)	EBR	GNP	EBR AS % OF GNP
	£m.	£m.	£m.	£m.	%
1992	254	360	614	25,757	2.4
1993	454	520	974	26,572	3.7
1994	400	375	775	28,432	2.6
1995	400	225	625	30,564	2.1

Inflation is projected to be 2% in 1993, 2.5% in 1994 and 3.5% in 1995.

1. The programme involves an increase in Exchequer borrowing for capital purposes of £200 million in 1993 (including equity capital for state enterprises).
2. The EBR will rise to £974 million in 1993 because economic growth will remain weak due to high interest rates until mid 1993, though will be higher than the 1% projected growth without any stimulus.
3. A fall in German interest rates of 2% is forecast to take place in the second half of 1993 (which is a conservative view) leading to an additional increase in economic growth of 1.25%–1.5% per annum in each subsequent year.
4. It is assumed that the deflationary budgetary stance in economies other than Italy and Germany will be reversed in 1994 and that the favourable trading conditions will result in strong economic growth with lower interest rates.
5. The current budget deficit increases in 1993 because of existing commitments and higher unemployment arising from returned emigrants reducing the impact of labour market measures, and falls in subsequent years to yield a small surplus in 1996.
6. The recovery in the U.K. economy in 1994 halts the increase in unemployment and begins to fall in 1995.
7. The EBR falls back to 2.1% of GNP in 1995, which is a conservative estimate, as the current deficit benefits from a £100 million reduction per annum in 1994 and 1995 from the 2% reduction in German interest rates.
8. The Debt/GDP ratio as defined in the Maastricht Treaty does not increase in 1993 and falls in 1994 and 1995.



# MAKING IRELAND WORK

A Two-Part Programme  
To Put Justice into Economics  
and  
Trust into Politics

## TRUST INTO POLITICS



The Labour Party

## TRUST INTO POLITICS

Last week we published the first part of our Programme to put **Justice into Economics, and Trust into Politics.**

The cost of the various measures proposed here, in the second part of our Programme, has been provided within the overall financial parameters we published then.

The principal purpose of this part of the programme is to spell out a range of measures aimed at restoring **trust to politics.** Where it is appropriate, we have repeated some of the proposals we put forward in the economic part of our programme.

- Trust has been shattered in the last few years in different ways. The era of scandals has led to a demand for **better and more open** Government. The era of broken promises has opened up a mandate for **more honest** Government. And the era of run-down essential services has created a crying need for **more effective, and more socially just,** Government.

*This document is aimed at addressing those needs.* It sets out, within very tight financial parameters, to redress some at least of the injustices that have arisen from Government policies in the last five years. It aims at establishing a framework for Government and politics that will never betray the trust of the people.

And it lays out an agenda for radical reform of our laws and institutions, to develop our commitment to the spirit of partnership that we believe Ireland wants.

Because of the scarcity of resources, it is not possible for any responsible Party to lay out a list of financial promises and commitments. To attempt to do so would not be credible, and would be irresponsible.

For that reason, we have decided to concentrate most of the limited resources we have already provided in our budget on two principal areas, both crying out for trust and justice.

- Our priorities are **children, and people with a disability.** We intend to spend additional resources on these areas next year, *and we are not apologising to anyone for the commitments we are making.*

The first two sections of this programme set out our proposals in relation to these two areas of policy.

*If trust in politics means anything, it means directing policy towards those who are most vulnerable. Vulnerable people in our society have been made victims of policy neglect in the last few years. We are going to reverse that trend.*

In relation to the people affected by this programme, both policy and action is based on a commitment to RIGHTS.

The radical programme of legislative reform that we are planning, across the whole range of individual rights, is underpinned by our commitment to equality, and to the dignity of citizenship.

- The full expression of citizenship involves responsibility as well as rights. We believe that responsibility goes hand in hand with partnership - and that this is the reason why the politics of partnership can bring a new energy to our community, and a new level of trust to our politics.



**DICK SPRING**  
**LABOUR LEADER**

## THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

It is because we are committed to the right of equal citizenship that one group of people has been singled out for particular priority in this programme - people with a disability.

For too long, the issue of disability in Ireland has been seen as an issue of charity - not of rights. We recognise the *disabilities* from which people suffer, and we want to help - but we do not recognise often enough the *abilities* that people have, if only the facilities existed to bring them to full expression.

- We want to change the focus, to concentrate on *ability*, and to bring citizenship to its full flowering.

People with a disability are equal citizens of Ireland. But the full expression of that citizenship requires the utilisation of community resources, and a significant injection of political will.

The neglect of policy in this area has diminished the equal citizenship of people with a disability. *There is now a major scandal in regard to access to services; quality of services; facilities and environment; and worthwhile employment opportunities.*

There are reasons for this - and they all have to do with the choices made by Government. Labour would make different choices. In a time of scarce resources, Labour believes that the area of disability must be singled out for special priority.

### Mental Handicap

The reasons for the diminution of citizenship for people with a mental handicap include:

**Funding:** There is no single identifiable form or source of funding for services. Many of the agencies in the field, as a result, have no clear idea of how much they spend on different

aspects of the services they provide, and very little planning is possible. *The capital and current money available is grossly inadequate.*

**Staff:** Staffing requirements have been made subject to the public service embargoes of the last few years. Nearly every facility in Ireland is understaffed (more so in Dublin than in other parts of the country).

**Management:** There are dozens of different agencies in the field. Competition is as much a feature of the system as co-operation. There is waste of resources arising from this, and it is a huge obstacle to proper planning.

**Philosophy:** The provision of service is not based on a coherent philosophy, aimed at drawing out the full potential of the individual. Some service providers believe sincerely that people with a mental handicap are incapable of any significant development; others believe that there is no target they cannot reach.

**Planning:** Most of the service agencies are unable to plan beyond the end of a current year. Many operations are being run on a very ad hoc basis as a result.

**Control:** There is no one person or agency with overall control of, and responsibility for, the provision of a full range of services for people with a mental handicap. Several Government Departments are involved and dozens of agencies. The buck stops nowhere. *That is the biggest scandal of all.*

As a result of all this, there is now a crisis for the 25,000 people with a mental handicap in Ireland, and for their families. That crisis may relate to education, training, employment, or residential care - depending on family and individual circumstances.

- But it is unacceptable in any civilised country that those who are often unable to argue their own case should be the ones most victimised.

Labour intends to put a stop to this. Our proposals include:

- The provision of **£25 million** next year (already included in our budget), to “catch up” on the “Needs and Abilities” Report prepared by the last Government and effectively shelved.
- The enactment of legislation to put the rights of people with a mental handicap on a statutory basis, together with a means of redress for people whose rights are ignored.
- Measures to ensure that the parents and families of people with a mental handicap are adequately consulted and involved in the planning and decision-making processes.
- Measures to ensure greater co-operation among the agencies involved, in such areas, for example, as the assembling of financial and other information, and in the most rational and effective use of transport facilities.
- Re-classification of special national schools, as junior and senior schools, to recognise the fact that students attend such schools up to the age of eighteen years of age. Over time, the equipping of all such schools to the same standards as all primary and secondary schools.
- The establishment of a vocational training centre for people with a mental handicap on the campus of one of our Universities. This will be a pilot project, which will serve two purposes:  
First, there is no reason why people with a mental handicap should not be integrated into the life of a third level educational establishment. The training that many undergo is itself a form of third level education, and it should not be carried out in centres that are isolated from the rest of the world.

Secondly, the range of disciplines available in a University can only benefit from interaction with people with a mental handicap. The adaptation of machinery, the design of products, marketing, engineering - all of these together with a host of “caring” disciplines, including speech therapy, psychology, social work, etc - all provide important areas of activity and interaction.

In this sense, the training centre would act as a research resource as well as a mechanism for further integration.

### Physical and Sensory Disability

People with a physical disability have the same talents and abilities as anyone else - they are equal citizens. They also suffer from policy neglect. A major programme of improvements is necessary.

Labour proposes:

- A major programme of development of accessible streets and public buildings: standards would be prepared in relation to such areas as dropped kerbs, safe crossings, on-street parking facilities, signage and street furniture.
- Access to transport: all future replacement stock in the public transport fleet to include an emphasis on accessibility; train and bus stations to be totally accessible. This will involve capital expenditure over the medium term.
- Detailed examination of a scheme to provide an allowance to people with a disability to employ a personal assistant, in cases where they require help at home to maintain independence. Such a scheme could be highly cost-effective, especially when compared with the cost of hospitalisation.

## Employment for People with a Disability

In 1977 the Government introduced a 3% quota for those with a physical or other disability for employment in the public service. The idea was a recognition that in the open labour market an active discrimination in favour of a group which otherwise would experience massive discrimination was essential.

Unfortunately, this 3% target has been honoured in a largely token manner. Only 545 people in 1990 were employed in the Public Services, which out of a total 179,000 employment was considerably below 3%.

### **Unemployment amongst people with disabilities now is estimated at 80%.**

Government and society in general must first address the shameful neglect of the most vulnerable group to discrimination - those with physical disability or mental handicap. The 3% quota must be given the place it was originally accorded and met in earnest.

The Government can give a lead by honouring its own pledge in the public sector, and serious consideration must be given to legislation for a quota throughout the economy. At the very least, this issue should be high on the agenda for any future talks between Government and the Social Partners.

## A Minister for the Rights of People with a Disability

The programme that we intend is one that will require total concentration, and a considerable re-arrangement of resources. The effective delivery of services will require new structures, a far greater degree of co-ordination, and strong management.

It will be a fundamental priority for Labour that any new Government elected in Ireland should designate a Minister with special and

overall responsibility for the Rights of People with a Disability. That Minister must be a full member of the Cabinet, and must be given a budget which is commensurate to the task.

## CHILDREN'S ALLOWANCE

A cornerstone of any partnership in Ireland is a new concern for families and for individuals: a concern that has been undermined.

Where families are concerned, our policies on Children's Allowance especially will be geared towards recognising the strains of nurturing and providing for children. 93% of all money spent on Child Benefit goes to families with an income of £25,000 or less. The aim of our policy is to use that money as wisely as possible, so that it is available to mothers particularly when they need it most.

Labour has already announced a major plan to use Child Benefit - or the Children's Allowance, as it is still popularly known - to remove poverty traps and to assist families.

The Children's Allowance, payable as it is to every family, is one of the most effective weapons in the fight against poverty. It has been very badly neglected, and effectively frozen since a Labour Party Minister increased it by 25% in 1986.

- As the first step towards our planned target of £40 per month per child, we have provided approximately £40 million in our financial parameters to fund a 25% increase next year.
- This will result in an increase of **£4.20**, to bring the Children's Allowance to **£20** per month per child.
- From 1994, we will provide for the introduction of an enhanced payment for children over 12, as recommended by the Combat Poverty Agency and the Commission on Social Welfare.

## HEALTH & SOCIAL POLICY

Health and social welfare have been the casualties of the discredited Thatcherite/monetarist policies adopted in 1989 by the Fianna Fail/ Progressive Democrat coalition.

Top rates of income tax have been reduced, on the one hand, and spending on imported goods and investment of wealth offshore has increased, on the other. A golden circle has emerged.

- And while this has been happening, health care has become an increasing feature of the two-tier society, and essential supports for the poor and disadvantaged have been decimated.

The Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat record is littered with broken promises. No-one will now believe either Charlie McCreevy's last minute conversion to compassion and justice for those on social welfare, or Dr. John O'Connell's promises of new hospitals in every marginal constituency.

Labour's priorities in these two key areas are:

- To halt the downward trend in social expenditure under the last government.
- To introduce a carefully balanced programme of capital expenditure in health care and in giving full expression to the rights of people with a disability.
- To continue with the improvements in efficiency in both Health and Social Welfare pioneered by Labour in successive governments.
- To restore justice, concern and dignity to the way in which the state treats every member of our society, irrespective of income.

The increases in social welfare and health expenditure must be undertaken within our general strategy, which accepts the Maastricht framework, and all of the measures outlined here as priorities have been included in the Budget published in "Justice into Economics" last week.

It is worth recording several encouraging features about the financial scene in health and social welfare.

- Change in the value of sterling has dramatically reduced the cost of our drugs bill. Labour will ensure that these benefits are passed on fully to the General Medical Service, the Health Boards, the hospital sector and the general public.
- The overall impact of the British devaluation will be to reduce inflation to very low levels.
- This will lead to a stabilisation of both health and social welfare costs below the levels currently being planned for.
- Well planned capital expenditure in the health and social welfare area, as well as providing desperately needed facilities, will also provide considerable additional employment; so that every pound spent will have a double effect.
- For example, the Tallaght Hospital will provide 1,000 extra jobs during construction over four to five years with an investment of £140m.
- Increases in social welfare payments are utilised almost entirely in local expenditure on food, clothing and so on.
- This gives added support to the local retail sector, thus improving general employment and again giving extra effect for every pound spent.

## FF/PD Promises and Reality: Labour's Policies

### **The Promise:**

To reduce hospital waiting lists

### **The Reality:**

In 1989 there were 22,380 people waiting for essential hospital treatment. Now there are 36,421 people waiting for essential hospital treatment. (*Source: Department of Health Statistics*)

- Labour is committed to more emphasis on prevention and primary care, thus treating illness before it gets to the hospital stage. Re-opening some of the beds recently closed, as well as the proposed capital programme, will enable waiting lists to be reduced.
- £20 million** has been provided for this next year within our financial parameters.

### **The Promise:**

Fianna Fail promised cash grants to reduce Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgery waiting lists.

### **The Reality:**

The money has been diverted to other areas of health and no significant progress has been made on ENT lists. (*Source: Leading ENT surgeon quoted in Irish Medical News, November 1992*).

- Labour, by improving children's hospital care as a priority throughout the country would ensure speedy treatment for all major hospitalisation procedures for children, including ENT.

### **The Promise:**

to start building the new Tallaght Hospital (promise given in 1987, 1989, 1991 and 1992).

### **The Reality:**

While £11 million has already been spent on site works, planning etc., no action has yet been taken. The Tallaght Hospital Board has not met for nine months - and it has only now

been formally notified of the Taoiseach's recent announcement that work on the hospital will commence!

- Labour is committed to providing **£20 million** in next year's Public Capital Programme for work to commence.

### **The Promise:**

To provide permanently for the maintenance of the ethos and ethical views of the Adelaide Hospital in the move to Tallaght.

### **The Reality:**

Negotiations have not been completed on this issue. The Hospital Board is deeply worried about lack of effective action by the government, and the hospital's budget has been cut drastically.

- Labour will fully protect the Protestant ethos of the Adelaide at every level of the structures for the new Hospital, and the services to be provided by the Hospital.
- Labour, as stated, would have a public timetable for the implementation of the capital programme in health. We will complete the rationalisation of the Dublin hospital sector begun when last in government. We will follow expert views on the type, size and location of hospital development throughout the country to ensure a planned and integrated service within easy reach of every citizen.

### **The Promise:**

To resolve the problems in the General Medical Service.

### **The Reality:**

Large numbers of General Practitioners are threatening to resign from the Service on December 8th while the government has prevaricated, delayed and changed its mind on the matter.

- Labour accepts that the GP service is crucial to the development of effective primary and community care and to preventing unnecessary and expensive

primary hospital facilities. We would immediately enter into negotiations with the doctors' unions on this matter. More resources must be devoted to the development of efficient group practices and to providing a better funded out-of-hours service. An Appeals Committee with ICGP and IMO membership should be established to decide upon disagreements between GPs and GMS. This Committee should also, as a first priority, review and re-design all forms issued by the GMS to GPs and should simplify the system to cut down the inordinate amount of time now spent by GPs in paperwork rather than patient care. Necessary changes or adjustments in the tax structure, to take account of cash flow situations in general practice, would be examined sympathetically in the context of overall tax reform as it applies to all the professions and the self-employed.

Labour will also:

- Devote £10 million next year (as per our financial parameters) to easing the present situation in Health Boards, and to allow them to concentrate on waiting lists.
- Devote additional resources to a meaningful programme of counselling and care for HIV and AIDS sufferers.
- Legislate to allow condoms to be sold in vending machines.
- Replace the glossy but superficial Patients Charter with a properly structured system of patients' rights. We will extend the remit of the Ombudsman to cover patients' rights, and will enact legislation to give patients a right to their medical records in any situation where they have reason to believe they have been hurt or damaged by medical treatment.

## Social Welfare

The Dickensian approach of this Government to the Social Welfare system has been intensely damaging to the fabric of our society. It has been based on a blind and callous assumption that the people of Ireland will tolerate the development of a two-tier system.

People who are dependent on Social Welfare are **not** less deserving members of our society. They have as much right to human dignity as any other citizen.

Labour Proposes:

- To reverse the cuts made by the outgoing Minister within twelve months.**
- To insist on a long-term policy commitment to maintaining the social insurance system.
- To ask the Commission on Social Welfare to "re-visit" its Report, and to advise the Government on all remaining steps to bring that report into implementation.
- To introduce legislation that will prevent future maverick Ministers of Social Welfare from regulating the conditions under which poorer people must live by Ministerial Order.

## Unemployment, Dignity, & Choice

For too many people, unemployment means a sentence of economic death. It is a fact that the longer unemployment lasts, the harder re-entry to the workforce becomes.

To a considerable extent, the structures and rules relating to unemployment compound that problem. In particular, the requirement that unemployment assistance is only payable to people who are unemployed *and* available for work, militates against the chance of unemployed people pursuing a range of personal goals.

This rule has been relaxed to some extent, in respect of occasional voluntary work and some education courses.

- We believe it should be abolished entirely. Anyone who is unemployed, and who wishes to take up a programme of further education (at whatever level), or to get involved in voluntary work in their own community, should be supported, rather than penalised.

People who opt for this form of activity can be taken off the Live Register until such time as they wish to re-enter the world of work.

At present, anyone unemployed must sign on once a week. It is no longer clear why this is necessary.

It represents a considerable indignity for the unemployed person, and involves thousands and thousands of staff hours (including thousands of Garda hours in rural areas) in carrying out a meaningless exercise. It is completely ineffective against fraud.

- The "weekly signing-on" ceremony should be abolished, and replaced by a system where people sign on at the start of a period of unemployment, and off at the end. This would free up thousands of staff hours, which could be used in two ways - first, to assist in better detection of fraud, and second, to be used in better services for the unemployed.
- In addition, the present requirement whereby anyone in receipt of Supplementary Welfare Allowance must make regular visits to their local health centre must also be abolished. It is a demeaning requirement, entirely reminiscent of the work-house, which serves no purpose other than to make the recipient feel dependent and under continuous scrutiny by an unfriendly bureaucracy.

All such payments can be made and processed through the existing state banking machinery, ultimately using "cashless" methods of payment.

- The key to better services is the concept of the "one-stop shop". There is no reason why a person who is dependent on social welfare should not be able to secure all his or her entitlements, and be registered for alternative employment possibilities, in the same location.

## EDUCATION

- The Green Paper will be withdrawn, and extensively redrafted to reflect real priorities.

Labour recognises that the resources required for a proper development of our education services will be very considerable. But the priorities include the following:

- Reduction of class sizes in the primary sector. **One thousand additional primary teachers** is needed by 1996 to reduce the pupil/teacher ratio from 25.1:1 down to 22.5:1.
- A further 1,000 teachers** is required in the same time scale to provide remedial teaching for all who require it.
- Access to third level education is becoming increasingly vital (and increasingly unequal). **Labour proposes to work towards a position where the income limit for Higher Education Grants is based on net income, rather than gross income as at present.**
- Labour believes that urgent consideration must be given to the introduction by the end of the decade of **a comprehensive system of pre-school education**, with a properly designed curriculum and trained teachers.

- Second-chance education** must be adequately resourced and structured to be available within every community.
- The **psychological service** must be expanded to ensure that every child with behavioural and learning difficulties has access to help at the earliest stage. There is a role here for School Welfare Officers, as indeed there is in the area of more effective discipline.
- Resources must be more effectively **targeted** at areas of greatest disadvantage. The education system must be seen in this context as a weapon in the battle against institutionalised inequality.
- Rather than the present over-emphasis on technical education in the Green Paper, the emphasis must be on **developing the whole person** - we need a new emphasis on developing critical and creative faculties.
- Language development** must be a greater priority, from an earlier age.
- We need a new and creative emphasis on our own **language, culture, and heritage**. Our identity must be proud, confident, and outward-looking, and our education system has a major role to play in that.
- Control of our education system must include a meaningful role for **parents**.
- Not enough attention has been paid to the **stress** involved in teaching. Job satisfaction must be an issue, to be addressed by removing rigidities from the system and allowing teachers to more fully express the wider range of their talents.
- We will protect the independence and traditional democratic decision-making structures of the Universities; preserve the diversity of the activities of Universities; and reject measures to centralise power.

## PUTTING TRUST INTO POLITICS

*We intend to embark on the most comprehensive and reforming series of changes in structures and legislation ever seen in this country. The aim of this programme of reform is two-fold:*

- *First, the securing of a framework for Government and politics that will never betray the people; and second, the development of our commitment to the spirit of partnership that we believe Ireland wants.*

*This programme of reform is set out below in summary form under two broad headings: Institutional Reform, and Citizen's Rights.*

### Institutional Reform

#### A. LAW REFORM

- All British legislation enacted before independence will be repealed on a phased basis and replaced with a modern code of laws. This project will require an increase in funding to the Attorney General's office.
- The putting in place of a broad programme of signature, ratification and incorporation into Irish law of UN and Council of Europe Conventions, particularly in the human rights field. This process will include the incorporation into domestic law of the European Convention on Human Rights.

#### B. ELECTORAL REFORM

- Constituency commission to be placed on a statutory basis with a remit extended to local electoral areas and European constituencies.
- Introduction of a requirement of proportionality in drawing up

Euro-constituencies and (within any individual council) local electoral areas.

- Votes for emigrants.
  - Revision of Electoral Act to ensure full opportunity for electoral participation by all sectors of society.
- C. OIREACHTAS REFORM
- Compulsory procedure for declaration of interests.
  - Establishment of a permanent committee for each Department of Government with general powers to investigate and report. Ministers will be required to appear before these committees.
  - Committee stage of every Bill will be taken in the appropriate committee.
  - MEPs to be given a role in Oireachtas committees.
  - To improve the effectiveness of the Oireachtas as a law-making body, each member to be assigned one research staff member and one administrative staff member.
  - Introduction of a Petition System along the lines of the European Parliament.
  - Introduction of question time in the Seanad.
  - Compulsory disclosure by political parties and candidates of all financial contributions.
  - Amendment of Companies Act to require disclosure of corporate donations to political parties.
  - The establishment of procedures to enable both the Oireachtas and Irish citizens, industry, trade unions and interest groups to have a more meaningful role in the legislative process in the European Community.

- Introduction of strict procedures for the implementation of community law in Ireland within the appropriate time limits.
- Review of Statutory Instruments Act; all Government regulations to be published promptly and be freely available.

D. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

- Establishment of elected regional authorities and sub-county structures, to be elected in July 1993.
- Acceleration of devolution of functions from central government in line with the Barrington report.
- Legislation to prohibit members of the Oireachtas or MEPs from membership of local authorities.
- The Government's power to postpone local elections should be removed.
- The Government's power to dissolve local authorities should be subject to approval by both Houses of the Oireachtas.

E. THE COURTS

- Full review and reform of the office of Attorney General, to assess the need for some of his or her functions in the light of current circumstances and to bring the Attorney General under the political responsibility of the Government.
- Establishment of family courts.
- Court of Criminal Appeal to be abolished. Establishment of a new Court of Appeal with civil and criminal jurisdiction staffed by full-time judges.
- Offences against military law to be tried by ordinary courts. Courts-martial and Courts-martial Appeals Court to be abolished.
- Expansion of the law reporting system to ensure a fully comprehensive service.

- Independent advisory body for judicial appointments.
- Examination of the possibility of televising of courts, public tribunals, etc.
- Extension of civil legal aid to tribunals; such as Social Welfare Appeals Office and Employment Appeals Tribunal.
- Broadening nationwide basis of civil legal aid.
- Extending small claim procedure in District Court on a nationwide basis.
- Protection of judicial independence by giving all judges (including District Court and Special Criminal Court) the same security of tenure as High Court judges.
- Steps to reduce the workload of the Supreme Court including the appointment of law clerks to the court.
- Legislation to ensure that all judges of the Supreme Court participate in the court when available to do so. Requirement that judges of the Supreme Court cannot hold other positions.

#### F. THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Labour policy is based on an all-out attack on crime. But we must also make the system more rational, modern, efficient, and humane. Changes must include:

- Immediate implementation of the Norris judgment.
- Introduction of legislation on miscarriages of justice. In addition to a committee to advise on pardon, the courts will be given power to quash a conviction following pardon even if all appeal mechanisms have been used.
- A statutory right to compensation for victims of miscarriages of justice.

- Prohibition of conviction on the basis of uncorroborated confession evidence.
- Funding for victim support groups.
- Change in extradition procedures to require a prima facie case before extradition: expand the range of offences for which a person can be tried in Ireland in respect of crimes committed abroad; examine expansion of the range of democratic countries to which persons can be extradited.
- Reform of the outdated and inadequate law of "insanity" and introduction of a new defence of diminished responsibility.
- Abolition of the offence of suicide.
- General provisions on the confiscation of proceeds of crime.
- Legislation on the indexation of fines in line with the law reform commission report.
- Review of legislation on computer misuse.
- Abolition of provisions for sentences of penal servitude, hard labour or corporal punishment. Abolition of the categorisation of offences as felonies or misdemeanours.
- Termination of the state of emergency.
- Tightening of the emergency clause in the Constitution to prevent abuse.
- Repeal of all internment legislation.
- Review of all other security legislation.
- Complete exclusion of evidence in criminal trials obtained in breach of legal or constitutional rules.

## Citizens' Rights

### A. PERSONAL RIGHTS

- Strengthening powers of Ombudsman; increase in funding to allow a full nationwide operation; introduction of power to make binding awards of compensation.
- Increase in funding for Garda Síochána Complaints Board.
- Introduction of a Privacy Act; extension of Data Protection Act to cover written records and introduction of controls on dissemination of personal data; stronger controls including judicial controls on telephone tapping and bugging devices; strengthening of protection for the privacy of the dwelling including prohibition of picketing on residences.
- Freedom of information legislation.
- Amendment of the Constitution to allow disclosure of cabinet discussions where the public interest requires it.
- Review and expansion of statutory tribunals and appeals systems. The provision of an independent appeals system for supplementary welfare allowance along the lines of the Social Welfare Appeals Office
- Crisis in civil legal aid to be alleviated by immediate funding. **£7 million has been provided in our Budget for this.** Scheme to be placed on a statutory basis.
- Protection of the right of freedom of expression including review of law on contempt of court, confidentiality, blasphemy, defamation, the Offences Against the State Act and section 31 of the Broadcasting Act.

### B. WOMEN'S RIGHTS

- The continuing programme we intend to

pursue will start with enactment of the Equal Status Bill which we published last year. Our Equal Status Bill was and remains the most comprehensive piece of equality legislation ever produced in this country. The grounds on which the Bill prohibits discrimination across a wide range of grounds, including *sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, religion, age, handicap, race, colour, nationality, or national or ethnic origins, including membership of the travelling community.*

Secondly, the objective of the Bill is to make discrimination unlawful not only in the work place, but also *in education, in the provision of goods, facilities, and services (including recreational facilities, and services, entertainment, accommodation, transport, and professional services), and in the disposal of premises.*

Apart altogether from the Bill, we will be pursuing, over the short and longer term, a very ambitious equality programme. It will include the following specific measures:

- Full implementation of The Child Care Act 1991; major expansion of child care facilities.
- Total review of gender equality in education and promotion of full curriculum choice for all students. In particular *all* students should be exposed to education for home management and to political science studies including human and civic rights and to comprehensive sex education.
- Career guidance programmes to be enhanced to include a positive programme to encourage women to enter labour markets dominated by men and to dispel traditional employment prejudices.
- Particular emphasis on adult education to encourage re-entry of women into the workplace.

- Promotion of women's studies in third level education.
- Promotion of women in public life by state funding of a women's officer in all political parties.
- A major programme of family law reform, culminating in a referendum on divorce, modernisation of the law of nullity; placing a monetary value on women's work in the home for the purposes of property distribution; extension of barring order legislation; legislation to give each spouse an equal share in family assets; increase in the age of marriage to 18; enhancement of the rights of parties in non-marital relationships.
- Extension of maternity leave, paternity leave and adoptive maternity leave.
- Major review and extension of employment equality legislation, including more effective provisions on sexual harassment.
- Incentives for employers to introduce increased flexibility in hours of employment and to provide childcare facilities in the workplace.
- A radical programme of affirmative action in appointing women to state boards to replace the current totally inadequate piecemeal level of appointments, with the objective of reaching a position of equality.
- Introduction of a "gender-proofing" policy for all legislation and other major government decisions to assess impact on women's rights and interests. In the legislative process this may be carried out in particular by the joint Oireachtas Committee on Women's Rights.
- Review of the small number of areas in the public service where women are excluded from employment, e.g. certain

aspects of defence and justice, to ensure full equality of opportunity.

- A Sports policy to be specifically geared to increasing the fullest participation of women and to improve the profile of women's sports.
- Review of upper age limits for employment in the public and private sectors in the context of the return of women to work.

#### C. HEALTH

- Reform of mental health services; updating of the Mental Treatment Act 1945; introduction of safeguards for persons involuntarily admitted including judicial protection; prohibition of applications for involuntary admission by a spouse in defined situations of marital breakdown.
- The Nursing Homes Act to be brought into operation immediately.

#### D. LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

- Statutory protection of rights of Irish speakers e.g., to do business with public agencies through Irish.
- Commitment to Teilifis na Gaeilge
- Increased use of bilingual Bills; publication of legislation and regulations bilingually to be brought up to date.

#### E. THE ARTS

- Planning of capital expenditure on the arts is currently inadequate, ad hoc and piecemeal. Inadequate co-ordination exists between capital expenditure (e.g. national lottery) and arrangements for the current funding of arts projects. The Arts Council ought to operate on a co-ordinated 3-yearly plan for funding of the arts.

- Current arrangements for timing of funding announcements are inappropriate for arts events which need to be organised long ahead of time.
- Funding for the Arts Council should be increased to the level envisaged by the PESP.
- Funding of the arts by local authorities ought to be on a planned basis rather than facilitating a scattergun approach. As with planning and development, local authorities should be required to produce a county cultural development plan, to guide planned priorities for arts funding for a number of years.
- The regional authorities envisaged in our local government reform plan would co-ordinate decisions on major items of expenditure (e.g., theatres).
- An Arts Officer to be put in place in each local authority with professional arts staff organised in an Arts Department. In addition each local authority to have a cultural committee.
- Arts to be part of overall job creation strategy. The cost to create a job in the arts is considerably less than in any other sector of the economy.
- Emphasis on improving access to the arts and on the community arts.
- Promotion of artists of exceptional talent, including grants for foreign study.
- Exploitation of all opportunities to obtain European funding for the arts.
- The maintenance and expansion of the current favourable tax regime for artists.
- Changes in planning law to require incorporation of an arts dimension to defined categories of buildings; in particular those to which the public have access.
- Re-establishment of metropolitan streets commission with remit extended to all major urban centres. Introduction of strong controls on shopfronts, streetscapes.
- Enhancement of protection for listed buildings including the placing of the system of listed buildings on a statutory basis.
- Radical overhaul of the national monuments legislation including automatic protection for defined categories of monuments.
- A prohibition on the giving of consent to the demolition of monuments without approval by the Oireachtas in exceptional circumstances and after a full archaeological excavation.
- Full national audit of archaeological sites.
- Developments by the Office of Public Works and Government Departments to be subject to ordinary planning control.
- Developments by planning authorities to be subject to a public notification procedure with an appeal to An Bord Pleanála.

#### E. THE ENVIRONMENT

- Introduction of legislation on waste management. Institution of a national recycling policy including tax on non recyclable materials.
- Statutory obligation for local authorities to prepare a recycling plan for their functional area.
- Tighter control of land-fill sites to minimise visual impact and disruption of the locality.
- Establishment of environmental information centres/offices in major locations outside Dublin.

- Extension of Dublin smog regulations to other major urban centres, where necessary.
- Strengthening of environmental impact assessment regulations.
- Special emphasis on the protection of wildlife and on the preservation of habitats, including the fullest implementation of European Community directives.
- Legislation to place the scheme of Areas of Scientific Interest on a statutory basis. Particular protection for peatlands and wetlands.
- Press for the establishment of the European Environmental Agency headquarters in Ireland.
- Reversal of current policy on interpretative centres.
- Institution of legal action in the European Court of Justice in relation to Sellafield.

#### F. HOUSING

- Abolition of ground rents.
- Conversion of land registry into a commercial semi-state enterprise.
- Simplification of conveyancing procedures in line with law reform commission recommendations to reduce costs for home purchasers.

#### G. TENANTS' RIGHTS

- Immediate extension of minimum standards of accommodation to cover the entire private rented sector; coupled with thorough implementation of enforcement powers.
- Extension of system of registration of accommodation to cover the entire private rented sector. Publication of reports on registration by local authorities.

- Extension of the statutory obligation to furnish a rent book. Rent books to be sufficient evidence of tenancy for supplementary welfare allowance purposes.
- Introduction of statutory arbitration system in respect of disputes about deposits.
- Improvement of security of tenure of residential tenants.
- Additional protections for tenants in respect of notices to quit.
- Extension of landlord's liability for repairs.
- Imposition of criminal liability for improper entry into the property by a landlord.

#### H. PRISONERS' RIGHTS

- Full implementation of the Whittaker report.
- Administration of the prisons to be vested in a Prison Service Board.
- Expansion of alternatives to imprisonment and introduction of a statutory requirement that prison sentences be imposed only when necessary.
- Review of security regimes in prisons. Prohibition of strip-searching except in well-defined and special circumstances.
- Introduction of detailed and humane regulations on living conditions in line with Whittaker report in order to ensure rehabilitation.
- Placing of long sentence review committee on a statutory basis.
- Entitlement to remission to be defined on a statutory basis.
- Review of prison disciplinary procedures to ensure proper safeguards.

- Ombudsman to have jurisdiction to hear complaints about the prison service.

#### I. EMIGRANTS' WELFARE

- Representation of emigrants in at least one House of the Oireachtas.
- Increased funding and development of welfare services in all major destinations of Irish emigrants.
- Expansion of RTE telephone news services.

#### J. RIGHTS OF REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS, IMMIGRANTS

- Current Irish policy towards treatment of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants fails to meet minimum standards. Procedures will be introduced to guarantee rights of hearings, appeal, access to legal advice and access to the courts.

#### K. CONSUMER POLICY

- Further legislation to regulate the financial services sector and prevent fraud.
- Closer regulation of the insurance industry introduction of regulations on policy forms.
- Reform of the law on charities and collections; introduction of a registration system for charities; re-examination of criteria to qualify as a charity; requirements for publication of accounts and public notification of percentages spent on administration.

#### L. JUSTICE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- Accelerated increase of Ireland's ODA contribution to the UN level of 0.7% of GNP.
- Introduction of tax relief for personal and corporate contributions to charities working in the developing world.

