

THE PARTY PROGRAMME



**LABOUR PARTY
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
1980**

THE PARTY PROGRAMME



LABOUR PARTY ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1980

Published by:
THE LABOUR PARTY
16 Gardiner Place
Dublin 1

Introduction

PRINTED AT ALFA PRINT LTD., DEERPARK ROAD, ATHLONE

The Labour Party is required under its constitution to publish from time to time a Party Programme, which, it is intended, would state the party's basic principles together with an outline of the policies whereby they can be implemented.

The Programme is to be distinguished from an election manifesto which normally is confined to short-term issues as they relate to an election. The Programme has a longer vision and, indeed, a different purpose. It should be the basic guide for all party activity over a generation.

The Labour Party, not unnaturally, is the only party in Ireland to publish a Programme. It first did so in 1930 and again at the end of the thirties and the beginning of the forties.

The third version was adopted in 1952 while the Policy Statements of 1969 could be said to constitute the equivalent of a fourth Programme.

It is appropriate that at the beginning of a new decade the Labour Party should once again address itself to a restatement of its basic socialist objectives and the means whereby they can be achieved in practice. It is always a challenge to a serious political party to abstract itself from the day to day pressures of politics and to reappraise its policies in the light of change.

The Labour Party accepted that challenge and updated its Programme to meet the new demands and priorities of the eighties. It offers this Party Programme as its vision of Ireland during that decade, an Ireland organised on socialist lines.

*Brendan Halligan
GENERAL SECRETARY*

*Labour Party Head Office
DUBLIN
October, 1980.*

**Published by:
The Labour Party
16 Gardiner Street
Dublin 1.**

CONTENTS

Part One: Aims and Objects

- | | |
|-----------------|---------|
| 1. Introduction | Page 7 |
| 2. Socialism | Page 8 |
| 3. The North | Page 10 |

Part Two: The Economy

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| 4. Planning | Page 13 |
| 5. Industrial Development | Page 14 |
| 6. Worker Democracy | Page 16 |
| 7. Banking | Page 18 |
| 8. Agriculture | Page 18 |
| 9. Maritime Development | Page 21 |
| 10. Taxation | Page 23 |
| 11. Transport | Page 24 |
| 12. Energy | Page 25 |
| 13. Environment | Page 26 |

Part Three: Social Policy

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| 14. The Elimination of Poverty | Page 27 |
| 15. Social Welfare | Page 28 |
| 16. Health | Page 29 |
| 17. Education | Page 31 |
| 18. Housing | Page 32 |
| 19. The Elderly | Page 34 |
| 20. Children | Page 35 |
| 21. Consumers | Page 36 |

Part Four: Justice

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| 22. Equality for Women | Page 37 |
| 23. A System of Justice | Page 39 |
| 24. The Travelling People | Page 41 |
| 25. Penal Reform | Page 41 |

Part Five: Culture and Recreation

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| 26. Youth | Page 43 |
| 27. The Arts | Page 43 |
| 28. Sport and Recreation | Page 44 |
| 29. The Irish Language | Page 45 |
| 30. An Gaeltacht | Page 46 |

Part Six: The Citizen and the State

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| 31. The National Constitution | Page 47 |
| 32. Parliament | Page 47 |
| 33. Local Government | Page 48 |

Part Seven: International Affairs

34. International Policy

35. Neutrality

36. The European Community

Part Eight: Future Perspectives

37. The Eighties

Page 50

Page 51

Page 52

Page 53

PART ONE

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

**SECTION ONE:
INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Labour a distinctive Party

The Labour Party is a distinctive, independent political party with its own programme and ideals representing the interests of all workers. It seeks to win control by democratic means of the machinery of the State in order to establish an all Ireland democratic workers republic based on socialist principles.

1.2 Aims and Objects

As its primary objectives Labour seeks to eradicate the exploitation of one class by another, to banish poverty, to promote industry, to stimulate agriculture, to foster commerce, to develop our natural resources, to end violence, to promote the voluntary unity of all the people on the island of Ireland and to establish the Workers' Republic.

1.3 This Programme of the Labour Party is framed to express explicitly the ultimate aims of the Labour Party and to indicate in unequivocal terms the methods and measures which the Labour Party will adopt when entrusted by the people with the authority of Government. As part of a continuous process of creating a free, classless society in which the masses of the people will exercise democratic authority the Labour Party, when entrusted with governmental power, will speedily adopt a fundamental programme of legislation and administrative measures which is outlined here.

Labour the Workers' Party

1.4 The Labour Party does not claim to represent the interests of all groups and sections in the nation. The Labour Party could not honestly make such a claim because there are groups and sections whose special interests and activities are opposed to the general welfare and common good of the Irish people.

1.5 The presence of these privileged wealthy groups and their attempts to protect and maintain their wealth and privilege gives rise to class antagonism and conflicts in the community whenever any serious efforts is made to raise the general standard of living or add to the economic security of the mass of the people which necessitates a curtailment of the wealth or privileges of these selfish groups. This antagonism and these conflicts become very clear on such occasions as when the wealth and other capital taxes were introduced or when attempts are made to establish proper medical and health services for all; to provide cheap credit for housing or economic development; or to control the price of building land.

1.6 The Labour Party, by its very name, therefore, seeks only to represent and further the interests of that class which is threatened and exploited by selfish interest groups.



A Majority Party

1.7 Founded in 1912 prior to the creation of the independent Irish State by the Irish Trade Union Congress under the inspiration of its two great founders, James Connolly and James Larkin, the Labour Party was established as the political arm of the movement of organised workers dedicated to the overthrow of the capitalist system in Ireland and its replacement by a socialist society based on the inherent dignity and equality of every citizen. The Party remains totally committed to the achievement of power in its own right as a majority party in Dail Eireann in order to implement its policies, while at the same time carrying on a day to day struggle to secure immediate improvements in the living conditions of the people.

1.8 But clearly, the Labour Party can only achieve its objectives by attaining the power of government as the majority party in the country. The present position is a transitory phase on the road to securing the support of the majority of the people. That objective can be achieved when Labour demonstrates convincingly that it has the capacity to become the government of this country. This Party Programme is offered to the Irish public as an indispensable part of that process.

SECTION TWO: SOCIALISM

Socialism is Democracy

2.1 The Labour Party is a democratic socialist party. It believes that democracy and socialism are synonymous and that one cannot be achieved without the other. Socialists stand for a world of peace and freedom, for a world in which the exploitation and enslavement of peoples by peoples is unknown, for a world in which the development of the individual personality is the basis for the fruitful development of mankind.

They appeal to the solidarity of all working people in the struggle for this great aim. That is the message of the Labour Party in Ireland.

2.2 The basic aim of socialism is to liberate people from oppression by a minority which owns or controls the means of production, distribution and exchange. It aims to put economic and political power in the hands of the people as a whole and to create a community in which people work together freely as equals. This aim of changing the economic structure of society by transferring ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange from one small elite to the masses of the people is the very bedrock of socialism.

Socialism in Ireland

2.3 Socialism in Ireland and throughout Europe was born as a movement of protest against the disease inherent in capitalist society. Because wage earners suffered most from capitalism, socialism first developed as a movement of the wage earners. Since then more and more people - professional and clerical workers, farmers and fishermen, craftsmen and shopkeepers, artists and scientists - are coming to understand that socialism holds the key to their future. Socialism appeals to all men and women who believe that the exploitation of one person by another must be abolished.

2.4 In Ireland, as in many countries, uncontrolled capitalism, such as existed when the Labour Party was founded, is giving place to an economy in which state intervention and State ownership limit the scope of private capitalists. Social security, free trade unionism and industrial democracy have won ground. This development is largely the result of long years of struggle by socialists in the Labour Party and trade union movement. However, this new situation is not socialism. It is a new form of capitalism which, despite its modifi-

cations and the amelioration of its worst crudities and excesses, will always be an unjust, intolerable and unacceptable social order. Socialism is an alternative form of society to the one in which we live. It is concerned with the creation of a totally new social order based on new values and with the means by which the new order can be created.

Basic Beliefs

2.5 The Labour Party's philosophy is grounded on a set of basic beliefs which are shared by millions of socialists throughout the world and which bind them together even though there are differences as to the best means to achieve the common objectives. These beliefs are as follows.

Freedom

2.6 In the first place socialism is a belief in freedom and in the right of every person to develop as they wish. It applies not just to political freedom but to economic freedom as well since everybody has a basic right to participate in decisions affecting their livelihood, whether in the workshop, the office or the farm. The concept of freedom as held by the Labour Party involves not only each person's right to freedom of intellect and of expression but also freedom from those social or economic conditions which would deny the achievement of that person's full potential. Therefore, true freedom must bring with it freedom from hunger and want, freedom from injustice and discrimination. On the positive side it involves a right to equal opportunity in education and, in adulthood, to the right to work.

2.7 Freedom is for socialists the basic principle of their philosophy. Without freedom there can be no socialism. Socialism can only be achieved through democracy. Democracy can only be achieved through socialism. The fullest expression of individual and social

freedom is thus to be found in socialism embracing not just political life but all the other myriad aspects of life as well in the economic, social, cultural, recreational and intellectual spheres.

Equality

2.8 Secondly, socialism is a belief in equality. It is in this area that socialism most differs from capitalism, under which there are gross inequalities in wealth and consequently, in power, influence and prestige. Notwithstanding the attempts to redistribute income by means of progressive taxation, one per cent of the population still owns more than half of the wealth of the country. That is not equality since it is ludicrous to claim that a person without wealth is the equal of a person with it. Capitalist competition has allowed the aggressive and the strong to accumulate wealth with few rules to prevent them from going beyond the bounds of justice.

2.9 Lipservice is paid in Ireland to equality. The words of the Proclamation are quoted as a belief in equality. Yet powerful interests have frustrated any real moves towards equality in Ireland.

2.10 The commitment to equality is deeply ingrained in socialism and is inseparable from it. The very first election programme of the Labour Party, published in 1920 at the height of the independence struggle, stated in its



initial paragraph that one of the ultimate aims of the Labour Party was "to abolish all powers and privileges based upon property or ancestry or not granted or confirmed by the freely expressed will of the Irish People." That aim remains one of the fundamental objectives of the Labour Party today, encompassing as it does the very essence of the socialist belief.

Solidarity

2.11 Thirdly, socialism is a belief in the concept of solidarity. The hallmark of the capitalist economy is exploitation with profit as the key motive for economic affairs. Competition breeds cruelty and indifference. It destroys any sense of social responsibility because the competitive process rewards the aggressive, punishes the weak, stresses the money value of every thing, and values only those goods and services which can make a profit. Yet it is a fact that individuals cannot always provide for themselves in every eventuality. It is equally a fact that many important goods are social in character, such as health, education or housing, either in terms of their production or consumption. A purely individualist philosophy cannot provide the basis for safeguarding the individual against adversity or for providing the community with the social goods and services necessary for civilised living.

2.12 Labour seeks to replace capitalist society with one based on the principle of solidarity and which truly reflects the interdependence of people. The aim of the Labour Party is to build a society based on co-operation, shared responsibility and social harmony in which there is a recognised common purpose of life. Such an aim requires the rejection of selfish individualism in preference to the principle of service to the community. It demands the extermination of all forms of exploitation and speculation, particularly in natural resources, such as building land.

Democracy the Means

2.13 It follows directly from these three basic principles of freedom, equality, solidarity, that the means by which socialism is to be achieved must be in themselves democratic. Socialism can only be built on the willing assent of the people. It cannot be imposed by force or tyranny for to do so is to deny freedom - the first starting point of socialism itself.

2.14 Labour realizing the frustration of these values of freedom, equality and solidarity by the institutions of an exploitative economy system aims to replace that economic order and to organise and educate so as to achieve these aims in the workplace, home and school.

2.15 The socialist principles of freedom, equality and solidarity have been reflected and stated on the many occasions Labour has offered its programmes and policies to the Irish people and find their most authoritative formulation in the Party Constitution.

SECTION THREE:

THE UNITY OF THE IRISH PEOPLE

Voluntary Unity

3.1 Whereas other political parties in the Republic aim solely at territorial unity, the Labour Party goes further and aims at the creation of a socialist society in Ireland and the uniting of the Irish people as complementary objectives.

3.2 The Labour Party seeks the voluntary union of all Irish people and territory. The achievement of the voluntary unity of all the people of Ireland clearly implies that the real and profound differences that exist at present must be removed by persuasion, dialogue and communication, and not by the bomb and the bullet.

Peace a Precondition

3.3 The Labour Party is convinced that peace and better understanding between



the communities is a necessary precondition for the achievement of both socialism and of eventual unity. It, therefore, repudiates unequivocally any attempt to achieve a United Ireland, socialist or otherwise, by force of arms.

Unity of the Working Class

3.4 The Labour Party is committed to the principle of Connolly and Larkin, that it is in the unity of the working class, of all denominations, that the future unity of our country lies. Consequently, the Labour Party pledges itself to the support and strengthening of the trade union movement in the North and South and the promotion of political solidarity among all Irish workers and will continue to support similar activity by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Socialism in the Republic

3.5 The attainment of socialism in the Republic would be a step of vast importance towards the goal of an All Ireland Socialist Republic. In working for socialism in accordance with its policies and programmes, the Labour Party is also working for national unity. Similarly, the attainment of socialism in Northern Ireland would be a long step towards a socialist united Ireland.

3.6 In accordance with its philosophy as a socialist party, the Labour Party pledges itself to the elimination of all sectarian laws, constitutional provisions

and practices, both in the North and South, which are a major factor in dividing the working class, and deplores all appeals to sectarian passions and violence.

Full Employment and Unity

3.7 The Labour Party also recognises that the economic situation in the whole island has contributed to the present disastrous crisis. The depressed economic and social conditions of the Republic have been among the reasons maintaining support for Unionist Parties in the North. At the same time, the depressed state of certain regions in Northern Ireland - and, in particular, extremely high chronic unemployment rates in certain areas - has created a sense of frustration among many of the

young which has resulted in support for various forms of violence. Consequently, the attainment of the Labour Party's economic and social objectives, particularly of full employment, is of the greatest importance, not only in itself, but also within the framework of a sound approach to the Northern question. The Labour Party, therefore, will work for full employment, North and South, as a means of eliminating social evil and of forwarding unity.

Internal Settlement

3.8 While our fundamental commitment as a party is to an all Ireland socialist society, Labour recognises that the immediate requirement is an internal settlement within Northern Ireland, brought about by the Northern people themselves. Longterm solutions can only be considered when the political vacuum within Northern Ireland is filled. In practical terms what is required is agreement on a form of devolved government which is acceptable to the minority and majority populations there. Until such agreement becomes possible there can be no hope of progress.

3.9 It automatically follows from the basic principle that unity can only come by consent, that until this consent is granted the majority population in the North has an effective veto over Irish unity. However, since the collapse of the Power Sharing Executive in 1974 the Unionist population has assumed the right to a second veto and this it exercises over any attempt to create developed institutions which do not correspond with their demands for a return to majority rule. That veto cannot be accepted or tolerated. It is the policy of the Labour Party to support developed Government in the North as an essential component in the process of reconciliation leading on to peace and unity. But it equally is a principle of policy that such institutions cannot be on the basis of majority rule. They must be on a power sharing basis involving both communities as of right in the exercise of executive authority.

Devolved Government

3.10 The Labour Party is accordingly pledged to the immediate objectives of working for a return to devolved Government in the North involving both communities as of right, to bringing about reconciliation between them and to replace violence by tolerance and understanding for each other's position based on peace and mutual respect.

Mass Party

3.11 The Labour Party also believes that a major factor in the continuing sectarian division in Northern Ireland is the lack of a mass Labour Party based on the trade union movement which could win the support of Protestant and Catholic workers alike. To this end the Labour Party stands for the creation of a mass Labour Party in Northern Ireland to extend the existing industrial unity onto the political plane.

Council of Labour

3.12 The Labour Party will work to create a climate of opinion which would make possible the establishment of a Council of Labour between a mass Labour Party in Northern Ireland and our own party. This would make possible, on the basis of joint activities on common issues, the eventual establishment of an All-Ireland Labour Party just as there exists at present an all Ireland ICTU.



PART TWO

THE ECONOMY

SECTION FOUR: PLANNING

Economic Failure

4.1 The biggest failure of the Irish economy to date has been its inability under capitalism to provide employment for those who wish to remain in Ireland. Side by side with affluence amongst some sections of the population and progress in certain sections of the economy there are still all the characteristics of chronic under-development.

4.2 The Irish economy needs to be transformed utterly if an end is to be put to under-development, low incomes, unemployment and emigration. Reliance on private enterprise has failed to provide full employment and industrial development.

The Choice for the Eighties

4.3 The challenge facing the people in the next two decades is immense if there is to be full employment and an end to emigration. Membership of the European Community will be a continuing reality over that period but there will be no significant regional or industrial development policies at the Community level to compensate for the reduced capacity in national decision-making. Growth prospects in the industrialised world do not envisage any significant reduction in unemployment in the years ahead. Third world countries will demand increased access to Community's markets for agricultural and industrial products. At the same time, in order to approach 30,000 net new jobs a year, which will be required into the 1980s in order to achieve full employment, the Irish economy will

need to grow continuously by 7% to 9% per year.

4.4 Thus the Irish economy will need to grow 1½ to 2 times as fast as the rest of the European Community in order to approach full employment at increased living standards. This means that past national policies must be altered; they have not succeeded in meeting the legitimate aspirations of Irish men and women for secure and rewarding employment at home. Over one million Irish people in Britain and elsewhere testify to that. Those past policies if continued unchanged will not succeed either in the future. The need is for a planned economy.

The Necessity for Planning

4.5 The Labour Party's belief in a planned economy goes back to its earliest pronouncements on economic policy. A previous Party Programme in a section entitled "Economic Planning", opposed "the riot of cut-throat competition peculiar to capitalist countries" and emphasised it "would not be tolerated in an era of planned economy". Labour is still opposed to reliance on capitalist competition as the means of running the economy.

4.6 In contrast to the other parties, Labour believes the state must accept the primary responsibility for economic development. It must plan by directing the use of capital so that investment goes into the industries and types of agriculture which are the most beneficial to the community. In a national plan which has for its purpose a thriving expanding economy, a wide range of social services and a high level of welfare, profit cannot be used as the sole determinant of investment.

Full Employment

4.7 The basis of Labour's policy for a planned economy is to make Full Employment the primary policy objective of all government activity with a

rapid increase in the growth of national income.

4.8 The foundation to the planned economy will be a National Development Plan which will express Labour's economic strategy by setting down the types of industries to be established and areas in which they will be located in the light of future expectations of world trade and technological innovation.

Directive Planning

4.9 In the past, planning has been confined to the "indicative" or so-called programming approach. The public controls used have been the normal orthodox measures that would have been applied anyway in the absence of a programme. The major criterion of success has not been an increase in the numbers at work but rather stability in the balance of payments and exchequer finances and growth in our external reserves although none of these objectives have been achieved in the face of depression within the capitalist economies. The interests of the monied class have been put at a premium at the expense of the great majority of our people. The consequence has been a deadly combination of high unemployment matched by recurrent emigration.

Department of Planning

4.10 A Department of Economic and Social Planning will be established and will be the premier department of state. It will be charged with devising and implementing the National Development Plan. The planning process will be democratic and participatory, involving the great masses of people in decisions affecting their economic future from which they are at present excluded.

Employment the Premier Objective

4.11 In the future, employment will be the premier policy objective and planning will be directive instead of in-

dicative. A fifteen to twenty year plan cannot be allowed to flounder in the face of short term financial problems or the inability or unwillingness of private enterprise to invest in the sectors where expansion is needed.

SECTION FIVE: INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

No Restrictions on State

5.1 In a socialist economy there will be no doctrinaire restrictions to the State's range of activities. The state will involve itself in industrial development as an integral part of the National Development Plan in the following ways:

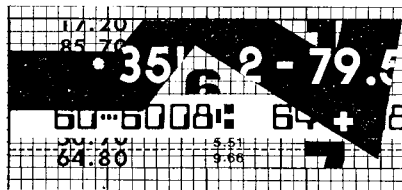
- (a) State owned companies.
- (b) State participation in development of existing industries
- (c) Joint ventures in new industries
- (d) Direct state aid
- (e) Development of the necessary infrastructure.

State Development Corporation

5.2 To these ends a State Development Corporation will be established with responsibility for establishing industries and generally developing areas judged to have growth potential. It will act as the executive agency for implementing large scale regional development plans.

National Development Plan

5.3 The resources whose industrial exploitation would be basic to the National Development Plan include mineral ores, agricultural materials, particularly meat, and the sea. Mining can lead on to extractive metallurgy and a metals industry. In turn this could create heavy engineering and then light engineering industries. A chemical industry, basic to any modern advanced economy, would complement the growth of a metals and engineering industry. Agricultural processing would demand extensive engineering facilities, especially refrigeration and packaging, and



would lead to innumerable derivative industries processing by-products. In addition, it would require extensive transportation. Marine development holds out the possibility of large scale advanced processing, such as fishmeal, allied to major engineering requirements in ship building and marine engines. It also provides an opening into one of the growth industries, that of animal feeding stuffs.

5.4 The rapid development of micro-technology introduces both opportunities for growth and dangers for employment. If the application of micro-technology to industrial and commercial practices is left solely in the hands of private enterprise it could, and most likely will, result in mass unemployment. It is, therefore, essential that the proper development of the new technology be undertaken under public control. It will either usher in immense possibilities for increased leisure and output or create unemployment of the most serious dimensions. Hence this programme commits Labour to the phased introduction of microtechnology under public control within existing industries and services and to the development of our own national base in the technology itself.

Industrial Strategy

5.5 Labour's policy will be to alter current industrial strategy. Ireland over-

relies on decisions by foreign multinational and other companies for new industrial projects. Foreign investment in this economy is essential for job creation, but it must be considered as one necessary part of the overall industrial strategy. The inevitable outcome of relying primarily on present structures and policies centred on the IDA is that by the mid eighties the majority of the growth sectors of Irish industry will be owned and controlled from abroad. The commitment of foreign industry to the Irish economy will eventually be tested when the effects of tax and other incentives disappear in the mid eighties.

5.6 What is needed is an industrial development programme based on Irish resources and utilising the most advanced technologies under Irish control. There is not the slightest possibility that private enterprise will meet these demands. Thus for reasons both of necessity and ideology Labour advocates the use of the State as the means of securing a successful programme of sustained Industrial Development throughout the rest of this century.

Investment

5.7 Massive investment in ultimately self-sustaining projects is essential if employment is to increase at the

required rate. This will be funded by domestic savings and foreign borrowing, but it will be essential to plan the economy so that those trade unionists and others who forego current consumption can directly obtain the subsequent benefits of growth and can directly see in the short-term the linkage between their restraint and the creation of jobs. This will involve major changes in the ownership structure through increased public enterprise, special incentive schemes for co-operative development by groups of workers, the acceleration of worker participation both in the public and private sectors, and depending on the degree of trade union interest, in support schemes such as "capital growth sharing" or additional "investment" wages. All this can only occur with full Government backing and a carefully structured planning system where the trade unions have a major role to play. It is the Labour Party alone which can offer that commitment.

Incomes Policy

5.8 Incomes policies relating wages and salaries with investment and employment will not succeed in a capitalist economy. The belief that worker restraint will lead to higher growth, lower inflation and increased employment is a fanciful conception unless it is accompanied by profound changes in the ownership structure. In other words, in an economy organised on socialist lines. Hence, fundamental to Labour's policy for the planned economy and industrial development is the achievement of worker democracy.

SECTION SIX: WORKER DEMOCRACY

Control

6.1 Socialism insists on the right of working people not only to adequate rewards for work, but also to control of the processes of production, distribution

and exchange. This is what socialists mean by worker democracy.

Fundamental Change

6.2 Labour's objective is a fundamental change in society, not a mere reforming programme which makes work more bearable without changing the control and ownership structures. The objective is to gain acceptance for the democratic principle in the work-place and then to institutionalise it by creating new organisational structures in the work place.

6.3 The great mass of those who are employed in industry, commerce and administration are without power. Their working lives are directed and managed by people who were not appointed by any democratic process. In political life people have struggled for centuries to secure equality and the right to elect those who rule. Yet in industrial life people are unequal. Those who manage are not elected to their positions of authority but are appointed.

No Democracy without Economic Democracy

6.4 Unless this inequality between those who own or manage, and those who work, is brought to a swift end, then political democracy will become progressively more meaningless. The control by ordinary people over political power will become even more illusory. Democracy is two-sided. There cannot be true political democracy without economic democracy. Society must solve this problem of democratising work or else the contradictions between political democracy and industrial autocracy will lead to tensions which cannot be solved.

No Doctrinaire Approach

6.5 There can be no doctrinaire approach to worker democracy. Life must not be forced to conform to theories. The approach must be ex-

perimental and flexible while the principle remains immutable. The intention is not to replace autocratic management with bureaucratic management but instead to allow freedom full play in economic organisation.

Legislation

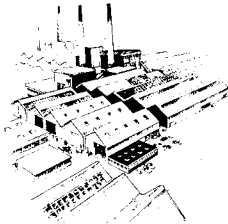
6.6 Labour proposes to change existing legislation to give workers a legal stake in their employment. The aim of this legislation will be to democratise those enterprises where the numbers engaged constitute a group big enough for a meaningful structure to be created. The legislation governing each type of economic activity will be tailored to the specific conditions obtaining in the industry, trade or profession involved.

Small Undertakings

6.7 Labour does not wish to foist on small undertakings these statutory obligations designed for other circumstances. The work relationships in the thousands of small businesses which exist in the distributive and service fields will be covered by a new industrial relations code.

State Ownership

6.8 It is necessary to discount the widespread belief that state ownership automatically ushers in a more demo-



cratic or socialist form of management and control. No mere change in the relationship of an enterprise to society, such as occurred in the nationalisation of the transport companies, can assure that the worker obtains a full measure of responsibility and fulfilment from work.

Public Service

6.9 Labour will mandate the civil service, local authorities and semi-State bodies to restructure their internal organisations so as to introduce real worker democracy. The public sector will set the pace and provide examples of how to democratise work while at the same time maintaining efficiency in the work output.

Co-operation

6.10 The formation of industrial co-operatives will provide more examples of workers ownership and control being matched with efficiency. Labour will actively promote the establishment of co-operatives as a mile-stone in worker democracy.

Full Worker Democracy

6.11 Full worker democracy will not be attained in a private enterprise economy. Even in a situation where workers have their say at all levels of an enterprise little real advance will have been made if the ultimate control of the enterprise's resources are still exclusively in the hands of a minority. Worker democracy is about power. But real power in the Irish economy today resides in the financial institutions whose associations with foreign finance are undeniably growing stronger. Therefore the public control of financial institutions and restrictions on movement of investment funds are essential.

SECTION SEVEN:

BANKING

Nationalisation of Banks

7.1 The Labour Party believes that Banking should be a nationalised institution managed in the public interest. The whole system of insurance should also be reorganised on nationalised lines. The Labour Party will therefore seek to bring banking and the control of credit under public ownership.

Monetary Policy

7.2 Labour believes that monetary policy must be framed as the basis upon which a national plan for economic development rests. Monetary policy must be an integral part of overall national planning and it must be subordinated to the aims of full employment and increased incomes rather than private profit for a small privileged group.

7.3 The Banking system hinders the prospects of growth during periods of boom by allocating credit for speculative and anti-social purposes. It hinders prospects of recovery in a depression by high interest rates and the restriction of credit. The control and direction of credit policy must, therefore, be brought under the proper public control.

Central Bank

7.4 The Central Bank, as operated since the passing of the 1971 Act is not by itself a suitable mechanism to exercise the appropriate level of supervision. Banking performance should be evaluated every year by a special Oireachtas Committee. The system of placement of private bank directors on the board of the Central Bank must be abolished without delay.

Immediate Measures

7.5 As an immediate measure of securing greater public control Labour

proposes that the Government should acquire a share holding in the banks with provision for its enlargement. This method for expanding public control is favoured because of the banks' long tradition of association with British banks. The process of disengagement to greater public control must be carried through without any loss of public confidence. The steps to be taken must be seen as responsible ones in the light of economic policy and the implementation of the principle of community control over capital resources.

SECTION EIGHT: AGRICULTURE

Land Issues

8.1 The resolution of the land issue of the last century when tenants fought to secure their holdings by a form of peasant proprietorship resolved the problems of the day but left others unsolved, e.g. how to maximise output and employment from the land for the benefit of the people. Native exploitation went unchallenged as graziers, for example, eliminated the small holders.

Capitalist Agriculture

8.2 The first agricultural policy of the independent state worked to the interest of the strongest economically within agriculture. It was honestly capitalist. It was succeeded by populist measures to purchase rural votes under the slogan of land for everybody while Irish rural society was condemned to a slow death. The backwardness of Irish rural society stems from the absence of a plan for agriculture within a planned economy. The absence of such a plan suits the myth that the objective interests of small farmers and large ranchers are the same. There is no single Irish rural society. Exploitation has existed and exists in rural Ireland as surely as it existed and exists in Irish cities.

Rural Ireland

8.3 The problems of Irish agriculture cannot be considered in isolation. Rural Ireland is not "another Ireland". It is the basis of our economic potential and the foundation of our economic structure. The deep problems of agriculture will be solved only within the framework of an overall policy of planned economic and social development. Agricultural policies can no longer be permitted to evolve without reference to policies for industry, housing, education, finance, social and cultural amenities.

Objectives

8.4 The policy of the Labour Party on Agriculture and the rural community is based upon the three fundamental concepts of co-operation, community development and commercial efficiency. These concepts are centred on the needs and potential of people, as is appropriate to a socialist policy. The Labour Party, in proposing a comprehensive policy for agriculture and the rural community in the overall setting of the socialist Ireland of the future, sets down the following fundamental objectives:

- (1) The creation of a modern and adaptable farming sector with living standards on a par with the rest of the community.
- (2) The development of a thriving rural community, characterised by advanced amenities in housing, edu-

cation, social and cultural activities, and growing opportunities of employment.

- (3) The extension of producer control over the entire production and marketing process.

European Community

8.5 Cognisance must be taken of the fact that Ireland's membership of the European Community involves us in a Common Agricultural Policy which has both advantages and disadvantages for this country but which cannot be changed unilaterally. However, it is inevitable that change will take place within the Common Policy over the eighties.

8.6 Accordingly, the Labour Party will seek the development of a Common Agricultural Policy which secures enhanced agricultural incomes through greater productivity and the application of better structural policies. Policy development for the future must concentrate upon the attainment of a more balanced relationship of supply and demand by a greater emphasis on the structural and marketing element rather than on across-the-board price increase and on the promotion of food processing in areas of primary production such as Ireland.

8.7 The Farm Modernisation Scheme must be reformed so as to provide effective support and real hope for the majority of Irish farmers. Financial



support to agriculture must favour farmers capable of achieving development and in no circumstances be permitted to become an indiscriminate subsidy to larger producers. The consumer interest must be taken fully into account in the evolution of the Common Agricultural Policy.

8.8 Agriculture and its related industries must be recognised as a potential source of employment for many citizens of the Community especially in Ireland. The development of the whole range of agriculture-based industries must be planned as a matter of priority. But the considerable advantages of the Common Agricultural Policy for some sectors of our economy must be ploughed back through the taxation system as a contribution to the balanced over-all growth of the whole economy.

The Food Industry and Marketing

8.9 Agricultural output is directly linked to the country's food industry. Labour's objective for the food industry is to increase the value added to farm output to the maximum extent possible, thereby increasing employment and the value of exports. This is clearly in the national interest and in the interest of farmers, who can expect to share in the rewards from such development by way of better prices.

8.10 Because of its size, these developments would be most rewardingly carried out in the beef sector. A realistic approach, in this as in other sectors of the food industry, must involve the attempt to bring about an orderly supply of raw material of appropriate quality. In addition, there is a need to commit greater resources to marketing a wider range of more sophisticated food products. Only in this way can we exploit fully the markets of the European Community and, at the same time protect the domestic market where at present demand for many processed products is being met from abroad.

8.11 The piecemeal approach to agriculture and the food industry which has characterised policy to date must be replaced by a planned approach to co-ordinate food production and distribution from the farmer to the foreign and domestic producer.

Land Resources

8.12 Land is the primary agricultural resource of the nation and is to be regarded as the collective heritage of the Irish people. Possession of land entails a most serious social responsibility to use it well and to ensure the optimum return to the whole community in terms of marketable produce, and adequate levels of real employment.

Elderly Farmers

8.13 A very high proportion of farms in Ireland - much higher than in any of the other EEC countries - are owned by older people who have no direct heirs and no prospect of heirs. Almost a quarter of all farmers in 1971 were over 45 and single. Even this understated the problem. It is estimated that over half of all farmers over fifty in the western counties had no direct heirs, being unmarried or, if married, their children had migrated. In addition, the proportion of farms in the hands of older, heirless and almost unmotivated farmers has been increasing rapidly for the past twenty years. Labour proposes a substantial improvement in existing Farmer Retirement incentives to increase mobility in farm ownership.

Central Objectives

8.14 The central objective of policy in this area must, therefore, be to increase mobility in land ownership and, in particular, to increase the supply of land available to smaller, potentially development and development farmers. The other side of the coin is that policy must seek to prevent the continuing accumulation of land by non-farmers and by

those larger farmers whose need for it is no longer great.

8.15 Access to the land market should also be limited to those who have demonstrated that they are competent to farm efficiently and to meet minimum training and vocational requirements.

Land Commission

8.16 The Land Commission has proven to be one of the most important institutions in modern Ireland. The Commission, in our view, must retain its land acquisition and distribution functions and it must be given an adequate budget for that purpose.

8.17 As far as possible the land purchased should be retained by the Commission and used as a land bank for long lease arrangements. While we do not rule out the value of transferring title to individual small holders, as far as possible the Commission should take on the role of arranging and overseeing long term leases from older, heirless farmers who are not themselves working the land to younger more commercially orientated farmers.

Land Transfer

8.18 In addition to all the work of the Land Commission, improved policies to secure earlier transfers of land from father to son or within the wider local kinship group are required. In particular, transfers of land from father to son should be exempted from stamp duty.

Disease Control

8.19 The eradication of disease in the dairy herd is obviously of profound importance to output in agriculture. Progress to date in this area of policy has been less than satisfactory. In order to speed up the process of achieving a disease-free herd, Labour will compensate farmers for losses on the basis that such compensation is reinvested in the herd.

Agricultural Workers

8.20 In respect of agricultural workers, Labour's policy will be to bring agricultural wages into line with wage levels in industry.

Control of Food Processing

8.21 Expansion of foreign control of the Irish food processing and distributive sectors represents a most compelling threat to the future development of farm out-put and employment. Legislative measures will therefore be taken to ensure that domestic demand for food will be used to establish a viable Irish food processing sector. The vulnerability of the Irish distributive sector will be removed by a series of measures ranging from planning to consumer protection orders.

SECTION NINE: MARITIME DEVELOPMENT

Potential

9.1 The potential of the sea has never been exploited. Its wealth has not figured in any programme for economic development as a natural resource which could provide substantial employment or contribute to the income of the nation. The neglect of the sea has been characterised by the failure to establish a separate Government Department to deal with maritime affairs as a whole.

Neglect

9.2 Other small countries with lesser resources have developed the potential of the sea and have rivalled the greatest powers. By contrast, successive Irish governments have allowed shipping and fishing resources to run down with the consequent social and economic decay of most of our coastal areas, particularly in the West.

Remedy Defects

9.3 Labour regards the exploitation of

the sea as an integral part of a National Development Plan. The first defect which must be remedied is the lack of a proper Irish fleet. Labour's objective is that as an island nation we should carry at least 50% of all our own trade, incoming and outgoing, as well as stepping up our foreign trading operations to earn valuable foreign currency. We must so expand our shipping as to create a new industry and this should be done on the basis of enlarging the state owned Irish Shipping Companies. These policy considerations apply with special force to trade on the Irish sea.

Fishing

9.4 In relation to the development of the fishing industry, Labour has three immediate aims:

Target 1: Labour will aim at expanding the Irish fishing industry to the extent that, by the end of ten years, we catch 50% of all the fish caught around our own coast.

Target 2: Labour will aim at 10,000 fully trained fishing personnel engaged in the trade around our coast.

Target 3: Labour will aim at jobs for another 10,000 directly in the catching end of the fishery business, but many more in the ancillary trades, boat-building, training, canning, transport, etc.

B.I.M.

9.5 The Boar Iascaigh Mhara will be enlarged, and its operations extended over all aspects of the wholesale and processing side of the industry. The Bord will be composed of fishermen and people of practical experience in all sides of the industry.

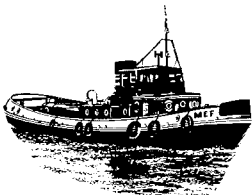
9.6 There is need for an integrated capital fishery development programme aimed at securing the employment potential of the industry with adequate training and educational provision but operating within a scientifically established conservation programme. Such

a programme's separate identity from a European Programme, even if it is complementary to it, is crucial.

9.7 As traditional fishing declines, education, training and promotion of the opportunities in fish farming will assume great importance. Labour will develop a programme to bring such developments to communities and individuals interested, particularly co-operatives.

Inland Waterway

9.8 The scandal of private exploitation of our inland waters will be ended by a Labour Government. The waters of Ireland will become the property of the people.



SECTION TEN: TAXATION

Equitable Structure

10.1 As a socialist party, Labour's objective is to devise an equitable taxation structure which will include all income earners within the taxation base and which will be levied on all earnings, no matter how they are derived. The aim will be to effect a real redistribution of income and wealth between the different groups in society so as to bring about greater equality and the elimination of poverty.

Progressive Taxation

10.2 A progressive system of direct taxation has always been part of the cornerstone of socialist taxation policy. Labour proposed the introduction of graduated scales in the taxation rates which increased in proportion to the level of taxable income. This was designed to have the redistributive effect which all socialists regard as being essential in a proper taxation policy. Labour stands by the principle of direct taxation on a progressive basis.

PAYE

10.3 Throughout the seventies there was growing disenchantment against the system of PAYE for two main reasons. The levels of allowances did not keep pace with inflation, and many who should and could have paid taxes did not do so. Labour believes that having been structured equitably all allowances should be indexed so as to maintain their real value in the face of inflation. Secondly, Labour believes that all incomes should be taxed at the same rate irrespective of their sources or the sector of the economy in which they are earned. This applies just as much to the farming sector, to the self-employed and to the professional classes as it does to the wage and salary earners.

10.4 The mechanisms of collection of

income taxes outside the PAYE system operate inefficiently. Tax evasion must be eliminated and the penalties increased.

Capital Gains

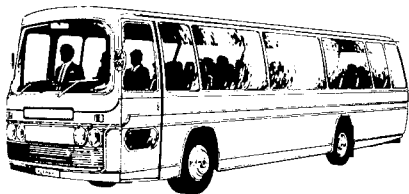
10.5 Taxes on profits arising from speculation in capital transactions and in land dealings have always formed a basic plank in Labour's taxation policy. Such a tax was introduced when Labour was in Government during the mid seventies and was emasculated when Labour left office. The restoration of the rates of tax on capital gains is a priority. It is clearly unjust that income derived from take-overs and speculation in share values should be taxed at derisory rates while at the same time the earnings of industrial, commercial and agricultural workers are taxed to the hilt.

Wealth Tax

10.6 Unless differences in the structure of capital ownership are radically altered there will never be any real equality in society. A tiny minority own the great bulk of the capital stock in the economy. This imbalance is at the heart of social injustice and taxation must be used as an instrument to remedy its evil effects on society. Labour originally proposed a tax on both real and personal wealth to be levied annually. A wealth tax was later introduced when the party was in power in the mid seventies and immediately scrapped on the return of Fianna Fail to power. This is a scandal and Labour pledges itself to the restoration of a Wealth Tax as a matter of fundamental principle.

Indirect Taxes

10.7 Indirect Taxes, such as VAT, do not discriminate between the rich and the poor and are levied without regard to ability to pay. Socialists have always



objected to the excessive use of this form of taxation, particularly in the absence of broad comprehensive social programmes to alleviate the lower income groups. But accepting the necessity to raise revenues by indirect taxes, food stuffs and other basic commodities should have no tax levied at all, while luxuries should have high tax rates.

SECTION ELEVEN: TRANSPORT

Radical Policy

11.1 Labour believes that a radical transportation policy is required in order to obtain the following social and economic objectives:

- (i) Equal mobility for all citizens.
- (ii) Efficient and energy conserving systems.
- (iii) Economic and efficient movement of freight.
- (iv) Protection of the environment from noise and air pollution.

Public Transport

11.2 Labour is committed to the provision of a public transportation system as an essential social service. Labour is determined to improve and extend the public transport system within built up and new urban areas, but equally

within our rural areas which have seen the decline of an effective public transport system. Labour therefore expresses its commitment to public transport as an essential social service and in line with this commitment, will positively examine

- (a) the concept of the flat fare for urban services
- (b) the re-organisation of existing routes
- (c) the development of the urban rail network.

Motorways

11.3 Labour is opposed to the construction of urban motorways through existing urban environments as has been proposed for the Dublin region because of their environmental and social impact, as well as because of the real doubts to their suggested efficiency.

11.4 Labour will require local authorities to provide for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and the disabled in all development plans.

Traffic Congestion

11.5 As part of an immediate policy to deal with traffic congestion Labour proposes as follows:

- (1) **Buses:** Bus lanes and right of way will be given to public transport. Local

bus services will be improved and extra buses will be made available to CIE to enable them to improve and extend their present services.

(2) **Juggernauts:** Heavy commercial trucks, which now clog our towns and cities, will be controlled. This will reduce environmental pollution. Special parking areas will be assigned for them away from residential areas.

(3) **Traffic:** Comprehensive traffic management plans will be prepared and implemented to reduce congestion and delay in our streets.

SECTION TWELVE: ENERGY

Energy Sources

12.1 A developing economy requires access to secure energy sources at reasonable cost. Neither condition is likely to prevail in the eighties. The days of cheap oil are gone. Supplies are likely to be uncertain. The eighties demand a coherent energy policy, almost as a condition of our own economic survival.

Lessen Dependence on Imports

12.2 Such a policy must begin with a massive and determined effort to lessen Ireland's dependence on oil as an energy source. This will require the development of other sources, some of which are well proven, such as coal, and some of which are as yet unproven in Irish circumstances, such as wind, solar and tidal power as well as bio-mass. The apparent novelty of any source must not deter Government from investing in the necessary research and subsequent development of these sources.

Home Sources

12.3 Labour believes that in the first instance all possible indigenous sources of energy should be exploited to the maximum. If any significant reduction can be made in the import bill by a new

source of energy free from outside control then there is a double incentive to explore its technical and commercial feasibility. There is not only an incentive but a responsibility to do so. The ESB should be directed to establish a Research Unit in developing stations based on wind and tidal power.

12.4 Bio-mass and solar energy should be positively encouraged for domestic use and in small scale enterprises by appropriate incentives.

Gas

12.5 The Kinsale Gas Field should be used as the sole source of town gas for the main cities and towns in a national grid. The industry must be completely nationalised.

Conservation

12.6 Conservation of energy, particularly through thermal insulation, is as important a factor in integrated energy policy as a new indigenous source of cheap energy. Irish design standards in this area are appalling. The most rigorous regulations must be applied, backed up with an appropriate mix of incentives incorporating tax concessions and grants, to ensure that all existing buildings are converted and all new ones are built to exacting standards.

12.7 Labour proposes a major programme of energy conservation through out the eighties, ranging from higher levels of thermal insulation to concentrated densities of urban settlements with a design bias favouring public rather than private transport.

Nuclear Energy

12.8 Proposals to increase our energy supply by building Nuclear Power Stations are unacceptable. Labour opposes the use of nuclear power for generating electricity. The environ-

mental hazards are too grave to be ignored and too great to be risked. There is as yet no available technology to eliminate potential disaster either from the malfunctioning of a reactor or from the disposal of the waste. The economics are uncertain. Labour's opposition to nuclear power is unequivocal and an expression of its sense of responsibility to the present and to all future generations.

12.9 For these reasons Labour opposes the proposal to build a Nuclear Power Plant at Carnsore.

SECTION THIRTEEN: THE ENVIRONMENT

The Threat

13.1 The rapid growth of urban and rural settlements, the increase of industrialisation and the application of industrial methods of agriculture, threaten the existing balance in our environment.

13.2 This non-returnable resource must be protected as an urgent priority. In future, all planning authorities must be required to include in planning proposals assessments of the potential environ-

mental impact of such proposals. These assessments should contain basic data on air, water and sound pollution as well as a comprehensive analysis of the physical and social impact of the plans. 13.3 Planning authorities should require applications above a certain scale to be subject to a detailed environmental impact statement.

13.4 Local authorities themselves must be required to prepare and implement an environmental programme aimed at ensuring that all their own water, sewerage and refuse disposal systems are brought up to an acceptable level of environmental management.

Sanitary Systems

13.5 Modern sanitation systems with high levels of environmental quality and amenity protection are essential in a civilised society. Their absence throughout much of the country is a disgrace. This is all the more so given the potential for recycling waste to produce either biological fertilisers or heat from incineration. Labour supports waste recycling as being both environmentally correct and economically attractive.

PART THREE

SOCIAL POLICY

SECTION FOURTEEN: THE ELIMINATION OF POVERTY

Social Justice

14.1 The achievement of social justice, which is the concrete expression of the democratic principle of equality, is fundamental to the Labour Party's philosophy and policies. It believes that there can be no social justice under capitalism based as it is on the unequal distribution of wealth and consequently of power and privilege.

14.2 Notwithstanding the improvement in the general standard of living, which has been a feature of all western economies over the last half century great deprivation and poverty still exist side by side with great affluence. This is concentrated in low income families, amongst the old, particularly, and certainly within that section of society which depends on the state for the means of subsistence. There is also widespread unemployment, a grievous

lack of housing and intolerable inequalities in opportunities for self-development.

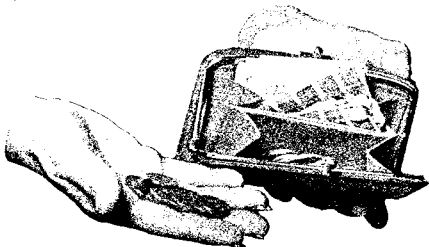
14.3 In 1973 the Labour Party published a major report on Poverty in Ireland which shocked the public. It indicated that almost a quarter of the population had a personal income below the poverty line.

The Alibi for Inaction

14.4 The policy position of the Labour Party in regard to this situation was stated clearly in previous Programmes to the effect that the economic system which had caused widespread poverty and distress had also lavished riches upon some and provided abundance for many more. Labour disagreed emphatically with the policy regarding social services until agriculture and industry have become so prosperous as to be able to afford them. That policy position remains and is of even greater relevance than normal as the economy faces prolonged recession.

Anti-poverty Plan

14.5 It is fundamental to the policy position of the Labour Party that the way forward in all sectors of economic and social development is through planning. It is essential that there should



be comprehensive social and economic planning to eliminate poverty by ensuring that the fruits of economic activity accrue to the community as a whole and that wealth is equitably distributed. As a priority, a five year Anti-Poverty Plan must be drawn up and implemented.

14.6 In the long-term, the concentration must be on re-distribution of wealth and income and on the creation of effective structures of welfare and community service. If poverty results from inequality then clearly mechanisms must be devised which in a systematic manner ensure that imbalances are and prevented from recurring.

Longterm Task

14.7 While the socialist strategy of the Labour Party aims at the total reform and restructuring of Irish society it is necessary that policies should take cognisance of the longterm nature of this task. It will be a task of many years, perhaps even of generations.

14.8 The Labour Party is under no illusion either as to the time or the cost involved in eliminating poverty. All must accept a share of responsibility for overcoming distress, poverty and squalor. The Irish people must decide whether to will the necessary means if the end is honestly sought - namely, the elimination of poverty. The transfer of financial resources and the improved distribution of wealth and income in society must be backed up with an active policy for the improvement and extension of all social services if a short-term anti-poverty strategy is to prove effective in human terms and if the long term strategy is to succeed in once and for all ridding this society of the scourge of poverty.

SECTION FIFTEEN: SOCIAL WELFARE

15.1 A high level of social services is essential for a humane and compassion-

ate society. The dual purpose of the social services is the elimination of poverty and the prevention of its re-emergence during a person's life time. With this duality of purpose in mind the Labour Party has proposed policies to combat poverty as well as policies relating to the social welfare of the entire community. The whole system of social welfare requires restructuring in terms of its funding and in the range of services provided.

Objective

15.2 The overall objectives of Labour's social welfare policy is to secure for each person a basic standard of living which will maintain their dignity as an individual. The computation of the basic standard in terms of income will be the responsibility of Government. By computing this basic standard of living below which no person will be allowed to fall, Labour will ensure that poverty is finally banished from our society.

Social Fund

15.3 Basic to Labour's system is a Social Fund incorporating all the functions currently carried out by the various pension schemes and illness, redundancy and unemployment benefits. Contributions will be obligatory on all earning members of the community based on a percentage of income. At similar income levels individuals will make the same contribution irrespective of the sector in which they are employed.

15.4 Contributors and their widows will be entitled to an income related to previous earnings from the fund in all circumstances where they have ceased to earn through illness, incapacity, unemployment or old age. All others who are unable to earn a living will be covered by general taxation. Incomes will be related to the cost of living and wage movements.

15.5 The Social Fund will operate as a

State Corporation, administer the services, invest the funds and engage in social and economic research. In itself it will become a very important investment agency with a significant role to play in the determination of social and economic development. For example, its funds could be invested in housing and industry.

15.6 The Social Fund will absorb the present privately run superannuation schemes since it will enact all pension requirements in the community. All pensions will be a percentage of the average income over the years immediately prior to retirement.

15.7 The objective will be to provide pensions within the range of a half to three quarters of average income. In no case, however, will a pension be allowed to drop below the level necessary to maintain a basic living standard as determined by Government.

Short-run Objectives

15.8 Labour's major short-run objectives on social welfare are

- An equitable and progressive system of financing social welfare.
- The inclusion of all categories of the population within the insurance scheme.
- Removal of the remaining elements of discrimination against women within the social welfare code.
- Real increases in benefits linked to price-movements and to the overall growth of earnings in the economy.
- Extension of the pay-related principle throughout the social insurance scheme.
- Creation of a single Department of Health and Social Welfare, or of a totally new Department of Social Affairs with overall responsibility in complex areas such as that of child care.

Long Term Aims

15.9 Labour's longer term aims are:

- The creation of a truly comprehensive social security system including all gainfully employed persons and their dependants in the insurance scheme.
- The creation of a single social assistance scheme of a flexible nature.
- A single national pension scheme providing an adequate standard of living for all citizens aged 65 years or over.
- A statutory link between social security and income maintenance services and the personal social services.
- Implementation of the overall anti-poverty plan.
- Introduction of an effective link between social welfare services at local level and the employment and manpower training services.
- Creation of a positive policy base for the redistribution of income and wealth in Irish society.

SECTION SIXTEEN: HEALTH

Basic Aims

16.1 The fundamental objective of the Labour Party in this vital area of the social services is the establishment of a free comprehensive health system for all citizens incorporating a general medical, hospital and specialist service, dental, aural and ophthalmic services and free medicines to be provided on doctors' prescriptions.

16.2 Our socialist policy on health is based on the acceptance of equality and of the right of every citizen to medical treatment without cost. We believe health care to be a fundamental human right and that there should be no price barrier to people availing in full of the health care which they need.

It is wrong that illness can still be a cause of financial hardship. The separate organisation of health care for the public patient and the private paying patient constitutes an unacceptable discrimination and should be abolished. The community has the responsibility of providing a free medical health service for all citizens without distinction.

Present Inadequacies

16.3 At present about two people in five are covered by the medical card scheme which provides for a free health service. Nearly nine in ten have "limited eligibility" for free services which, in effect, is confined to free hospital care. The income limits for eligibility for free services are low and there are many anomalies and inconsistencies. A substantial proportion of the population faces a price barrier in availing of health services which results both in financial hardship and in people seeking appropriate medical treatment because they cannot afford it.

16.4 Examples of present inadequacies are:

- The gross inadequacy of institutional facilities for the mentally ill and for elderly people.
- The inadequacy of free dental and ophthalmic services and unacceptable delays in receiving treatment.
- The serious shortage of institutional places for mentally handicapped people, particularly mentally handicapped adults.
- The under-development of community based general health and psychiatric services.
- Poor training opportunities and job placement services for both mentally and physically handicapped.
- The lack of facilities for relatives in hospitals.
- The inadequate financing of the home help service and the low numbers receiving this help as a result.
- The absence of a comprehensive

planning service in all areas of the country.

The Strategy for Development

16.5 Labour's strategy for the development for the health services is to phase in a free hospital, free drugs and free general practitioner service for the whole population over a six year period. In the first year a full free hospitalisation scheme would be introduced, an accelerated programme of free health services for all children under sixteen years would be begun; the range of long term illnesses covered by the drug scheme would be extended; free dental services for expectant mothers and mothers with children under one year would be introduced and the first steps towards a free general practitioner scheme would also be introduced. Family Planning Clinics would be established nationwide as part of the free health services available.

Financing

16.6 As regards the method of meeting the cost of paying for a free health service the Labour Party advocates a balance between taxation and insurance contributions. Total spending on health from taxation and insurance sources should be fixed as a minimum percentage of the Gross National Product. This approach would ensure that there would be real improvements in the health services in line with the rate of growth of the economy.



16.7 While our ideal would be a fully publicly owned health care system we recognise the practical difficulties involved in ensuring this. Labour believes that any institutions such as voluntary hospitals receiving public funds should be under open democratic control and accountable to the public which supports them. This can be achieved through a common board structure for all hospitals representative of the medical, para-medical and non-medical staff, representatives of patient organisations and patient interest and representatives of local communities and of the public interest. No public money should be given to any institution which would discriminate between private and public patients.

SECTION SEVENTEEN: EDUCATION

17.1 Labour believes that education is not neutral in the fight to create a different kind of society, a society not characterised by exploitation and greed, and that, while educational reform alone will not transform society, no fundamental change will take place without appropriate changes in our educational system.

17.2 Labour also calls for a socially just system of education as an essential component of each individual's personal social and intellectual development. It argues that educational expenditure should involve a redistribution of resources from the wealthy to those who are economically less powerful; and that the structure and control of education in a democratic society should itself be democratic.

Free Education

17.3 Social justice necessitates the provision of free primary and post-primary education and adequate grants for all able to benefit from third level education. It also requires a progressive reduction in class sizes, especially in primary

schools. This is essential if education is not to remain essentially a part of a structure of social and financial class privilege in which the greatest public subsidies benefit children from the wealthiest backgrounds.

Democratic

17.4 In the light of these overall objectives, Labour believes that education must, firstly, be democratic of access. This implies not merely the absence of fees, but the provision of adequate equipment, books, free transport, medical and dental treatment, and maintenance allowances where appropriate. It is totally opposed to selection on grounds of alleged academic ability or social class to any educational institution in receipt of public funds, and will legislate to prevent such forms of discrimination. Other obstacles to full participation in education by citizens who have been denied the full range of formal education must be tackled by an adequate system of adult and recurrent education.

The Curriculum

17.5 Labour believes in the necessity for a democratically-inspired curriculum which should act, not as a crude instrument of social control, or as part of a production line designed to turn out unthinking employees for private industry, but as source material for the development of a free and critical intelligence. Accordingly, Labour will initiate a programme of curriculum development which will focus on the need to eliminate sexist attitudes, to emphasise the communitarian aspects of human history, including the roles played by different social classes, to give adequate recognition to the social and civil rights of different groups in society, and to challenge the forms of selection concealed in our archaic and academically biased examination system.



17.6 The hidden curriculum of the school, embodied in its structure and practices, is no less important. Labour insists, therefore, on the importance of co-education, of religious integration in the context of a respect for individual beliefs, of creating the maximum opportunities for participation by pupil and staff and the local community in the management of their institutions and of the abolition of corporal punishment.

17.7 Education must also be democratically controlled. Labour proposes a system of local education authorities elected on the basis of general franchise to ensure both the maximum efficiency in the planning of education and the maximum amount of democratic accountability, subject to the overall authority of the Minister for Education and the Dail.

Special Needs

17.8 The special needs of mentally and physically handicapped children must become a major priority, in the context of an approach which stresses the maximum possible degree of integration between handicapped and other children.

17.9 Labour recognises the vital importance of a well-educated, well-paid and thoroughly professional teaching force, and accordingly will therefore place appropriate emphasis on educational research and in-service training.

SECTION EIGHTEEN: HOUSING

Fundamental Right

18.1 The right to adequate shelter is a fundamental human right. Labour considers housing to be a social necessity. Access to proper housing must be assured on the basis of a person's housing need and not on the ability to pay.

Worsening Crisis

18.2 But on the basis of current housing output and future demand there is no hope of the housing crisis being solved in the eighties. If anything it will only get worse. The lack of adequate housing for all our people is the most conclusive condemnation of Irish capitalism.

Emergency Programme

18.3 In the face of this continuing crisis, which can only worsen as the population and number of households increase, Labour proposes the following emergency programme; the control of the financial institutions which fund housing in Ireland so as to secure capital and stabilise interest rates; the bringing of building land and major portions of the building industry under public control; and the establishment of a State Construction Company to engage in house building, environmental development and to eliminate speculative building profits.

Land Prices

18.4 The most important element in this emergency programme is Labour's proposal that only local authorities should be authorised to acquire land for building purposes at prices to be determined by the previous use of the land in question. Without this major change there will be no end to the housing problem. Local Authorities must become the only purchasers of building land and they in turn should

make it available to housing co-operatives and approved private projects as well as providing for their own needs.

Inner Cities

18.5 A specific programme of renewal of the existing housing stock in the inner city areas will feature as a priority. The decay of the inner cities, particularly Dublin, is a disgrace. Compulsory purchase procedures must be simplified, strengthened and streamlined as this is the key to renewal programmes.

Private Rented Dwellings

18.6 The demand for privately rented dwellings, either flats or houses, continues to rise. This sector of the housing market will increase in importance but receives no subsidy, with the exception of people living in rent-controlled dwellings. Existing rent control legislation has been detrimental to the housing stock in general and has not been equitable in its application. The entire rented sector of housing must be renewed in order to protect new tenants and to ensure the proper maintenance of the housing stock. Local Authorities should be authorised to acquire and build accommodation for letting in addition to their public housing programmes. Such an innovation is essential for certain categories such as students, young married couples, people living alone and the elderly.

Special Needs

18.7 The special housing needs of two groups require particular attention. Special action must be taken to provide permanent homes for all those travelling people who wish to settle. New houses must be designed to facilitate the disabled and capital provided for the modification of existing stock where necessary.



Immediate Objectives

18.8 As part of its immediate plans to deal with the housing emergency Labour proposes the amendment of the 1966 and 1969 Housing Acts so as to secure the following objectives:

- (i) Protecting the existing housing stock.
- (ii) Increasing insulation standards substantially.
- (iii) Improving the design and standard of construction of housing units.
- (iv) Ensuring the simultaneous provision by Local Authorities of community facilities by requiring that new housing schemes above a certain number should include a range of basic community services and open spaces.
- (v) Establishing a State Construction Corporation to engage in house building and environmental development and which will be available to local authorities for housing projects.

Mortgages

18.9 Finally, Labour proposes that the first time buyer of a dwelling, whether old or new, should be assisted by 100% mortgages on the basis of a low rise mortgage scheme.

Housing Estates

18.10 The creation of housing estates without essential neighbourhood facilities such as schools, shops, recreational centres and physical amenities causes

great social hardship. This is an inevitable consequence of the profit motive predominating over social needs. Housing cannot be looked at in isolation but as part of the larger problem of constructing communities that are designed to meet people's real needs, physical, mental, social and economic. Accordingly, environmental planning must be treated as an integral part of housing policy. The simultaneous provision of community facilities must become a statutory obligation on all developers.

SECTION NINETEEN: THE ELDERLY

The Elderly in the Eighties

19.1 At the beginning of the eighties the number of people over 65 stood at 340,000, or 11% of the population. An annual increase of some 20,000 is expected throughout the decade so that the total population above pensionable age will at least reach half a million by 1990.

Discrimination

19.2 Life for these elderly people is nowadays often characterised by inadequate income, poor housing conditions and increasing loneliness and isolation. This is shown in their spending pattern which is marked by a much higher proportion of expenditure on necessities like food, fuel and housing, than the rest of the community.

Normal Life

19.3 Labour believes that old people should be enabled to lead lives as normal as possible within the community. The need for institutional care should be avoided where at all possible. By their work over the years old people have earned their right to a retirement which is free from financial worry and hardship.

Adequate Income

19.4 An adequate income is the most basic requirement if our old people are to have normal and happy lives. The first priority must therefore be a substantial increase in the basic level of pensions and a commitment to maintain the subsequent relationship between the basic pension and other incomes or consumer prices whichever would give the larger increase. Labour's immediate aim is to achieve a 50% increase in the real value of pensions.

19.5 As old people are at particular risk of getting hypothermia, due to inadequate heating, Labour proposes a proper system of direct help for home heating based on a system of fuel vouchers available without an income limit to all people over 65 years to cover basic home heating costs.

Special Housing

19.6 The next priority must be for a completely new and radical approach to community planning by the local authorities. In rural areas an experimental programme of building homes suitable for elderly people must be begun in the villages. In urban areas grants for the renovation and restoration of older houses should be re-introduced and substantially increased. Local authorities should purchase houses for letting. A minimum proportion of any new housing development must be for small and preferably one storey houses reserved for the elderly. For those in rented accommodation there should be a supplement to cover rent added to all pensions.

Institutions

19.7 The pressures to force people into institutions must be resisted - and swiftly. The development of capitalism has seen the progressive breakdown of the extended family and this must be counteracted by the rapid expansion of organised community support for



the elderly such as the home help service, the public health nurse and social service councils, all of which are grossly under-developed.

19.8 Elderly people must have a proportion of hospital beds reserved specially for them as many find it difficult, if not impossible, to be given admission to general hospitals. The establishment of a comprehensive charter of rights for the elderly in institutions, covering their rights to privacy, personal possessions, decent facilities and accommodation, to visits and contacts from the outside is also an urgent necessity.

Retirement Policy

19.9 Labour believes that in a society where life expectancy is increasing there must be a more flexible approach to retirement and that there is need for a national policy on retirement.

Allowances for Relatives

19.10 In a society which truly looked after its elderly there would be proper remuneration for those who forewent their right to work outside the home and who instead devoted their own lives to looking after an aged relative. Labour proposes that they should receive a care allowance payable directly to them and equivalent to unemployment benefit and thus the years involved in such home care should be automatically regarded as insurable employment. Such a pro-

posal would, on its own, profoundly change the position of many elderly people for the better and ensure for them and those caring for them the type of dignity and contentment to which they are entitled but so frequently denied in a callous capitalist community.

SECTION TWENTY: CHILDREN

20.1 Concern for the welfare of children has always been at the centre of Labour's political philosophy. The Party has consistently argued that all children have an equal right to the emotional support, resources and services which are necessary for them to achieve their full potential. It has opposed, throughout its history, the existing economic and social system which discriminates between children and which denies a majority of them the privileges conferred on a minority.

Equal Access

20.2 Throughout this Party Programme measures to secure equality for all citizens are outlined. These will be pursued with special vigour where they contribute to the elimination of inequality among children. For this reason, in drafting this Programme, special emphasis has been placed on the need for equal access to the full range of educational, recreational and other social services which directly affect their wellbeing.

20.3 We recognise, however, that the provision of equal access to these services will not, of itself, eliminate the disadvantages which some children face. Special discriminatory measures are required to meet the needs of children who suffer acute economic or emotional deprivation, the effects of which prevent them from benefiting adequately from generalised social services.

20.4 Labour proposes in the first

instance, a special range of financial incentives and study facilities for those children whose economic circumstances would preclude them from benefitting fully from global social services, including education.

New Children's Bill

20.5 Secondly, we propose a radical transformation in the law and family support services relating to children. The concept of the paramountacy of the welfare of children will be at the centre of a new Children's Bill which Labour will introduce in Dail Eireann. The Bill will, in addition, abolish the concept of criminality at present applicable to children.

20.6 Labour will pursue a comprehensive programme designed to extend the range of residential and community facilities available to support children with special needs. Responsibility for all services relating to children with special needs will be centered in a single Department of State.

SECTION TWENTY-ONE: CONSUMERS

The Position

21.1 Despite some new laws passed in the seventies the position of the consumer in Ireland is most unsatisfactory. The law, reflecting the capitalist bias of the society, favours producers and distributors to an unfair extent. There is no right of refund or other form of redress for an aggrieved consumer. The law is complicated, technical and expensive to apply for the individual consumer.

Priorities

21.2 In a society which is orientated heavily towards consumption, a trend backed up by a massive advertising industry, the consumer must be protected fully by the law and given the right of redress as well as to all necessary advice and guidance. Similarly action is needed to ensure the proper representation of consumers in the determination of standards.

Advertising

21.3 The advertising of alcohol and tobacco should be prohibited.

PART FOUR

JUSTICE

SECTION TWENTY-TWO

Equality for Women

22.1 The seventies were a decade of awakening about the inferior status of women in society. The eighties must be a decade of achievement.

Roots of Inequality

22.2 It is necessary to tackle the roots of inequality between men and women at source - deep in the economic structure of the capitalist system. Only socialist analysis and action can offer a broad solution to the problem because socialists alone propose a democratic transformation of society which can guarantee full equality for all men and all women.

22.3 Labour's analysis begins with the recognition that women have for generations been excluded from the powerful decision-making groups in political cultural and religious institutions that the role of women as home-makers is totally undervalued by society and that women who work outside the home are in the lowest paid sectors of employment. These areas of discrimination must be removed systematically as follows.

Co-education

22.4 To begin with the Labour Party advocates a comprehensive co-educational system of second level education believing that such a system will benefit girls both socially and intellectually.

Adult Education

22.5 Adult education should be given a more important place in the educational system particularly because it could take account of the specific needs of women and help to eliminate discrimination. Many women were not encouraged to think in terms of a life-long career while at school. Adult education would enable some to pursue careers for which they were not previously qualified. It would also go a long way in allaying the discontent felt by some women working in the home by giving them a greater sense of fulfilment as persons and eliminating feelings of failure and frustration.

Equality at Work

22.6 In order to create real equality for men and women in the labour market it is essential to revise the traditional attitude according to which it is the task of men to earn the money while women take care of home and children. The period 1973 to 1977 brought on to the statute books a considerable amount of legislation dealing with workers. Of particular relevance to women workers were the Equal Pay Act, 1975 and the Equal Opportunities (Employment) Act, 1977. Both pieces of legislation have now been in operation for some time and it is possible to assess their effectiveness. Labour proposes that the provisions of both Acts be strengthened and extended.

Training

22.7 Historically women have not been given the same opportunities for training as men. Under the terms of the Employment Equality Act positive discrim-



ination in favour of women is permitted in the area of training. There is little indication that this programme has been initiated under these sections of the Act. All agencies in the training field should therefore, be obliged to immediately draw up schemes of training which take into account the spirit of the section of the Act. Progress should be monitored by the Employment Equality Agency. No special service exists to cope with the particular needs of married women interested in re-entering the labour force. Labour will provide such a service.

Maternity Legislation

22.8 Ireland is the only member of the EEC which has no maternity protective legislation. Legislation to provide full maternity protection for all working women must be a priority. Believing that it is important that fathers should be allowed to fulfill their role as a parent, provision should be made in legislation to allow for additional leave for fathers at the time of the mother's confinement and that an option be given to the couple that either party can avail of the extended period of unpaid leave for the purpose of looking after the child with the same protection as to rights of re-employment.

Women in the Home

22.9 The majority of Irish women at some stage in their working lives leave the work force either temporarily or completely, for the purpose of rearing a family. Labour proposes that they be entitled to a pension under a National Pension Scheme.

Women and Work

22.10 In order to allow some element of free choice to women who wish to, or have to from economic necessity, work outside the home, a survey of family needs in this context must be undertaken. The Labour Party calls

for the examination of hours of work, holidays and child care facilities to establish the impact they have on women's ability to choose.

22.11 The absence of support services for mothers has long been a feature of Irish society. A system of state sponsored creches and nurseries and play school groups, particularly in high density areas of population, will be established. All creches and nursery schools should be required to register with the appropriate local authority. In addition, and particularly to facilitate women in more scattered areas of the country, employers should be encouraged by way of grant to provide such facilities at the place of employment.

Deserted Wives

22.12 To qualify for deserted wife's benefit or allowance, a woman is generally expected to take her husband to court first. Understandably, many women are reluctant to do this. A separated wife's right to help should be based on her financial need alone, not on the circumstances of her separation. The state should pay all separated wives an allowance and should then take on itself the collection of any maintenance due. Any maintenance paid over and above the minimum allowance would be passed on to the wife.

22.13 All widows should receive a weekly payment equal to the widow's contributory pension for three months after the death of their husbands.

22.14 For most mothers, children's allowances are the only income which they have in their own right. Labour proposes to improve substantially the level of these allowances, believing that this is the best way in which the state can give practical recognition to the valuable work of women in the home.

22.15 With increasing acceptance of its role in Irish political life, the Labour

Party has formulated a policy providing a socialist alternative to the policies of the other political parties. It offers a rational basis for the expectation of a socialist government. It is in the context of that expectation that women in Ireland can look forward to full rights and equality, irrespective of marital or socio-economic status.

SECTION TWENTY-THREE A SYSTEM OF JUSTICE

No Equal Access

23.1 The present legal system does not provide people with equal and equally effective access to justice. Although its stated aim is the equality of all citizens, the constitution inhibits equality of treatment by anomalies of definition, prohibitions and restrictions. The legal system is primarily geared towards the convenience and prosperity of the legal profession rather than being directed to providing an equally accessible service to all citizens.

23.2 Legal remedies that are available are often inadequate to cope with the problems of many individuals. As socialists, the Labour Party intends not merely "law reform" but a thorough review and restructuring of the legal system to bring the operation of the law into line with real community needs, sensitive to the rights and best interests of categories and individuals.

Legal Profession

23.3 The structure of the legal profession in Ireland with its division into barristers and solicitors, was inherited from Britain without serious examination of its appropriateness in Ireland. It is cumbersome, creating "delays that defeat justice", together with the prohibitive cost and unaccountability of barristers for their handling of cases in court. Access to the university law schools and to the professional courses has been the privilege of the few, while

the provision of legal services is geared to the private market - those who can pay. The Labour Party will press for a comprehensive review of the provision of legal services in Ireland which will include an examination of access to the legal profession, professional fees and taxation of the profession, the appointment of judges, the content and focus of legal education and the provision of legal aid and advice to the public.

Family Law

23.4 Family law is the area of the law that is in most urgent need of reform. The existing court structure and procedures dealing with family difficulties are over complex and are negative in their approach to the resolution of family conflicts. Traditional legal confrontation is the least satisfactory method of settling marital problems. A new structure of family courts is needed and is a primary objective of Labour in the area of legal reform.

23.5 A new system of family law will require changes in the training of judges who would sit in a unified family court. They will require special preparation and training in psychology and in family welfare problems. The court structure needed would require a family court composed of family court judges.

Children's Rights

23.6 The present constitution so closely defines the rights of married parents as to limit the rights and best interests of children and tends to call into doubt the rights and status of children in regard to the "natural" parents. In the absence of a new constitution, there is need for a change in Articles 37, 41 and 42.

Matrimonial Property

23.7 Despite the improvements in the Family Home Protection Act, 1976,

there is still no legislation governing matrimonial property in Ireland. This is an essential requirement to protect the family and to ensure that the dependant wife and children have some financial resources in the case of desertion. Labour proposes a provision that either during the marriage or on its termination certain of the spouses' property forms a community in which each has an equal interest. The spouses should be free at the beginning of the marriage (or later) to agree between themselves that the community of property system should not apply to them.

Divorce

23.8 Preliminary to the consideration of grounds for divorce in Ireland it will be necessary to amend Article 41 of the Constitution and Labour so proposes as it has done since 1975.

23.9 Divorce should not be made easy; a period for attempts at reconciliation and eventually a period of separation is essential. The Family Legal Service should provide a marriage counselling

service. To avoid a situation of merely identifying the problem of breakdown of the relationship it is important that counselling be available after divorce has been granted.

Rape

23.10 There is evidence to believe that the forces of law and order have coped ineptly and insensitively with the crime of rape and it is time for the state to react accordingly and provide a rape crisis centre from public funds, and to ensure the adequate education of public servants in coping with the victims and the circumstances of rape and domestic violence.

23.11 Trial procedure should be held in camera ensuring anonymity for the victim and the defendant's name should only be published where he be found guilty. A change is necessary in the laws of evidence to end the cross-examination of the victim about her sexual relations with other men. Sexual violations involving oral and anal sex, or penetration with an instrument should be defined as rape. Rape within marriage should be legally recognised.

Contraceptives

23.12 The law should be amended so as to permit the sale of contraceptives.

Legal Aid

23.13 A full national scheme of free legal aid to cover civil and criminal proceedings should be instituted so as to ensure equal access to the law.

SECTION TWENTY-FOUR THE TRAVELLING PEOPLE

24.1 Labour recognises the plight of the travelling people and the desire of the majority of them to become a part of the settled community. Labour believes that a special effort must be made to house them in dignity and comfort within the settled community.

Requirements

24.2 Every local authority should be required to provide for the travelling people by providing:

- (a) A special housing plan to accommodate those members of the travelling people within their area who wish to be rehoused within that area.
- (b) Halfway settlement camps for travelling people in locations adjacent to urban services.
- (c) A number of permanent homes for travelling people within each authority area every year.
- (d) In conjunction with the Regional Health Boards, a comprehensive social counselling service to help the travelling people.
- (e) Special health services for the children of the travelling community to be provided by Health Boards.

SECTION TWENTY-FIVE: PENAL REFORM

Concern

25.1 The Labour Party has expressed a traditional concern for prisoners and for their families. It has supported

moves to humanise prison conditions, to provide non-custodial alternatives, to ensure the wellbeing of prisoners' dependants and to remove the conditions which lead to behaviour resulting in the law being broken.

Women

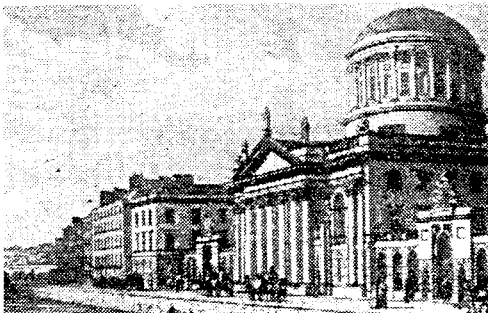
25.2 The vast majority of women coming before the courts are there for crimes which do not involve violence. Many arise from factors not yet taken into account by the traditional criminal law. These must be researched properly, particularly the biological causes of deviant behaviour. While accepting that a very small number of women will require to be in custody in secure conditions, Labour believes that non-custodial alternatives must be developed for the great majority of women who come before the courts.

Men

25.3 The great majority of male prisoners have been in some form of institutional care either in childhood or adolescence. This indicates the critical necessity for alternatives to such institutions. It also demonstrates the obligation on society to ensure humane conditions wherever imprisonment is necessary with particular reference to the regulations governing life within the prisons themselves and the facilities for education, recreation and visiting.

New Programmes

25.4 A range of new programmes are urgently necessary to remove the conditions which lead to criminal behaviour. The juvenile liaison programme of the Garda Síochána, programmes to deal with drugs and teenage drinking - often the cause of petty crime - must be rigorously developed. The number of Gardai on the beat must be increased, particularly in urban areas, from which they have all but disappeared.



25.5 In the end, the response of society so as to eliminate vandalism and crimes of violence, must be directed in order to eliminate the conditions which induce such behaviour; bad housing, low incomes, unemployment, a complete lack of community facilities for sport and recreation, poor education and inadequate cultural development. Un-

doubtedly, such programmes cost money, particularly in terms of manpower. But they are required for their own sake and also for the sake of the protection of the old who so very often are the targets of violent behaviour. Labour commits itself to this integrated humane policy of prevention and rehabilitation.

PART FIVE

CULTURE AND RECREATION

SECTION TWENTY-SIX: YOUTH

26.1 Following a century of population decline the recent census shows that Ireland has the youngest population in Europe with all its attendant opportunities and challenges. Regrettably, facilities specifically catering for young people have been sadly neglected in this country, and consequently, are seriously deficient.

Minister for Youth

26.2 In order to create proper youth services Labour favours the appointment of a Minister for Recreation and Culture with a Minister of State having responsibility for youth affairs, supported by an adequate budgetary allocation.

Youth Service Agency

26.3 Labour will ensure that a Youth Service Agency will be set up in each local authority area with sufficient funds to cater for the changing needs of young people and local youth organisations. These agencies will support and encourage the development of locally based youth services.

Urban Services

26.4 Labour recognises the need for training professional personnel to promote the development of local youth services. In urban centres the provision of supervised playgrounds is a priority in built-up areas. In all new housing developments Labour will see that provision is made for serviced recreational sites, i.e. all weather pitches,

changing rooms etc. Labour will encourage summer recreational programmes based in local communities. Labour will have each local authority set up a work experience programme and will promote summer community work schemes.

Rural Services

26.5 In rural communities swimming facilities will be promoted and developed. Labour sees the availability of school buses a key factor in the work and development of Youth Organisations, especially in rural areas.

Premises

26.6 Aware that the provision of premises is a problem for many community organisations, Labour will work to ensure that maximum use is made of all community property by making it available to local youth and community groups.

26.7 Labour will ensure that there is a budget allocation in each local authority area for the provision of capital grants to local youth and community groups for the building of premises.

SECTION TWENTY-SEVEN: THE ARTS

27.1 Labour recognises the intrinsic part that culture forms in the lives of every one of us. But an economic system determined largely by consideration of private gain with minimum public expenditure, particularly at local level, has resulted in very few resources being made available for cultural and recreational development. The division of work and art has produced an alienation in both.

Art for the Elite

27.2 Inequality within the education system has resulted in an artificial distance being established between the experience of ordinary people and the

arts. The result has been, on the one hand, the self confidence of the general public in the natural artistic potential of their experience and, in the other, the degeneration of art into a diversion for an elite.

Funds

27.3 Labour will support the spending of local funds on the arts within each local community. Each local authority will prepare a cultural budget and make funds available for the financing of local cultural activities within the community. The operation of the cultural budget will be organised with the help and co-ordination of the Arts Council. A programme for the workplace will complement local residential programmes.

Local Arts Officer

27.4 Each local authority will be encouraged to appoint an Arts Officer whose task will be to co-ordinate and promote activity in the arts within its community in such areas as drama, literature, visual arts, music and dance.

Arts Centres

27.5 Every community must, in a developed environment have an understanding and knowledge of its own history and of the formation of its local culture. There is a critical need to provide for local art centres with museums and galleries. Some towns in Ireland have excellent museums but sadly many others have none at all.

Building Heritage

27.6 Urban conservation and preservation is an integral part of any local arts/cultural programme. Labour will encourage local authorities to develop an awareness and self confidence in their building heritage and to make provision, within their local development plans, to ensure its conservation.

SECTION TWENTY-EIGHT: SPORT AND RECREATION

State Responsibility

28.1 The achievement of the full human potential requires facilities for physical development. Sport and recreation form an essential part of this objective. To date the existing sport facilities have been provided largely by voluntary sports organisations in conjunction with the local authorities. The State must accept responsibility for providing these facilities.

Minister for Sport

28.2 Labour has already proposed that a Minister for Recreation and Culture should be appointed and here proposes that a Minister of State should, within the new department, be designated as Minister for Sport, with an adequate budgetary allocation.

National Sports Centre

28.3 A sports policy must be based on proper facilities which are at present woefully inadequate both outdoor and indoor. As an immediate priority Labour proposes the establishment of a National Sports Centre, outside Dublin, with residential facilities for training in all forms of sport. There should also be an integrated water sports complex which would cover yachting, rowing and canoeing complementing the National Sports Centre.



Local Sports Centres

28.4 Labour's long term objective is that each town and city locality should have a sports centre with facilities for athletics, cycling and field sports and a gymnasium for training and indoor sports.

Action

28.5 As there is need to fully co-ordinate the various activities and organisations within the sports world, Labour proposes that each local authority should:

- (i) Prepare a sport and recreation development plan in conjunction with the various local sports organisations within its area.
- (ii) Provide facilities for the enjoyment of sport and recreation.
- (iii) Appoint a sports and recreation officer to co-ordinate the activities of the various organisations within the area with the work of the local authority.

SECTION TWENTY-NINE: THE IRISH LANGUAGE

29.1 Labour believes in the revival of the Irish language, because it is a crucial part of our cultural identity. The decline in its usage over the years has diminished our culture and has meant that many of the more tolerant and egalitarian characteristics which we have had as a people have been temporarily lost.

Bi-Lingualism

29.2 Labour's aspiration is to promote a growth in bi-lingualism in Irish and English. This can only be achieved on a voluntary basis. The political task is to create an environment in which this becomes possible and to introduce measures in education and broadcasting which include positive discrimination towards language revival.

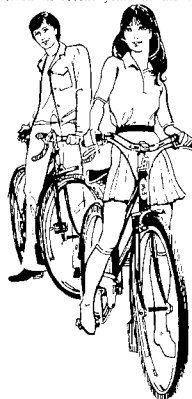
Education

29.3 In education it will be necessary to radically improve methods of teaching the language. These must include measures to ensure that all teachers of Irish are specially trained for their task and reach minimum acceptable standards of competence. It is also desirable that the number of schools in which Irish is the principal spoken language should be dramatically increased, especially at primary level.

29.4 Funds must be made available to ensure that high quality audio-visual courses in the spoken language are made available cheaply around the country for young people and adults, as a supplement to the formal education system.

The Media

29.5 A great deal of concern has been expressed in recent years at the low



This charge is justified when it is remembered that positive discrimination in favour of Irish is needed. Labour believes that, as part of a radically improved national programme for language revival, additional time on radio and television should be made available for Irish language programmes. There is no reason why, as a start, one or more nights each week on a national radio and television channel should not be made available in toto for such programmes. In this context, RTE facilities should be available to Irish language groups to make their own programmes.

The Gaeltacht

29.6 The survival of the Gaeltachtaí is of crucial significance to the revival of Irish. Their survival is in doubt at present. Labour will pursue economic and social policies designed to secure their long-term development.

AN GHAELTACHT

30. Aithníonn Páirtí an Lucht Oibre go bhail fadhbanna speisialta, siosialta agus caenamaoichta comh maith le cultúra, sna ceantair Gaeltachta. Creid-eann an Páirtí go geathfear forbairt a dhéanamh ar Thionscail bhuna sa Ghaeltacht. Tionscail a bhéadh bun-

tair, cosúil le tascaraeant agus rí. Cait-fear póstanna a chur ar fáil agus déanamh cinnte go bhfuil caidhean beatha nhuiníir na Gaeltachta comh hard leis an chuid eile de'n tír.

Tá Páirtí an Lucht Oibre in eadan cumhacht eithneach agus mar sin de tá an Páirtí in eadan mianadóireacht uranium mar atá ar bun i nGaeltacht Lár Thír Chonail. Tá an iomaídh achmhainn nádúrtha gur feidir a fhorbairt ar mhaithe leis an phobal gan contáirt d'ár sláinte.

Creideann Páirtí an Lucht Oibre go geathfídh Udaras na Gaeltachta oibríú go poiblí, agus gur chóir níos mó ionadaí ó'n Ghaeltacht a bheith togha. Aithníonn Páirtí an Lucht Oibre gur chóir níos mó leabhair a bheith ar fail sa Ghaeilge, go speisialta leabhair scoile, gur chóir níos mó cláracha Gaeilge a bheith ar R.T.E. agus cead a bheith ag Radio na Gaeltachta craoladh i rith an lae.

Tá Páirtí an Lucht Oibre i bhfatha le forbairt caenamaoichta na Gaeltachta, comh maith le forbairt sa'n farthar mar reigiún speisialta. Dearbhaíonn an Páirtí go geathfear an córas caenamaoichta a athrach ionnas gur feidir an tír a riarú de réir polasáí daonhathach sóisialach an Phairtí.

PART SIX

THE CITIZEN AND THE STATE

SECTION THIRTY-ONE: THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

A New Constitution

31.1 The Labour Party voted against the National Constitution both in its draft form when presented to the Dail in 1937 and in the referendum on its adoption. It is the view of the Labour Party that what is clearly needed is an entirely new constitution and not a shoal of amendments to the existing document. The new Constitution should be enacted for the Republic as a clear and unequivocal demonstration of our bona fides about the creation of a non-sectarian state by actually creating one here and now in the Republic. This new Constitution must take into account the plurality of views that clearly exist in the south and must guarantee the full civil liberties of the minority in this state.

Two Key Changes

31.2 Specifically, the new constitution must not include any absolute prohibition on divorce. Pending the enactment of a new constitution Labour proposes the deletion of the relevant section of Article 41 of the present constitution as an immediate measure in forwarding equality and civil rights. An amendment which would permit all land required for social purposes to be brought under community control is also proposed as an urgent requirement pending the new constitution.

Neutrality

31.3 The commitment of this country to a policy of neutrality should be

explicitly incorporated as an important principle of national policy in the new constitution. It should initially be inserted in the present constitution by way of amendment.

Change is Necessary

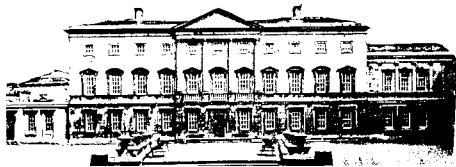
31.4 The drafting of a new constitution, or failing that, the above proposed amendments to the constitution, together with the removal of sectarian laws from the statute book, must be done precisely because they are the right things to do in themselves. They must be done as part of the process of building a just society in this part of Ireland. We must not tolerate the continuance of sectarian provisions or practices on the spurious grounds that their amendment can be used as a bargaining counter in discussions on unity with the Northern majority at some future date. Constitutional changes must be made for their own sake.

SECTION THIRTY-TWO: PARLIAMENT

British Model

32.1 The organisation of the Dail from its birth was based upon the British model, which represented a vast accumulation of experience of government by and for the privileged. Dail procedure, as we know it, was laid down over half a century ago. Ireland, her people and their political attitudes have greatly changed since then. The nature and extent of government has changed but the Dail itself has changed little. Its internal development has not kept pace with change in society and government and it does not meet the needs of modern times.

32.2 Under the present organisation of the executive and legislature, there is little scope for the involvement of the opposition in any positive way in policy formation and execution.



Committee System

32.3 As a contribution to greater efficiency in the use of Dail time, provision should be made for the establishment of a Standing Committee for the purpose of debating estimates directed to them by the Dail and for considering the committee stage of selected bills. The proceedings of the committee would be held in public. The committee procedure as proposed operates successfully elsewhere. Its introduction should create more time for legislation, encourage the most detailed scrutiny of bills and estimates and utilise Dail time with greater efficiency.

Broadcasting of Proceedings

32.4 Proceedings of both the Dail and Senate should be open to broadcasting on radio and on television so that the public can be made fully aware at all times of the debates in both Houses. Such an innovation would strengthen democracy by increasing the sense of participation by the public in the affairs of parliament and by also opening the conduct of government and of deputies and senators to a wider public scrutiny.

Longer Sitings

32.5 If the Dail is to be fully involved in the day to day activity of the machinery of government it must sit for longer periods than at present. The current recess periods are far too long and

should be readjusted to modern administrative requirements. The Labour Party believes that there should be provision for the recall of Dail Eireann during recess periods when, in the opinion of one-third of its members, the public interest so requires.

32.6 The present daily time-table of Dail sittings is as outmoded as the recesses. The Labour Party proposes that the hours of sitting should be increased to thirty-five hours per week.

Research Services

32.7 The structure of government is becoming more complex. It is essential in the interests of democracy that all deputies should be kept as well informed as possible on matters relating to legislation and public policy. It should be possible to set up a special section of the Civil Service attached to Leinster House which would assist deputies in preparing for debates by carrying out research on request and by providing a statistical service covering the social and economic fields.

SECTION THIRTY-THREE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Out of Date System

33.1 Labour believes that a democratic system of local government is essential to the health of the country and to the development of the nation. The present system is now totally out of date. It

is inadequate, tightly controlled by central government with elected members performing largely as consultative councils.

Regional Councils

33.2 If local government is to be government in the real sense of the word then co-operation on a regional scale is necessary. A new tier in the local government structure should be created which will group numbers of county councils for the administration of those government services which can best be administered on a regional basis. The new councils would have their own staffs and headquarters and would co-ordinate the activities of the county councils in the fields mentioned above. Members of county councils and of the local councils would be eligible for membership of the regional councils and could sit on both simultaneously.

New Councils

33.3 Labour recognises that the substantial growth of urban Ireland requires the creation of a number of new urban district councils and local boroughs.

Finances

33.4 The autonomy of local authorities has been further undermined by the abolition of domestic rates. Labour has always argued that rates were a bad

form of taxation. Labour will abolish the rating system entirely and establish a new form of financing for local authorities. This will consist of a statutory per-capita grant each year, plus a block development grant.

Managers

33.5 If local government is to operate in this decentralised manner it is vital that the chief executives of the authorities should be their employees, chosen and retained by them and answerable to them directly for the discharge of their duties. The present arrangements of appointing county managers will accordingly be scrapped. Local authorities will have the right to hire their own managers.

Local Referenda

33.6 It is Labour Party policy to make local government truly local by transferring power to it from the central authorities and by making it a government in the sense of providing it with the authority to deal with real problems. As a means of ensuring greater participation in the affairs of local government Labour will make provision for the holding of local referenda, particularly on matters directly affecting an area, such as planning and development.

INTERNATIONAL

SECTION THIRTY-FOUR:
INTERNATIONAL POLICY**Internationalism**

34.1 Internationalism is an inherent part of the philosophy of socialism. The statutes of the First International state that the emancipation of the working men and women of each country, and of the poor, is neither a local nor a national task but rather a common social task involving all countries and transcending the boundaries of the individual nation state.

World Peace

34.2 The socialist movement has been an international movement from the beginning. This is so because it aims at liberating all men and women from every form of economic, spiritual and political bondage, and because it recognises that no nation can solve all its economic and social problems in isolation. Socialists see the maintenance of world peace as the supreme task in our time. The struggle for the preservation of peace is inseparably bound up with the struggle for freedom and justice. It is the threat to the independence of peoples which is directly responsible for the danger of war in our time. Democratic socialism rejects every form of imperialism.

International Relations

34.3 From the earliest days of the party's history, Labour has been committed to the promotion of fraternal relations between the workers of Ireland and of other countries through affiliation with the international labour movement; to action to raise the standard of social

legislation in all countries to the level of the highest; and generally to assisting in the efforts of the working class of all nations in their struggle for emancipation.

Foreign Policy

34.4 International policy must be based upon a coherent set of principles. Pragmatism is not enough. The foreign policy choices of an Irish socialist government should be guided by the following principles which will ensure consistency and progressive standards in all international dealings:

- The recognition of the over-riding interest which all of us have in the strengthening of the defences of world peace.
- The recognition that the conditions under which most of the world's population lives require social and economic change on a revolutionary scale.
- The recognition of the common interest which small countries have in making it unpopular and unrewarding for big countries to intervene in their affairs under any pretext.
- The recognition that imperialism and racism are major, and allied, enemies of the human race as a whole.

34.5 International policy is urgently relevant at the present stage of development of this country. No reasonable approach can be made to the solution of the great economic, social and political issues of the day without a realistic appreciation of the international setting within which the country exists, works and seeks to earn its living. The main issues of world politics today - peace, development, disarmament, energy, human rights - represent a great challenge to each and every country and to the democratic socialist movement as a whole.

Third World

34.6 Ireland is a poor country by European standards but the condition of most of the world is such that even Ireland's poverty may be seen as relative wealth. The solution to the world's great development problem lies in the application of a correct model of development, based on justice. Here lies the only realistic path for ending the exploitation and need of the peoples of the Third World. Ireland must be ready to contribute its share - small though that necessarily is - to a greatly increased attack on world poverty, and must in international assemblies, encourage the diversion to this end of the vast sums currently being extended on armaments.

New International Economic Order

34.7 Labour is committed to the concept of the New International Economic Order and recognises that this concept relates to the solution of deep-seated structural problems and disorders which to varying degrees, afflict all nations and regions. Economic relationships on a world level must be based on a clear set of values. Central to these values is an acceptance, first, that development relates to the welfare of human beings and not to the dictates of capital or technology and second, that development should also be directed to the creation of harmony between peoples and their environment.

Solidarity

34.8 A basic socialist principle is that of solidarity. This principle must be extended to the international sphere. In practice, it will involve the party in day to day co-operation with the worldwide labour movement and in positive action on major current issues of justice etc. Support for the freedom struggle in Southern Africa is the most obvious example of such an area of action. Solidarity should also be extended to moral and practical support of all

individuals and groups struggling for human rights and freedom around the world.

SECTION THIRTY-FIVE:
NEUTRALITY

35.1 Labour's foreign policy is one of independence and neutrality. Irish neutrality is not based upon any constitutional or legal instrument. It is a policy which has evolved over the years and which became a central element of national policy in the World War II era. Yet, neutrality should not be seen as an adhoc response to the world crisis of 1939. From the early years of the Free State it had been widely accepted in political circles, and in all the major parties, that Ireland should remain neutral in any war situation. The Labour Party, from the beginning, advocated this view, stating that "unless the country can feel secure that its neutrality is assured, the transfer of territory to an Irish government is merely an illusion".

Non-aligned Position

35.2 It is the position of the Labour Party that the largely pragmatic basis of our neutrality should be strengthened by a firm acceptance of a non-aligned position in world politics and a refusal to contemplate involvement in any form of military alliance. Above all there can be no question of Ireland becoming aligned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Neutrality must imply a total commitment to the pursuit of detente and world peace - a rejection of



any form of involvement in the world armaments trade which has brought so much misery to the world for the sake of financial profit - and a positive contribution to the necessary process of world development.

Active Neutrality

35.3 Neutrality does not, and must not, imply indifference to the moral issues raised by the great political problems and challenges of the present time. An active neutrality will call for very clear responses and approaches to each and every issue within the international arena. The important characteristic of neutrality is that these responses and approaches are separate from and independent of, those of one or other of the world's power blocs.

SECTION THIRTY-SIX: THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

36.1 The deep-seated nature of the current problems of the European Community requires a response in terms of fundamental change based upon socialist principles and analysis. The European Community today is experiencing the results of the failure of its present economic and social system. Widespread unemployment, growing regional imbalances and damaging social pressures all add up to an unacceptable situation. A Community with vast resources is seen to be unable to fulfil adequately its responsibilities to all its own people or the world at large. The general problems of the Community are reflected here in Ireland where present difficulties are closely related to structural issues aggravated by the policies of the Community. The fact that Ireland is a peripheral region adds notably to the severity of many of its problems.

European Unity

36.2 The European Community is slavishly based on the principle of free trade which seeks to achieve the allocation of labour and capital through the operation of market forces. The institutions of the Community are gravely deficient in terms of democratic control and responsibility. In a world sense, the protectionist policy of the Community is a distortion of world trade operating to the disadvantage of the under-developed nations. The Labour Party is committed to the objective of European unity but not on the basis of a capitalist free-for-all untempered by even a modicum of planning.

European Parliament

36.3 Labour's ultimate objective is the creation of a democratic, socialist state here in Ireland within the setting of a Europe based firmly upon socialist principles and policies. Many of today's problems can be solved by actions based on close European integration while, at the same time, there remains a great number of matters which must be tackled in the national arena. For successful action in the interest of all the people the voice of the socialist movement must be strong, in the directly elected European Parliament and in the individual states.

36.2 The Labour Party does not see the European Community as an end in itself. Neither can it be considered as the whole of Europe since the majority of European states and peoples are not part of the Community. It is only in the setting of a Europe which is united, in the common pursuit of the welfare of its peoples and justice around the world, and socialist in the democratic organisation of its economic and social order, that this country will be guaranteed a peaceful, prosperous and socially-just future.

PART EIGHT

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

SECTION THIRTY-SEVEN: THE EIGHTIES

A Decade of Difficulties

37.1 The eighties will prove to be a decade of great difficulties, some of them brought about by world conditions, others by the consequences of changes taking place in Irish society and some the result of failure by the capitalist system to satisfy the competing demands of different sections of the economy. It is self-evident that a continuation of existing policies based on private enterprise and the profit motive will provide few solutions, if any at all. It is equally obvious that solutions are demanded and, indeed, are urgently required if current problems are not to intensify to the point where they will do lasting harm.

World Economy in Crisis

37.2 Within the world economy there are great tensions which can at any time precipitate major economic catastrophes with dire consequences for Ireland as a small open economy. Energy will continue to be the dominant problem both in terms of price and supply, dampening world trade while exacerbating costs. It is most unlikely that there will be a major recovery of renewed growth in the United States or the emergence of some alternative economic super power.

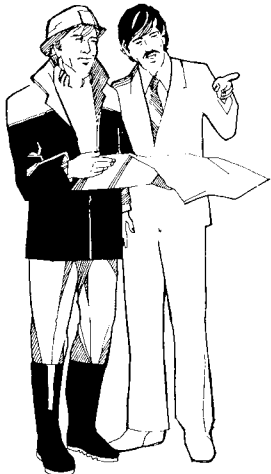
37.3 High inflation rates which were so persistent a feature of the seventies are likely to persist alongside high unemployment rates in practically all the major economies with the prob-

ability of further dislocations in the system of exchange rates.

37.4 Never at any time since the Great Depression has there been such widespread unemployment in the western economic system of which Ireland is a part. Never has there been so little prospect of a recovery. The capitalist world is bankrupt of ideas either to control inflation or reduce unemployment. It is in an intellectual and moral crisis.

No Repetition of the Sixties

37.5 There cannot be, therefore, throughout the eighties a repetition of the economic circumstances which proved so favourable to the growth of the Irish



economy during the sixties and which were almost exclusively responsible for it. The sixties were a period of high sustained growth with only moderate, and sometimes negligible inflation. There never was before, and there is unlikely to be again in the foreseeable future, a period of world economic growth comparable with the sixties. Hence, Ireland's economic salvation during the eighties will not come from a resurgent world economy. On the contrary, as a small open economy, Ireland will be hampered by continuing world depression and will have to find ways to overcome these difficulties.

And no Help from Europe

37.6 Despite the emergence of a major world depression in the seventies that decade was creditable in terms of economic growth, even though it was characterised by both high unemployment and high inflation, particularly in its closing phases. In particular, agricultural incomes grew at an unprecedented rate, especially in the second half of the decade. This was entirely due to the adjustment of the agricultural sector to the common policies of the European Community which resulted in annual real increases in prices for the main products. That process of adjustment is now at an end. Irish agriculture in the eighties will have to accommodate to modest annual price increases, in most instances possibly less than the long run rate of inflation. Far from being the motor of the Irish economy as it was during the seventies, agriculture will face unexpected difficulties whose exact dimensions it is at present impossible to assess but whose magnitude will certainly be beyond current Government perceptions of the problem.

37.7 For this reason, the European Community during the eighties will not provide the same counterweight to a

world of depression as it did during the seventies. Indeed, there is a real danger that a concerted attack on the very basis of the Common Agricultural policy by the main food importing members could succeed. Guaranteed prices for a continuously expanding output are at risk. And it is most unlikely, given the past disposition of the richer members and the imminent prospect of three entrants to the Community, all with structural problems similar to ours, that there will be any offsetting contributions from either an enlarged Regional Fund or Social Fund. On the contrary, Irish industry will be subjected to intense competition without any compensation from the Regional or Social Funds such as were promised by the other two parties prior to our entry to the Community.

Serious Malaise in the Economy

37.8 These prospects would be daunting enough in themselves even if the Irish economy were in a healthy condition. They are positively menacing in circumstances where not even the most partisan admirer of the present system can deny that the Irish economy is suffering from a serious malaise. As the eighties commence, unemployment soars over one hundred thousand, inflation races into double digits, redundancies multiply, Government services run down, strikes abound, investment dries up and emigration reappears. The Government has failed to provide



an analysis or a series of proposals marked by the slightest credibility.

Growing Population and Urbanisation

37.9 All this comes at a time when the country is undergoing the most profound demographic changes in a century and a half. The population is growing faster than any other in Europe. The percentage of young people is rapidly increasing and advancing into adulthood with impatience and anger at social and economic failure and will constitute the greatest challenge during the eighties. Urbanisation is proceeding rapidly as Irish society mott and more takes on the characteristics of a modern European economy. These two phenomena place unprecedented stress on public services, such as housing, education, health and transport.

Crisis for Government Finance

37.10 These services are in crisis with no capitalist solution in sight. The great mass of taxpayers believe the burden of taxation has gone far enough. But simultaneously the ominous consequences of the Fianna Fail taxation policies, as set out in their Election Manifesto of 1977, have had their disastrous impact on the national exchequer. The eighties opened with a rate of borrowing by the Government that was inordinately high, yet the level of public services was unacceptably low. The resolution of this dilemma was obviously beyond the capacity of the system or its conservative political representatives.

Microtechnology

37.11 As if all this were not enough, the Irish economy in common with other industrial economies, began to experience the onset of the micro-chip revolution. Regarded by many as a new industrial revolution in itself, micro

technology demands constant and efficient management at national level if its impact is not to be disastrous for employment. There can be no confidence for believing that the private enterprise system will prove capable of such management or that conservative economic policies will permit the necessary changes in government practices or institutions.

The North

37.12 The eighties will be a decade in which the continuing tragedy of Northern Ireland will move either towards a peaceful solution or lead to a further deterioration. Either way, it will continue to impose heavy costs on the economy generally and the exchequer in particular. A continuation of the political policies with which the eighties opened carry only one certainty - they will not succeed.

The Prospects for the Eighties

37.13 The prospects for the eighties are therefore stark indeed. One possibility consists of a hostile world environment, a decaying economy beset by unprecedented social tensions but with no new or imaginative policies on offer. The outcome here is predictable even to the most obtuse.

The Socialist Alternative

37.14 On the other hand, there is an alternative based on socialist philosophy which puts the common interest before private gain and which demands a commitment from each individual to a joint effort to provide employment, eliminate poverty and eradicate injustice. Such an alternative offers no easy or quick solutions. It requires work, unselfish dedication and a concern for one's community. In a word, it depends precisely on those virtues which capitalism condemns and despises as being unrealistic. But in the coming decade there can be only one reality:

the certainty of the crises that face us. Labour is clear where it stands. It offers the socialist alternative. This Party Programme is proof that the alternative has substance, relevance and practicality.

It is offered to the electorate in the conviction that it will be supported by all men and women of conscience, conviction and compassion.

Title: The Party Programme

Organisation: Labour

Date: 1980

Downloaded from the Irish Left Archive.

Visit www.leftarchive.ie

The Irish Left Archive is provided as a non-commercial historical resource, open to all, and has reproduced this document as an accessible digital reference. Copyright remains with its original authors. If used on other sites, we would appreciate a link back and reference to the Irish Left Archive, in addition to the original creators. For re-publication, commercial, or other uses, please contact the original owners. If documents provided to the Irish Left Archive have been created for or added to other online archives, please inform us so sources can be credited.