
**GENERAL ELECTION
1961**

**NOTES FOR
SPEAKERS**

(Index Inside Cover)

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PROGRAMME FOR ECONOMIC EXPANSION

I The publication late in 1958 of the Government's Programme for Economic Expansion was a landmark in the economic development of the nation. For the first time, every aspect of the country's economy has been surveyed and a comprehensive plan drawn up, intended to double the national income within 35 years.

A whole series of steps have been taken by the Government under the Programme, designed to increase production in Agriculture and Industry, particularly for export. Capital development has been greatly expanded, and this year's capital expenditure of some **£55 million** is by far the largest ever.

The Programme for Economic Expansion aimed at an annual increase of **two per cent** in the national income; in fact, 1959 saw an increase of **three per cent**, followed by one of **four per cent** last year. This compared with an average increase of only one per cent during each of the preceding ten years. If this rate of progress can be continued, the target of doubling the national income will be reached in about half the time estimated in the Programme.

As a result of the successful launching of the Programme, confidence, optimism, a new belief in our future, and a determination to succeed, have replaced the apathy and defeatism of 1956. The achievements of the past four years have laid the foundation for further advances.

The real issue in this election is whether or not our present economic progress is to continue under the dynamic leadership of Fianna Fáil. The next five years will be crucial in Irish economic progress. The new circumstances created by the emergence of the European Economic Community (Common Market) will necessitate careful planning, consistent policy and unfaltering leadership from the Government.

This is not a time to risk either Fine Gael incompetence or Coalition indecisiveness. Only a Fianna Fáil Government can give the nation the clear purpose and wise guidance needed at this decisive stage in Irish history.

AGRICULTURE

2 Fianna Fáil believes that, except on the basis of a healthy agriculture, we cannot expect any permanent economic progress. The Programme for Economic Expansion therefore set out a great number of proposals for expanding agriculture on a sound and lasting foundation, in order to increase exports and the income of Irish farmers.

During the three years 1958 to 1960, farmers had to face unprecedented climatic conditions, with extremes in successive years of wet weather and drought. Conditions on the export market, also, have been very difficult. Great progress has been made, however, in spite of all these difficulties; output is increasing rapidly, exports are higher than ever before, and the prospects for future expansion are excellent.

Ireland's entry into the Common Market will provide a new deal for our farmers. During the lifetime of the next Dáil the main purpose of agricultural policy will be to complete the adaptation of Irish agriculture to enable it to take full advantage of the wider and better organised markets which association with the European Economic Community will provide.

3 Output
In spite of very unfavourable weather conditions, net agricultural output rose during 1960 by **six per cent**.

4 Farmers' Incomes
Farmers last year got over **£16 millions** more for their produce than in 1959.

5 Exports
Agricultural exports last year were the highest on record. Since 1956 exports of **cattle and meat products** have gone up by over **£10 millions** a year. In this period very large increases have taken place in exports of **beef and veal, bacon and hams, and mutton and lamb**.

Exports of **butter, cereals and feeding stuffs, and sugar and sugar preparations** have also shown big increases since 1956.

6 State Aid
Under the Fianna Fáil Government there has been an increase of almost **50 per cent** in total State aid to agriculture—from **£17 million** in the Coalition's last year of office to **£25 million** last year.

Larger sums have been provided by the Government for the expansion and improvement of almost all the previously existing services, but in addition a number of valuable new schemes have been introduced:—

A new subsidy on **phosphatic fertilisers** was introduced in 1958. This subsidy was increased in this year's Budget by a further **£1 per ton**, and is now costing some **£2 million** a year.

In 1960 a subsidy on **potash** was introduced.

Total annual expenditure on **subsidies to cut production costs** is now more than **four times** what it was in 1956/57.

The 1961 Budget provided an increase of about 50% in the grants for the erection of **cow byres** and for the reconstruction and repair of **farm buildings**. Since last year there has been a **twenty years' rates remission on new and improved farm out-offices**; this has been a great incentive to farmers anxious to improve their farm buildings.

Over **£2 million** was spent last year on Section A of the Land Reclamation Scheme (where farmers do their own work). This is a considerable increase on the figure for 1956/57.

Section B of the scheme, where the Department did the work for the farmer, was wound up a couple of years ago—over 80% of the work undertaken was costing over **£40** per acre. This part of the scheme was therefore clearly uneconomic, and a waste of public money. Cases had even come to light where reclamation cost as much as **£300** an acre.

The setting up of the **Agricultural Institute** has been a most important step in the campaign to increase the efficiency of Irish agriculture.

7 Marketing

Further expansion in our exports of farm produce depend to a large extent on the existence of efficient marketing arrangements; important steps have therefore recently been taken by the Government to improve these.

An **Bórd Bainne** has been set up, composed of representatives of the milk suppliers and the other interests concerned. The Bórd will channel milk production into the most profitable manufacturing outlets; it will aim also at improving methods of marketing of dairy produce, and the systematic development of external markets. The State will pay two-thirds of any losses incurred by the Bórd in the export of milk products.

A centralised system has also been set up through the **Pigs and Bacon Commission**, to improve the marketing of pigs.

8 Credit

Since Fianna Fáil came to office, great improvements have been made in credit facilities for farmers. The **Agricultural Credit Corporation** has now been re-organised; it has been given more money and greater powers, has been freed of various restrictions which formerly hampered its activities, and can now make larger loans.

Since 1957 agricultural credit advanced by the banks has doubled, rising from **£16.5 million** to over **£31 million** at the end of 1960.

9 Cattle

During the past couple of years Irish Livestock exports have been handicapped by the bovine T.B. position, by abnormal weather conditions, and by the poor prices obtainable on the British market.

In spite of these difficulties, however, cattle prices have never fallen to the catastrophic low levels of 1956 and early 1957; at present prices

both of stores and fat cattle are well above the level which existed when Fine Gael were in office.

Livestock exports so far this year show an increase over the same months of 1956, while there has been an enormous rise in exports of **carcase beef**. Exports of cattle products during 1961 look like breaking all previous records.

As a result of the **Anglo-Irish Trade Agreement** of 1960, Irish cattle entering Britain gained for the first time parity of prices with **with the home-bred animals**. The differential of **3/6 a live cwt.** was abolished in the case of **attested stores**. The great value of this Agreement to the Irish farmer is now becoming evident: in the first four months of this year over **68,000** attested cattle were exported to Britain, compared with just over **2,000** in the same period of 1960.

In April last year the Government introduced the system of **subsidy payments** to exporters of fat cattle and carcase beef. This scheme, intended mainly to speed the eradication of reactors, has proved of great benefit to farmers in maintaining prices at an economic level.

Under Fianna Fáil, very rapid progress has been made with the Bovine T.B. eradication drive. Annual expenditure on this scheme has gone up from a mere **£440,000** in 1956/57 to over **£5 million** (net) this year. Ten complete Counties are now attested areas, and over a quarter of the cattle in the country are attested.

10 Dairying

Last year the income of milk producers went up by over **£5 million**—due partly to increased production, and partly to the higher milk prices fixed by the Government in April, 1960. Milk production has risen still further this year, and so far in 1961 has been higher than ever before.

An **Bórd Bainne** has now been set up to improve the arrangements for selling our surplus dairy products abroad—and in particular to channel milk supplies into the most profitable manufacturing outlets. Already a good deal of progress has been made, with the setting up in the past couple of years of **cheese** and **milk powder** factories, and the expansion of the **chocolate crumb** industry.

11 Pigs

During the past 12 months killings at Bacon factories have been the highest ever. In particular the new 'A' Special grading for high quality pigs introduced in 1960 has proved a great incentive, and farmers have found it very profitable.

In February, 1960, the Government introduced a scheme of increased grants for piggeries, and this year these have been raised still further, to a new maximum of **£750**.

The **Pigs and Bacon Commission** has been reorganised in order to improve the marketing arrangements for the industry, while a new scheme of grants for the **modernisation of bacon factories** has been introduced.

12 Wheat

Fianna Fáil policy has aimed at meeting the great bulk of our wheat requirements from home production, and paying a good and guaranteed price.

In recent years, however, there has tended to be a surplus production of wheat, which has to be sold for feeding at a heavy loss. This year, therefore, it was decided to make some price reductions for the lower grades; **the prices for the good grades remain unchanged.** The guaranteed price is well above the world level. Fianna Fáil aims to have wheat grown for bread and flour production and not to be regarded as a feed crop to be paid for at the flour milling price.

The Government's sympathy with the problems of the wheat-grower was shown in 1958 and again in 1960, when the harvest failed due to the appalling weather conditions. The bulk of the wheat in those years had to be sold for feeding, but the Government provided funds so that the growers could be paid the full millable price. This cost over a million pounds in relation to the 1960 harvest.

13 Horticulture

The most important development in Irish agriculture for many years has been the setting up by the Sugar Company of the new vegetable processing plant at Mallow. Apart from increased exports and the large potential employment which will be available at the plant, this new industry will be a great boon to the small farmer.

COALITIONS

14

None of the Opposition Parties is prepared in this campaign to support publicly (and before the election) the idea of another Coalition. This is not surprising; the first Coalition broke up in disaster in 1951, while the second Coalition Government retired from office four years ago leaving the country in a state of economic chaos.

There was a **Budget deficit of over £6 million**, an adverse balance of payments amounting to over **£50 million** in two years, **94,000** unemployed, an unprecedented rate of emigration, and declining exports. Agricultural and industrial output both fell during 1956, while there was a sharp decline in the national income.

This was the period which the then Taoiseach, Deputy John A. Costello, has since called: "**the worst time that ever hit this country, during the year 1956 and the beginning of 1957.**" (Dáil Éireann, 17th July, 1958).

Since then Fine Gael have disowned any idea of forming another Coalition Government; they now say that they aim at a one-party Government with an over-all majority. Labour also has taken the same line. Their annual Conference in 1957 passed a resolution pledging the Party never again to take office unless it had an over-all majority.

These groups know very well that never again would the Irish public knowingly vote for another Coalition. The voters should realise that a Fianna Fáil majority is the only safeguard against another disastrous Coalition.

COMMON MARKET

15

A most attractive aspect of the Common Market from the Irish point of view is the opportunity for expansion which it may offer to our agriculture. While final decisions on agricultural policy have not yet been adopted by the European Economic Community (Common Market), the principle has been accepted **that energetic, hardworking farmers should be entitled to be able to earn standards of living comparable to those of urban populations**, and that the prices of farm products must be held at a level which will make this possible.

While agriculture stands to gain from entry into the Common Market, the position with regard to industry in the initial stages will clearly necessitate very careful planning. The Government will of course seek to ensure that our special position is taken into consideration in this regard.

There will, in fact, have to be prolonged and intricate negotiations to ensure that our interests are safeguarded—with regard to both industry and agriculture. Few people will wish to entrust these important negotiations to the Fine Gael leadership.

DRAINAGE

16

Arterial drainage works under the Fianna Fáil Act of 1945 continue to expand. Schemes completed to date have brought benefit to 110,000 acres of land and opened the way for development of 40,000 acres of bog. Work is in progress at present on the Corrib-Care, Maine, Ballyteige, Broadmeadow, Kilmore, Moy and Inny Rivers, and on the Fergus Embankment Scheme. Work is beginning this year on the Killimor, Co. Galway. The Suir is at present being surveyed.

EDUCATION

17

Many advances have taken place in education during the past four years. With the abrogation of the 'marriage ban' and the provision of increased training college accommodation, the number of untrained national teachers has been greatly reduced. **The recruitment of untrained teachers was ended two years ago**—a position which exists hardly anywhere else in Western Europe or America. Three times in the past four years the teacher-pupil ratio has been improved and so the size of classes reduced.

Over **ninety** new national schools are now being built each year—**twice the rate** of four years ago. There has been a great increase also in the provision of extensions and improvements to existing schools.

The new **oral Irish test** in the Leaving Certificate has given a tremendous fillip to the cultivation of spoken Irish, not only in the secondary schools, but among primary schoolchildren as well. This has been the most important step taken in the language movement for very many years.

There has been a very big increase in the number of children in secondary schools. Over 70% of all those between 14 and 16 now attend full-time education courses; this figure will increase still further when the Government's new scheme for providing a large number of additional secondary and University scholarships comes into force.

EMIGRATION

18 The primary purpose of the **Programme for Economic Expansion** launched two years ago by the Fianna Fáil Government, is to remove the economic causes of emigration. There has already been an improvement in the position as a result of the success of the Programme; recent figures show that emigration so far in 1961 is 25% lower than last year, and 40% lower than in 1956 and 1957.

It has been admitted by the British authorities that figures issued by them some months ago with regard to the number of Irish people registering for work in Britain contain a great deal of duplication. They are therefore quite unreliable as a guide to the extent of Irish emigration, which is probably not more than half the total suggested by the British figures.

EMPLOYMENT

19 The average number in insurable employment rose during the past two years by 19,000—after making allowances for those brought in due to the raising of the income limit. All indications are that this year will show a further large increase.

When Fianna Fáil were last in office the total number in employment (including agriculture) was going up. After the Fine Gael led Coalition came back to office in 1954 this situation was reversed; during the economic crisis of 1956/57, total employment fell by 45,000 inside two years.

Fianna Fáil have now once again restored the position—in 1959/60 the fall in total employment was stopped, and in the twelve months ending in April last, the total number at work increased.

Unemployment had reached an appalling level by the end of the Coalition's period of office—over 94,000 were out of work in January, 1957. Under Fianna Fáil this number has been steadily reduced, and at present the Live Register stands at the lowest figure ever recorded.

This position is particularly satisfactory in view of the reduction in emigration during the past twelve months.

EXPORTS

20 In the Coalition's last year of office total exports fell by almost £3 million. Since then there has been a remarkable expansion in exports, which are now far higher than ever before:—

	Total Exports
1955 . . .	£110,852,000
1956 . . .	£108,127,000
1960 . . .	£152,631,000

In the first six months of this year there has been a further rise in exports of £15,528,000, compared with the same months of 1960.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

21 The foreign policy carried out during the past four years by the Fianna Fáil Government at the United Nations and elsewhere has raised our international prestige higher than ever before.

This was recognised last year with the election of Mr. Boland as President of the General Assembly, the request to Ireland to send troops to the Congo, and the appointment of Lieut.-General McKeown as U.N. Commander there.

FINANCE

22 At the beginning of 1957 public confidence was at its lowest ebb, after Coalition incompetence had brought the country into grave financial difficulties for the second time in a few years. Unbalanced Budgets (over £6 million in 1956/57) and heavy deficits in our balance of payments (£50 million in two years) brought about a position where the Government was unable any longer to maintain even the much lower level of public investment then operative.

The State was reduced to the ignominious position of owing money to local authorities and private individuals in every part of the country.

23 **Balance of Payments**
During the last four years Ireland's external payments have been in a very satisfactory position and this problem does not now exist.

This makes a startling change from the position under the two Coalition Governments. The first Coalition, from 1948 to 1951, incurred payments deficits of just over £100 million; the second Coalition, from 1954 to 1957, had an adverse balance of payments of over £50 million.

24 **Capital Development**
During 1960 £50 millions was spent on the public capital programme—by far the largest sum ever devoted to this purpose.

Under the Programme for Economic Expansion there has been a switch from non-productive to productive expenditure. On Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries more than twice as much was spent last year on all forms of capital development as in 1956/57.

With regard to industry the change has been even more striking: in the last Coalition year only £4 million was spent, as compared with £4.23 million capital expenditure last year on industrial develop-

ment. **Ports, harbours and airports** received **£2.24 million** compared with only **£0.42 million** in 1956/57.

25 Lower Taxation

The Programme for Economic Expansion laid it down that direct taxation should be as light as possible in order to encourage savings and investment. Besides a number of reliefs with regard to income tax allowances, death duties, etc., the standard rate of income tax has been cut by Fianna Fáil from 7/6 in the pound to 6/4, the **lowest rate for twenty years**. The PAYE system was introduced last year.

26 National Income

Fianna Fáil aimed in the Programme for Economic Expansion at an annual increase of 2% in the national income—a rate which would double it in 35 years. This rate of progress has already in fact been exceeded; in 1959 the national income went up by 3%, followed by a 4% increase last year.

This rise of 7% in two years is far beyond anything that has been registered previously. The average rate of increase in the previous ten years was only 1%, and in 1956 the national income actually **fell by 3%**.

FISHERIES

27

Fianna Fáil believes that the development of our sea fisheries must be a major aim of Government policy. The main task is to secure greatly increased landings of fish, and schemes have therefore been set on foot for the training of fishermen, while new boats are available from An Bórd Iascaigh Mhara on attractive terms.

Five major fishery harbours are to be developed at a cost of **£1.2 million**—at Killybegs, Castletownbere, Passage East, Howth and Galway. At the same time attention will continue to be paid to the needs of the smaller landing places round our coasts.

Irish fishermen have gained a most valuable concession with the extension last year of our territorial waters by the introduction of straight baselines.

The country's first exploratory fishing vessel, 'Cú Feasa,' went into commission last year, and has made it possible to undertake investigations which should prove of great value in the development of our sea fisheries. In the new fisheries' research station being established in Galway, information assembled by the 'Cú Feasa' will be studied. About half the staff of the Fisheries Division will be transferred to Galway, an important step in the Government's policy of decentralisation.

FORESTRY

28

During the past two years the area planted with trees has reached an annual rate of **25,000 acres**—an all-time record, and 50% up on the pre-1957 rate. Our forestry programme is now (per head of the population) by far the most ambitious being undertaken anywhere in the world today.

There are at present **4,600 men** employed in the State Forests, with an annual wage bill of **£1.5 million**. An incentive bonus scheme for these workers has been introduced by Fianna Fáil, enabling them to add substantially to their wages, and resulting also in a valuable increase in production.

In 1958 the Fianna Fáil Government doubled the private planting grant—from **£10 to £20 an acre**—and a full free technical advisory service covering all aspects of forestry work was introduced. The result has been a fourfold increase in private planting, **1,500 acres** in 1959/60 compared with a former level of about 400 acres.

HEALTH

29

Under the Fianna Fáil Health Acts of 1947 and 1953, a general practitioner service and a full range of medical, surgical, specialist, hospital and nursing care is available free of charge to all those in the lower income group—that is, to 27% of the population. Full hospital and specialist services are available to an additional 58% (in the middle income group), either free or at little more than nominal charges.

During the past four years every opportunity has been taken to improve these services and make them more efficient; last year, for example, steps were taken to unify the existing health services in the cities and counties of Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford.

Hospital building, which stopped as a result of the Coalition financial crisis, has now been resumed, and a large number of projects have been sanctioned throughout the country. Particular emphasis is now being placed on improving the conditions in **mental hospitals** and in **county homes**.

HOUSING

30

The impact of the financial crisis of 1956 was especially severe in the field of housing, and a fresh start had to be made by Fianna Fáil when they returned to office. Approval to deferred projects was given at once, and schemes coming up subsequently for approval were sanctioned without delay.

Local Authorities are being encouraged to go ahead as fast as possible with the elimination of the remaining unfit housing conditions in their areas, and can now be certain that any finance they need for this task will be available.

31 Private Housing

Private housing also was very severely hit by the 1956 crisis, and special measures had to be taken by Fianna Fáil to get things moving again.

In 1958 the Government increased the **maximum grants** for new houses, for works of reconstruction, for repair and improvement and for the installation of water and sewerage services. **Repair and reconstruction** grants were made available to a much wider section of the public. The supplementary grant system was improved, and Local Authorities were empowered to make loans to supplement the grants.

Small Dwellings Acquisition Act loans were extended to cover previously occupied houses, and the income limit raised to £1,040 a year; arrangements were made with the Land Commission to extend their loan facilities. Farmers with valuations of over £50 were brought within the scope of repair grant operations.

The result of all these activities can be seen in the remarkable increase which has taken place in private housing activity:—grants allocated for **new houses** went up by over 80% between 1958/59 and 1960/61. Grants allocated for **repair and reconstruction** works increased in the same period by over 60%.

Construction activity is now at the highest level ever known, so that there is actually a severe shortage of labour throughout the building industry.

INDUSTRY

32 Since 1932, when the industrial drive was begun by Fianna Fáil, production has **trebled** in industry, while employment has **doubled**.

Coalition incompetence caused a severe industrial slump in 1956: output and employment both fell sharply, and at the beginning of 1957 these were actually **below** the level reached four years earlier, in 1953.

33 Government Help

Under Fianna Fáil progress started again. A number of steps were taken to speed industrial development:—

Generous **tax concessions** were given by way of tax remissions on profits derived from new exports.

Foreign investment on a large scale in Irish industry was encouraged by the 1958 Industrial Development (Encouragement of Investment) Act.

The **Industrial Credit Company** was given greatly increased borrowing powers, and its capital doubled.

The **Industrial Grants Act**, 1959, provided grant assistance for industrial projects.

Grants for **technical assistance** have been made available to industrial firms to help them improve efficiency and increase output.

34 Increased Output

Industrial output has risen by one-third in volume in the past four years—and is still rising. It now stands at a level far beyond anything previously recorded.

35 New Factories

Since Fianna Fáil came to office in 1957, **321** new industries and extensions to existing industries began production (up to December 31st last). The employment potential of these projects is between **8,000** and **13,000**.

By the end of this year it is expected that another **61** industrial proposals will have gone into production, giving employment to between **4,200** and **6,400** workers when in full production.

A further **33** industrial projects are on hands which have reached a stage at which it seems likely that they will come to fruition; these are expected to employ between **3,500** and **5,300** people. A great number of other industrial proposals are also at present under consideration.

36 Higher Exports

Under the Coalition Government, industrial exports **fell** during 1956. Since Fianna Fáil came to office, exports have doubled, from **£21.9 million** in 1956 to **£43.6 million** last year.

37 More at Work

The number at work in industry has gone up by almost **14,000** in the past three years—and the rate of increase is still going up. Industrial employment is now much higher than ever before.

This is a great change from the industrial slump of 1956, when the number of workers in industry fell by almost **7,000** in two years—apart from a large number of workers who were on short time.

38 Increased Earnings

The average industrial worker's wages have gone up during the past four years by **almost a quarter** (23.5%), as against a cost of living increase of only 11%.

39 Shannon

In 1959 the Shannon Free Airport Development Co. Ltd. was set up. A number of export industries are already in production, many others are planned, and the development of the industrial estate is going ahead with great speed.

LAND DIVISION

40

The work of land division and resettlement has been greatly speeded up under Fianna Fáil, partly due to the introduction of more efficient methods, and partly to the Government decision to increase by **50%** the funds available for the acquisition of land for the relief of congestion. This is by far the largest amount provided for this purpose for over twenty years.

In comparison with the last year of the Coalition Government, the total acreage **resettled** by the Land Commission last year was up by **18%**. The number of **migrations** was up by **57%**. The number of allottees went up by **50%**, and **improvement works** expenditure was up by **10%**.

LICENSING ACT

41 The main aims of the Licensing Act of 1960 were to bring about uniformity in opening hours throughout the country and to do away with the undesirable bona fide trade. The provisions of the Act were in accordance with the recommendations of an **all-Party Committee** which considered the entire question.

The general effect of the changes was to **lengthen** the hours available for drinking; during the Dáil debates on the Bill a number of Opposition speakers complained that the new hours were too long. One Fine Gael ex-Minister, for example (Deputy MacEoin) said that no public house in either city or country should be allowed open at all on Sundays, or on St. Patrick's Day.

Some of these same Deputies are now seeking to make political capital by claiming that the new drinking hours should be lengthened—the exact opposite of the case they made in the Dáil last year! That the new hours are, in fact, quite adequate, is shown by the increase which has taken place since the Act became law in the consumption of beer, spirits and wine.

Where particular problems arise (such as tourist resorts) the Minister will be prepared to consider amendments when there has been adequate experience of the new hours.

ROADS

42 The amount being spent this year on the roads (from the Road Fund) is an all-time record—**£6.6 million** compared with only **£3.8 million** in the last year of the Coalition Government. This latter amount would have been larger, but was reduced by **£½ million** when Mr. Sweetman 'raided' the Road Fund in an attempt to balance his Budget.

Since last year, Counties with a large mileage of **county roads** to be improved have been empowered to transfer to these county roads part of their main road improvement grants. The total amount now being spent on county roads is **two-and-a-half times** the expenditure on main roads.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

43 The rural electrification scheme as originally planned by Fianna Fáil in 1947 will be completed next year. **280,000** rural premises will then have been connected, at a total cost of over **£30 million**.

In 1955 the Coalition Government abolished the subsidy on rural electrification. This subsidy has now been restored by Fianna Fáil, but there is still a deficit in the E.S.B. accounts of **£529,000** a year arising out of the failure of the Coalition to pay the subsidy during their period of office. As a result of this deficit, electricity charges have recently been increased slightly, at a cost to the average rural consumer of 3d. or 4d. a week.

SOCIAL WELFARE

44 Since 1932 Fianna Fáil has brought in, amongst other beneficial measures, the following schemes:—

Unemployment Assistance
Widows' and Orphans' Pensions
Conditions of Employment Act
Children's Allowances
Holidays with Pay
Wet-time Insurance

Every new Social Welfare scheme introduced since 1922 has been due to Fianna Fáil, and another milestone has now been laid with the introduction last January of the new **£2 Contributory Old Age Pension** (**£3 10s.** for man and wife).

Since 1957 the **non-contributory Old Age Pension** has been increased by a total of **6/- to 30/- per week**, a rise of **25%**.

All other non-contributory assistance rates have risen also, for example, **unemployment assistance** payable to a man with a wife and four children living in an urban area has gone up from **38/- to 57/6**, while a widow with four children now gets **57/6** a week in non-contributory pension compared with **36/6** up to 1957.

All rates of benefit under the **social insurance scheme** have also been increased under the Fianna Fáil Government.

TOURISM

45 Income from tourism has gone up by a quarter since 1957, and has now reached the huge figure of **£41 million**.

With the full backing and encouragement of the Fianna Fáil Government, a great effort is being made to improve **tourist facilities**. Large sums have been provided for carrying out development schemes at tourist resorts. **Loans and grants** given to hotels have resulted in the provision of over **1,000** additional bedrooms during the past two years.

Successful efforts are being made to improve **travel facilities** for visitors coming to this country, and a new **air ferry** for cars was introduced last year.

The number of **angling visitors** was up last year by two-thirds, compared with 1959; this is one of the most valuable of all forms of tourist development, since it is bringing prosperity to many parts of the country which do not belong to the tourist areas.

The development of Irish tourism is due entirely to Fianna Fáil, and was carried through initially against the violent opposition of Fine Gael and other Parties.

TRANSPORT

46 C.I.E.

In 1958 the Fianna Fáil Government decided to put C.I.E. on a completely new basis. The out-of-date restrictions which had hampered its activities were removed, and the Company was given a period of five years in which to reach solvency.

In 1958/59 the losses of C.I.E. were £2.3 million; over a ten-year period the total losses had reached the huge figure of £24 million. In 1960/61 these losses had been cut to £250,000, and there seems every prospect that solvency will be reached within the five-year period.

This great improvement has been brought about by the introduction of more efficient and business-like methods of working, which have brought in greatly increased traffic, particularly to the railways, which last year carried more tonnage than ever before.

The Coalition-appointed Transport Committee had recommended that a total of 1,000 miles of Branch lines should be closed down. This was not accepted by Fianna Fáil; only 400 miles of branch lines have in fact been closed, and no further lines will be closed during the present five-year period.

47 Air Lines

For the third year running Aer Lingus made a good profit last year, with passenger, cargo and mail traffic all well up on the previous year.

The new trans-Atlantic service of Aer Linte has now almost reached the stage where it also will be making profits (there was a surplus last year on our air services as a whole, taking both the trans-Atlantic and European sectors together). Last year the number of passengers carried across the Atlantic rose by over 50% and cargo more than doubled. With the new Boeings in operation, passenger traffic so far this year is up by 80%. **Now that this service is doing so well, it is more than ever to be regretted that the Coalition close-down of 1948 prevented us from getting in to this lucrative route at the start.**

The new Cork Airport is due to open in October 16th next, and this will be a most important event in the economic development of the country. It will open up the whole south of Ireland to British and continental tourists, and Bórd Fáilte have estimated that it will mean a 25% increase in tourist earnings for that part of the country.

48 Shipping

In spite of the depressed state of international shipping during the past few years, the amount of cargo carried by Irish Shipping, Ltd., has almost doubled since 1957.

The Company continues to add to the size of its fleet. Two large ships are at present under construction, one of them at the new Verolme shipyard at Cork.

BORD NA MONA

49

Bord na Mona last year produced 1½ million tons of fuel, in spite of very bad weather conditions. Two new briquette factories are now in operation. At peak last year, Bord na Mona gave employment to over 6,500.

An Act has just been passed to authorise increased capital expenditure on turf development.

WATER SUPPLIES

50

There have been three great landmarks in the Fianna Fáil drive to raise living standards throughout rural Ireland. The first was set in 1932, with the start of the enormous housing programme, which since then has changed the whole face of the countryside. The second landmark was the introduction, in 1946, of the Rural Electrification Scheme, now almost completed.

Now the third landmark is being set with the new £35 million ten-year plan to bring water supplies and improved sewerage services to rural dwellers in every part of the country.

Greatly increased subsidies have been made available to Local Authorities, who have been asked to make comprehensive surveys of their areas.

Some of these surveys have already been completed; in **North Cork**, for example, a programme has been prepared which will cover 71% of rural houses, while outline plans have been prepared in **Tipperary South Riding** to serve over 90% of houses. In **Donegal** a three-year programme has been adopted which will be followed by others, and several other Co. Councils are at present considering the adoption of definite programmes of works.

In addition to these schemes, people who live in areas not covered by any local authority scheme have been offered increased grants from the State and Local Authority to help them instal their own water supplies and sanitary services.

This new Fianna Fáil programme is one of the most important steps yet taken in raising the standard of living and improving the economy of rural Ireland.

WESTERN DEVELOPMENT

51

The economic development of the West of Ireland is a central aim of Fianna Fáil policy, and the Government has been applying a consistent plan for its realisation. Some of the main developments of the past four years are set out below:—

52 Industry

An Foras Tionscal was first set up by Fianna Fáil in 1952, to help industrial development in undeveloped areas; in recent years it has had rapidly increasing success in this task.

Whereas projects approved by An Foras Tionscal up to 31st March, 1957, were expected to give employment to **2,687** persons, the projects approved by that body to date for the undeveloped areas are expected to give employment to over **8,000** persons.

53 Forestry

There has in recent years been a most remarkable increase in the amount of afforestation that has taken place in counties West of the Shannon. The acreage planted in these western areas during the past two years was much the largest on record, increasing from 6,600 in 1956/57, to **10,500** acres in 1959/60 and **11,000** acres in 1960/61.

The following table shows the acreage acquired and planted in some western counties in 1956/57 and 1960/61:—

COUNTY	LAND ACQUIRED		LAND PLANTED	
	1956/47 (Acres)	1960/61 (Acres)	1956/57 (Acres)	1960/61 (Acres)
Donegal	1,657	3,619	1,558	3,031
Galway	1,674	1,791	1,265	2,731
Kerry	244	1,972	678	774
Leitrim	1,334	991	751	1,275
Mayo	2,217	3,496	1,101	1,493
Roscommon	289	356	407	456
Sligo	333	224	412	819

54 Grassmeal

The last Coalition Government killed the very promising grassmeal project which Fianna Fáil had started at Bangor Erris. A new Company has now been formed (Mín-Fhéir, Teó), and drainage operations have begun on land acquired at Geesala, Co. Mayo.

55 Gaeltacht Schemes

One result of the new Oral Irish Test in the Leaving Certificate Examination has been a great increase in the number of students visiting the Gaeltacht. To help the people of the Gaeltacht cater for this influx, the Government has initiated a system of grants for the erection of **holiday chalets** and **hostels**. Increased grants have been given to the Irish Colleges, and **£30,000** is being provided this year to send school children to the Gaeltacht.

A special scheme of grants for the building or improvement of **Gaeltacht secondary schools** has also been introduced.

One of the most practical schemes yet devised for the improvement of living standards in the Gaeltacht is **Scéim na Muc**, introduced in 1958, under which pedigree sows are provided at no initial cost to farmers in the various Irish-speaking areas.

The increased grants brought in in 1959 for building and improving houses in the Gaeltacht have led to greatly expanded activity; total expenditure on these grants this year will be twice the 1958/59 level.

56 Tourism

The undeveloped areas benefit from the increased help now being given to tourist centres, by way of grants and loans to hotels, grants for the improvement of resorts, etc. In particular, these areas gain from the drive being carried out to increase the number of fishing visitors.

WORKS ACT

57

The ending of expenditure under the Local Authorities (Works) Act was inevitable. Very large sums had been spent on schemes under this Act, but it is now clear that most of this money was wasted. Many of the schemes carried out were valueless, while, in other cases, due to the absence of any provision for maintenance, the land on which the work was carried out has long since reverted to its original condition.

During the past four years there has been a very large increase in State capital expenditure. But the Fianna Fáil Government has made sure that these sums are spent in a manner which contributes directly to the development of the national economy.

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