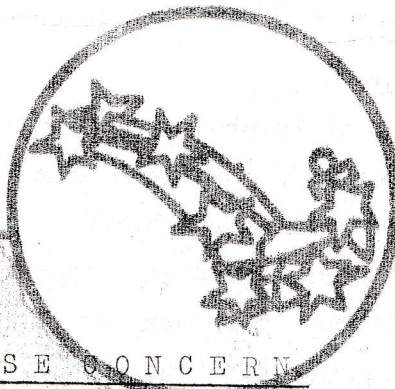


GALWAY PEOPLE

SINN FEIN
GALWAY CITY



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HEALTH CUTBACKS CAUSE CONCERN

The cutbacks in Government allocations to the Western Health Board will cause great hardship and concern to the working people of Galway, Roscommon and Mayo. In particular the people of Galway will be effected as the Regional Hospital will be severely hit in the proposed cutbacks. Many of the benefits that people have come to accept as a right are almost certain to come under the axe. According to figures issued by the Western Health Board more than 60% of the Population of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon are covered by Medical Cards.

From Bad to Worse.

Any patient who has ever had to attend the Out-Patients Department knows of the long queues and the long waiting list. It is obvious to anyone that these services need to be expanded rather than cutback. The Health Board is proposing to cutback on the number of Junior hospital doctors employed, reduce their overtime and want to enforce a policy of shift work. Many posts that are becoming vacant now will be left so.

Doctors on the Dole...

The Junior Hospital Doctors of the Regional Hospital & Merlin Park (that is all the non-specialist doctors) are very worried about this situation. At a big meeting held in the Regional Hospital the Junior Doctors expressed grave concern about the effects a cutback in their numbers would have on the care given to patients. Many wards are already understaffed and with the proposed reduction in numbers the situation could be very serious. There is a real prospect that many Junior Doctors will be unemployed after June and as the Health Board does not stamp their cards they will have no emigrants or go on the

Dole.

Other Cutbacks.

Other cutbacks will include reducing the free transport for Medical Card holders. This will mean greater inconvenience for patients. Most hospitals have no facilities to cater for people who may have to spend the entire day there while awaiting transport home. It is also proposed to cut the benefits which were given to people looking after sick relatives. Again this cutback will affect the lower income groups most.

Resist the Cutbacks.

It is essential that these cutbacks be resisted because of the hardship it will cause the ordinary man in the street. The well-off sections of the community will still be able to pay for their private facilities but the rest will have to wait even longer than before for a service from overworked doctors who are working in conditions that are far from satisfactory.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.

This week we want to inform people that the qualifying periods for unemployment and pay-related benefits have been extended by 13 weeks. At the same time the contribution from employees for their stamp is also increased. These are the new rates:

Male----- £2.14 to be paid by the Employee.

Female-- £2.08 to be paid by Employee.

Under the new Social Welfare Bill people will now qualify for unemployment benefit for a total of 390 days while those who are entitled to pay-related benefits will be able to get these for 381 days.

LEGAL FIX

Although the Constitution declares that everyone is equal before the law nobody would argue that in practice this is true. Money talks here like in all other aspects and the person who can afford the best solicitor or barrister has a clear and obvious advantage. Although solicitors are well paid by the state for free legal aid they dislike this type of work because they cannot fiddle the tax so easily.

One area of State work which is very lucrative is the area of State Briefs. Leading State Solicitors and Barristers earn in the region of £12,000 - £18,000. a year. This is totally separate from what they might earn in private practice. Despite these fairly massive earnings, which most of us could never dream of, our legal hawks felt themselves hard done by.

"National Interest"

The Legal Profession decided that since other people had got national wage

agreement "rises" , while their pay had been static for the past 3 years, they should put in a wage claim. Looking at the inflation over the past three years they saw it was 73% and so they decided that they were entitled to 73% increase. However, since they are the "backbone" of Cosgrave's Law and Order country they considered the National Interest and took a 7% drop in their claim. So when most of us are facing an actual cut in our living standards, if the Government get its way and impose a wage freeze, and 120,000 people are out of work, State Solicitors/Barristers tucked themselves in for a 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % wage increase.

If it seems unfair that people who are earning approximately £12,000 - £18,000 and maybe as much more in private business should get this large increase but, the corrupt legal system in this country can only be continued if the people in it are well paid. The legal system is based on political patronage ----The people involved will hardly cry halt when they are so well looked after.....

ENTERTAINMENT COLUMN.

R.T.E. has a new programme that is well worth watching. It is called "The Way We were". It traces Irish History from 1900 until the present day. To-date from 1900 to 1936 has been covered in this series. Cathal O'Shannon is presenting the programme. He interviews people who have lived through different eras. It is only shown for $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour and in this time it is not easy to do a good analysis. However, a good attempt to get at the facts is made and it is worth watching.

TEAM AHEAD.

the recent cost increases by C.I.E. there has been an intensified campaign launched against state and semi-state companies. But, as we pointed out last week, part of these losses are the result of C.I.E. providing services, while not being profitable, are necessary for the community.

Another reason why C.I.E. makes a loss is that while they are compelled to do unprofitable jobs they also face strong competition from private companies in potentially profitable sectors.

Specials.

Let us take just two examples of the above

--- One of the most profitable sectors of the transport industry is the specials. These "specials" are hired out to bring a crowd to a football match, bingo, on a pilgrimage or whatever. In Galway there are many private coach firms like O'Grady's, Flaherty's; and Eirebus to mention but a few. Most of these companies do only the more profitable runs. C.I.E. in Galway is almost totally excluded from this field because their buses are tied up in less profitable ventures. C.I.E. finds itself therefore in the ludicrous position that its scarce resources are concentrated in the loss making sector. The only way out of this is for expansion of this bus fleet into profitable sections like specials.

Of course, C.I.E., which is well unionised will not make as much profit as the private companies because its drivers and staff have better conditions of work than their counterparts in private enterprises.

C.I.E. makes profit but....

The other big avenue for C.I.E. to expand into is freight. This is a very Cont/d.

profitable area as witnessed by the huge number of new companies that are registering in this field. Yet, C.I.E. is showing a loss at present in this field why? - Again Road freight for C.I.E. is not concerned solely with profitable freight as are the private companies but, have also to provide a service to out-of-the way places like Clifden. In the meantime private hauliers like the Nestors, Martin Cunniss and Thomas Rbache (Tuam) and others can concentrate on profit-making without having to provide a service in less profitable areas.

Who is to Blame??

It is not surprising in light of the above facts that C.I.E. should be making a loss.

It is forced to do jobs that private companies would not touch with a forty foot pole. But in areas where it could make money (and so reduce the burden on the consumer and on the tax-payer) it has to compete with private companies. It should be clear that these private companies are as much to blame as anything else for the increases in fares.

Why Should SINN FEIN defend C.I.E.???

Until now most industry and jobs in this country were provided by capitalist companies. The result of this are obvious today with 120,000 unemployed. There was little alternative offered to this course.

Sinn Fein and other Socialist parties have seen that only by the Government providing jobs through State Companies will any short term solution be offered. Of course, the propaganda machines of private interests are continually trying to show that State Industries are inefficient. We have tried to show that a state company-like C.I.E. could succeed if the greedy hands of private interests were kept out of the profitable sections.

Where you come first or do you???

"Where you come first" is the advertisement slogan of the Northern Bank in this week's National papers. The Ad. tells us that at the Northern Bank "we are interested in everyone's financial problems, large or small.... That why, whatever your financial needs, come first to the Northern Bank - where you come first".

All very nice and I suppose even a few people may actually believe it. But the behaviour of the Northern Bank in the Vecta case would lead one to a far different conclusion about the nature of the "friendliness". Maybe the Vecta workers would agree a more correct slogan would be "The Northern Bank - where you come first.... provided we can make a fast buck".

FREE EDUCATION ??????

Surely one of the most disgraceful decisions ever to be made was one which is going to effectively deny secondary education to 14 boys from Gaeltacht areas. The boys from the Aran Islands and other areas where there are no secondary schools are boarding in Galway and now they have been told that their grants have been stopped and that they can't return to school after the mid-term break.

The school principal has strongly condemned the action of the Department of Education.

That the Government is saying to these boys is "If you can't afford to pay for your education--- do without it". The Gaeltachts areas are already disadvantaged in education facilities and this is a final insult.

No amount of Tom O'Donnell double-talk can hide this fact. This matter must not be allowed to rest.

Micheal D. Finds his Voice.....

We are very pleased to note that Micheal D. Higgins has at long last found his voice on the contraception issue. On the many other occasions that this subject was debated he just happened to be absent. Of course on this occasion he was speaking at the safety of a Labour Party meeting. We will be waiting to hear his spirited defence of Senator Robinson's Bill in the Dail....

MONEY LENDING AGAIN.....

It has been brought to the attention of Galway People that there is a new spate of money lending at the Social Security Office on Thursdays. The rate of interest being demanded by these unscrupulous people is 100%. Because it often takes a few weeks for assessment of a person's eligibility for Social Assistance Benefit to be finalised it is all too easy for a person to fall into the moneylenders trap and it is very difficult to get free then. Moneylending for profit is a very vicious thing in that it preys on those least able to defend themselves. All means at the disposal of the authorities should be used to bring these people to justice and the Department of Social Welfare should make an effort to lessen the delay in finalising claims.

CONGRATULATIONS.

The front page article in the Irish People deals with the Crown strike. We want to add our congratulations to the strikers on the successful end to their strike. At a very great personal cost they defended the basic rights and principles of Trade Unionism. All Trade Unionists owe them a great debt.