

Presidential  
Statement  
OF  
Policy.

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Delivered at the Public  
Session of Dail Eireann,  
April 10, 1919 :: :: :: ::



## Presidential Statement of Policy at Session of Dail Eireann.

[The following is the statement of policy made on April 10th, 1919, at the Public Session of Dail Eireann by President de Valera. It was in its entirety suppressed by the English Censor.]

PRÍOMH AIREACH (East Clare and East Mayo).

Our first duty as the elected Government of the Irish People will be to make clear to the world the position in which Ireland now stands.

There is in Ireland at this moment only one lawful authority, and that authority is the elected Government of the Irish Republic. Of the other power claiming authority we can say, adapting the words of Cardinal Mercier :—

The authority of that power is no lawful authority. Therefore in soul and conscience the Irish people owe that authority neither respect, nor attachment, nor obedience. The sole authority in this country is the authority of our own government, the authority of the elected representatives of the Irish Nation. This authority alone has the right to our affection and to our submission. . . . The acts of the usurper have in themselves no authority, and such of those acts as affect the general interests and to which we may give ratification will have authority only in virtue of such ratification which alone gives them juridic value.

Towards the persons of those who hold dominion among us by military force we shall conduct ourselves with all needful forbearance. We shall observe the rules they have laid upon us so long as those rules do not violate our personal liberty, nor our consciences, nor our duty to our country.

Our attitude towards the powers that maintain themselves here against the expressed will of the people shall then, in a word, be this : We shall conduct ourselves towards them in such a way as will make it clear to the world that we acknowledge no right of theirs. Such use of their laws as we shall make will be dictated solely by necessity and only in so far as we deem them for the public good.

In order to secure for our own *de jure* government, and for the Irish Republic which the Irish people have willed to set up, the necessary international recognition, we shall send at once our accredited representatives to Paris to the Peace Conference and to the League of Nations. We shall give them all necessary authority, and that they may proceed there in a manner befitting their character as the representatives of a nation, we shall apply for the necessary safe conduct to enable them to pass through the naval and military



cordons with which the power in occupation of our country has surrounded us.

We shall send also to other countries a number of duly accredited ambassadors and consuls to see that the position of Ireland is understood as it truly is, and not as English propaganda would represent it, and in general to see that the interests of Ireland in these countries are in no way neglected. We shall thus resume that intercourse with other peoples which befits us as a separate nation, that intercourse which it has been the chief aim of English statescraft to cut off and which indeed English power has succeeded in cutting off for over a century.

At the present time of general world reconstruction it is most important that the material interests of this country at home be also looked after, and by Irishmen. It will be the duty of our Ministry to secure the co-operation and to co-ordinate the activities of the various bodies which have taken voluntarily on themselves the safeguarding and advancement of these interests. Towards English legislation interfering with these interests we shall act in accordance with the general principles I have already indicated, that is, we shall act as we think best for the general good.

To measures such as the English Ways and Communications Bill, designed, as regards Ireland, to prevent Irishmen from using the natural resources of their own country to benefit their own nation, handing over on set purpose to an English bureau complete control of the communications of this country so that they may be used solely in the interests of England—to such measures we shall offer all the resistance we can command as being both injurious and unjust. It will be the especial duty of our Director of Trade to examine, in co-operation with public bodies, how best to make our resistance effective.

The Ministers and Directors at the heads of the other departments—Labour, Industries, Agriculture, Local Government—will similarly be charged with seeking co-operation with all interested in their departments. The Minister for National Defence is, of course, in close association with the voluntary military forces which are the foundation of the National Army.

It is obvious that the work of our Government cannot be carried on without funds. The Minister of Finance is accordingly preparing a prospectus, which will shortly be published, for the issue of a loan of one million sterling—£500,000 to be offered to the public for immediate subscription, £250,000 at home and £250,000 abroad, in bonds of such amounts as to meet the needs of the small subscriber.

I think that what I have said is a fair outline of our programme as it stands at present. An outline is all we are prepared to give, and so I have not attempted to go into details. The working out of the details will be the immediate concern of individual Ministers and of the Cabinet as a whole. When they are ready we shall bring them formally before you for your approval and sanction.

In asking the Dail to approve of our programme as I have stated it, I feel that I need not remind you how short the term is that the present Ministry has been in office nor how our best energies are being absorbed with the international situation of the moment.



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