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June 25, 1970

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CEMENT AND BANK DISPUTES

The Caretaker Executive of Sinn Féin issued a statement after its first meeting on January 17 last, outlining the reasons for the "walkout" from the Sinn Féin Ard-Fheis. One of the reasons was the Extreme Socialism being pushed by certain individuals who had got themselves into positions of influence in the Republican Movement, and which would lead to totalitarian dictatorship.

In that statement the Executive outlined its views on social and economic questions and defined its Socialism. It stated, inter alia, "our Socialism envisages the nationalisation of the monetary system, commercial banks and insurance companies, key industries, mines, building land and fishing rights...."

The Executive feels that since February last we have been learning the hard way that all key industries should be nationalised. Since February 2 last 750 production workers at Cement Ltd. have been on strike. They and their families have suffered immensely. An estimated 20,000 building workers have been laid off and the consequences generally of this strike are disastrous.

Cement Ltd. is a foreign dominated monopoly. They have treated in an inhuman fashion workers who are engaged in a job which is hazardous from a health point of view. They are holding our country to ransom. In the last year they made a profit of one and a half million pounds. Their directors see only their responsibility to their shareholders and hope to starve the workers into submission.

The Cement industry is too important to the economy to be left to private enterprise. It should be nationalised and its board and management made accountable to the people. This is the opportunity for the public to press for this step to be taken. The monopoly must be broken and this key industry brought under public control. We call on Republicans, Trade Unionists and the public generally to assist the strikers and their families, to oppose all attempts to break the strike by importing cement, and to demand the nationalisation of the industry.

In the Banks dispute, the attitude of the employers is similar to that of Cement Ltd. If the strike lasts much longer many small businesses will have to close down. Bank clerks, especially the younger members, are notoriously badly paid. The employers consider their duty to their shareholders and ignore their duty to the nation. Ultimately, the banking system will also have to be brought under social control.
