

PRESS RELEASE

from

SINN FÉIN

REASONS FOR REDUNDANCIES

Sinn Féin is concerned at the ever-growing number of redundancies resulting in unemployment in the 26 Counties.

Despite attempts by Government agencies to falsify the reasons, the actual reason for the majority of redundancies is the Free Trade Agreement with Britain.

This Agreement, which abolishes protective import tariffs on goods from Britain, has been progressively brought into effect at an annual reduction in tariffs of 10% since 1965. It has now reached the stage where it is having disastrous effects on the economy.

These effects are two-fold. Firstly, British firms which established subsidiaries here in the past so as to operate inside the tariff barrier no longer see any reason to remain. They have no social responsibility towards Irish workers but are interested only in ensuring profits for their directors and shareholders. It is now more profitable to produce goods at the parent factory in Britain and ship them across the Irish Sea for distribution.

Secondly, the majority of Irish industries are still in their infancy, have a small home market, are less well financed and are therefore weaker than British industries. It is impossible for them to survive in a free trade area and unfair competition is forcing them out of business. The Managing Director of Sandersons, Droichead Nua, admitted this on an R.T.E. interview when the firm announced recently that it was closing down. This may yet be repeated at Lever Bros. factory in Dublin, which employs 500 people. Unilever of Britain will supply the Irish market with soap and detergents when they close their Dublin branch.

There is also an historical precedent for the present crisis. During the last 20 years of the eighteenth century, Ireland had a spell of legislative independence under Grattan's Parliament. It was a period of economic progress for Ireland. The effort was undermined by the Act of Union of 1800 by which Free Trade was established between the two countries. By 1826 the Irish economy had been destroyed.

Sinn Féin calls for an end to gombeen capitalism in Ireland; the development of a socially responsible economy; an end to the present Free Trade Agreement; a return to Fair Trade with Britain; and the expansion of trade with other countries.

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