

SINN FEIN

Social & Economic  
Programme

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Whilst the immediate aim of Sinn Fein is to accomplish the task of freeing Ireland from the yoke of foreign occupation, it may be stated that the accomplishment of this task is but the means to achievement of the ultimate aim of restoring Ireland to her rightful place as a free Nation, having absolute control over the direction and administration of her own affairs. This aim embraces not alone the breaking of those links that, in the political sphere, bind Ireland to Britain but extends to smashing the economic bonds that link the economy of the nation to that of a tottering and virtually bankrupt Empire. As long as these economic bonds remain intact, for so long will the economic affairs of Ireland continue under the virtual control of Britain and the economy of our Nation will remain at the mercy of those who exercise the power of manipulating the British Financial System.

As a means of achieving its immediate task, Sinn Fein, in its National Unity and Independence Programme, has given an outline of the policy that it is intended to pursue. There yet remains the task of indicating the nature of the Social and Economic Programme that is visualised within the wider scope of its ultimate aim. What follows may be taken as being, in broad and general terms, an outline of the organisation's approach towards a solution of the social and economic evils that beset the Irish Nation. It goes without saying that, in the ultimate, the moulding and organisation of the Nation's economy will be a matter for the representatives of the Irish people, legislating for all Ireland through the government of a free and independent Irish Republic. In placing its social and economic programme before the Irish people and advocating their adoption of it, Sinn Fein is not motivated by any desire to outbid political parties and other sectional interests in a scramble to obtain kudos or the support of the electorate during election campaigns. Neither will they hesitate to encourage and support the development and undertakings already initiated that are truly national in character and control of a nature designed to secure an economy suited to the needs of the Irish Nation and the welfare of all its citizens.

One factor that directly affects a nation's economy is the level of taxation necessary to maintain its Central and Local administrations. In Ireland to-day, taxation is on a level equal to maintenance of three separate legislative administrations (plus a contribution to the British Exchequer approximating to an average of ten million pounds annually since 1922) and two local government administrations. Under such conditions, anything approximating to a sound and stable national economy cannot be achieved. Neither is it possible to secure any worthwhile reduction in administrative costs while administration of the nation's affairs remains as at present. The obvious remedy for such a state of affairs—the one that is advocated by Sinn Fein, the one that must be sought for and obtained at all costs, if the Irish Nation is to survive—is to end British rule and Partition Government in Ireland and to unify administration under control of a National Parliament legislating for all Ireland.

Similarly with Local Government administration. The burden of taxation borne by ratepayers is, in proportion to the services supplied, altogether too heavy. In general, the proportion of rates expended to meet administrative costs and loan charges exceeds that expended in the provision of services. In the main, this is due to the necessity of remunerating the officials and staffs required to operate an unwieldy and outmoded system to the excessive interest rates charged for overdrafts and loans obtained mainly from the Commercial Banks. To bring Local Government administration into line with a national economy suited to the requirements

of the people and providing services commensurate with their taxable capacity, calls for reform of the present system, or if necessary, its replacement, with a view to reducing administrative costs and, where necessary, the provision of credit free of, or at a low rate of, interest.

Of all those factors that, grouped together, constitute a nation's economy, finance may be rated as the one of most importance. To establish and maintain a national economy consonant with the nation's requirements and the welfare of its citizens, it is essential that the monetary system be organised on a basis that will make feasible the accomplishment of these ends, and that full control of the system be vested in the government of the nation. Of the monetary system operating in Ireland, it may be said that it is not designed to serve either the interests of the nation or the welfare of our people or that, apart from the British Government, those who in the legislative sphere govern Ireland to-day exercise little or no control over it. For all practical purposes, control rests in the hands of the British, acting as trustees for the sterling area, and in the Directorates of the Commercial Banks operating in Ireland. In view of this position, it becomes necessary to examine two aspects of the present system and to suggest a remedy for the evils to Ireland that flow from it.

### THE LINK WITH STERLING

The link with sterling may be briefly described as the bond that binds Ireland to economic dependence on England's monetary system. In practice, it means that Ireland must accept Sterling as a convertible currency; that the Irish pound be maintained at statutory parity with the British pound; that Ireland can only increase the volume of her currency through purchase of sterling securities (in other words, Ireland must first lend a pound to Britain before an Irish pound can be issued); that the Irish pound must depreciate in value and to whatever extent Britain's paper pound may fall; that (Britain excepted) those who govern Ireland with the present monetary system cannot, and do not, exercise the control necessary to safeguarding the nation's economy from the evils that flow from inflation and deflation; that the Central and Commercial Banks, insurance and Assurance Companies, commercial concerns and individuals are permitted to invest savings of the Irish people in British securities and undertakings. The present monetary system operated in Ireland (of which it may be said that the link with sterling forms its basis) renders inevitable a steady decline in agriculture, since it prevents establishment of a stable and satisfactory price level and produces amongst the agricultural community economic conditions that cannot fail to force emigration. For shopkeepers it means the loss of numerous potential customers who, through no fault of their own, have to subsist on the dole, or, alternatively, on inadequate income derived from intermittent employment, not to mention the loss sustained through enforced emigration. For manufacturers, it means curtailment of the home market so essential to stabilisation of industry, because, through heavy taxation, unemployment and emigration, the number and purchasing power of their customers must diminish. For workers, it means more unemployment with a consequent downward pressure of conditions to a level where human dignity cannot be sustained. Maintaining this system in Ireland is, in effect, placing our economic security in pawn with the monetary control of, and subordinating our monetary policy to the Bank of England. A break with the economic and financial concept of such control is essential to the establishment of a sound national economy. There is little point in the vast majority of our people accepting and applauding the principles of social justice enunciated in Papal Encyclicals whilst Ireland maintains, as a farcical tragedy, a system with which these principles can scarcely be reconciled.

## THE POWER AND FUNCTIONS OF COMMERCIAL BANKS

The entire question of the powers exercised by Commercial banking concerns and the functions performed by them is one that calls for much closer examination than that which can be given here. However, in face of the known facts, it will scarcely be disputed that Commercial Banks in Ireland exercise the powers and perform the functions of expanding and contracting credit. Furthermore, they follow a practice of investing reserves of capital in British Government and other foreign securities at rates of interest on a level much below the rate normally charged on advances for capital, commercial and private development in Ireland. Through their exercise of control over the volume of money, the Banks can determine the extent to which exchanges can be made. Through restriction of the volume of money, they can curtail economic activity, whilst, if it serves their own interests, they can stimulate such activity by the simple expedient of making money more plentiful. While such powers of control remain vested in private concerns (and exercised, as admittedly they are, in the interests of their shareholders), a national economy suited to the nation's requirements and controlled and directed in the interests of all its citizens will be almost impossible to achieve.

Money increasing in volume at a higher rate than production of goods causes prices to advance. Conversely, if the volume of money is contracted to a level below the rate at which the goods are produced, prices tend to fall. Therefore, those who control the volume of money control the price level at which goods, both agricultural and industrial, are marketed. To secure and maintain the level of prices most suitable to a sound national economy, full freedom to control the monetary affairs of the nation must be restored to a national government, to be exercised by it in the interests of the people as a whole. While Irish currency remains attached to that of a foreigner and while control over the volume of money remains vested in commercial banking concerns, Ireland will remain as she is to-day, forced to maintain a standard of value of international character, and control of the volume of her money, control of prices and the essential power to safeguard the prospects of her people will remain vested in the foreigner and the measure of her economic independence will be determined by him.

As a means of providing an opportunity for achievement of a national economy and re-organisation of the present monetary system, Sinn Fein proposes:—

- (a) Adoption of a monetary system the essential aim of which shall be equation of the volume of money, not to external and foreign interests but to the economic needs of the nation as a whole. Such an equation of the volume of money (currency and credit) to the national needs, rather than to external foreign exchange (and to sectional financial interests, such as those of Commercial Bankers) will constitute the difference between a National monetary system and the present international system based upon the Sterling link.
- (b) A complete break of the link with Sterling. The security that a National Government can provide and the productive capacity of the nation would secure the backing for Irish currency in substitution for that now provided by Sterling. Within the existing situation, the fact is concealed that any change in external conditions affecting the export trade reflects itself at once in the volume of money available for internal commerce. In other words, the people of Ireland are dependent on Britain to a great extent to provide or withhold at will, the supply of money necessary to enable Irish-manufactured goods and services to be exchanged within

- the nation. (Changing the political personnel in charge of the present financial and economic system inherited from Britain and designed to subordinate Ireland's interests to those of an outsider will not produce any better results for the Irish Nation.)
- (c) The re-organisation of the monetary system to embrace a vesting in the National Government of full control over, and direction of the issue of credit in the interests of the national economy. The main aim in the control of credit to be provision of the minimum necessary to ensure a steady volume of full employment, the direction to be towards basic national development, i.e., production of raw materials. A proper development of basic industries will provide an economic base for secondary industries, will tend towards making the latter independent of outside sources for the supply of raw materials and, through both, supplying a steady volume of employment, there will ensue a maximum internal market for the products of manufacturers and farmers alike.
- (d) Revision of the present system of Commercial Banking in Ireland with a view to (1) restricting or eliminating the powers of the Commercial Banks to expand and contract credit; (2) reducing the number of Commercial Banks operating in Ireland, particularly those having their headquarters outside the country; (3) curtailment of investments by the Commercial Banks in Britain and other foreign enterprises, thus diverting savings of the Irish people from what should be their proper function—native capital development.
- (e) Repatriation of accumulated sterling assets and the application of a general policy aimed at ensuring that the savings of the Irish people and profits accruing from their labours will not go to Britain or elsewhere, to bolster up and sustain the economics of foreign countries, whilst capital development in Ireland suffers from under-investment. In this regard, particular attention shall be given to Insurance and Assurance Corporations and all other concerns, particularly those having their headquarters outside Ireland who follow the practice of investing in foreign enterprises.
- (f) Strict curtailment (or, if necessary, abolition) of foreign investments in Ireland. Through the practice of allowing foreign speculators to invest capital in Irish undertakings, profits accruing from the labour and enterprise of Irish workers pass into the hands of foreigners, whilst, at the same time, outside speculators with money to invest are free to purchase land and house property in Ireland and to spend or invest the profits accruing in Britain or elsewhere.
- (g) The setting up of a committee comprised of financial experts whose function it shall be to examine the entire field of national currency and credit, and in close conformity with the foregoing proposals to formulate a monetary system based upon sound Christian and National principles suited to the economic needs of the Nation.

## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

In the measure that industrial development has been undertaken in Ireland within the past thirty years, its main direction has been towards achievement of self-sufficiency within the separate statelets into which the country has been forcibly partitioned, and towards maintenance of two distinct and separate economies. No attempt has been made to guide industrial development along lines adaptable or suitable to an over-all national economy. Obviously, the main object has been to direct industrial development on the basis of Partition remaining for all time. This has led to the establishment of industries in one of the statelets in certain categories.

whilst in the other states the capacity of established industries in the same categories was already more than enough to meet the requirements of a national economy, thereby leaving other and essential branches of industry neglected. Within a national organisation of industry, it might be found necessary for reasons such as consumer demand, transport, decentralisation and competition, to have industrial goods of a similar kind produced at two or more centres. Considerations of this kind, however, do not determine the present line of Industrial Development in Ireland. In point of fact, the present line of Industrial Development has led to the establishment of industries, whose shareholders, directors and employees have acquired a vested interest in the maintenance of partition. In addition, foreigners have been permitted to invest capital in many of the new industrial undertakings and to acquire a major influence in their control and management.

In the field of industrial development, the broad aim of Sinn Féin is to so organise industry:—

- (a) That it shall fulfil its proper role in the provision of a balanced national economy, i.e., it shall to the utmost extent possible provide for the internal requirements of the nation and at the same time produce a surplus for export that, coupled with an agricultural surplus, will be sufficient to meet the costs of necessary imported goods that cannot be produced at home;
- (b) that priority shall be given to those industries using native raw materials and for the products of which there is a home market;
- (c) that in so far as it is prudent and feasible, having regard to transport and other facilities, industry shall be decentralised to the maximum extent;
- (d) that cognisance be taken of the potential capacity of established industries to supply the full needs of a national economy before new industries are established in the same categories;
- (e) that until national capital and credit have been exhausted, foreigners shall not be allowed to invest in Irish industrial concerns, or otherwise (either directly or through evasion of whatever controls may be set up) share in their control, profits or management;
- (f) that private enterprise in the field of industrial development shall be promoted and encouraged. Promotion of government controlled industries to be confined to provision of those essential industries for which private enterprise fails to provide the capital, and to those which of their nature and extent call for State organisation and control;
- (g) that protection of native industries against foreign dumping of goods shall be provided in the measure necessary to ensure the home market for their products on the strict understanding that such protection shall not be abused, either through inefficient management, through price exploitation of consumers, or in any other manner;
- (h) that where industry is capable of providing employment for a given number of workers, the use of labour-saving devices or improved machinery must not be allowed to cause redundancy of workers within that particular industry, always providing that the industry is returning a fair profit. In order to offset unavoidable unemployment resulting from the use of labor-saving devices, provision shall be made at government level to maintain a full volume of employment. Measures taken to achieve this involve that the Government will make the necessary monetary provision to give constant employment at Trades Union and basic wages to

- such workers as cannot be absorbed by private enterprise. Otherwise, every improvement by mechanisation, intended, as it should be, to benefit the entire community, will actually impoverish it through resultant redundancy of workers, causing a reduction in the aggregate purchasing power of potential buyers;
- (i) that, as far as possible, development of industries susceptible to the fluctuations of international trade shall be avoided. That development of industry shall be planned, not along lines of temporary expediency that at best can only relieve unemployment for short periods, but along lines directed towards establishment of industrial stability and full employment. That capital investment shall be expanded to absorb available manpower, and that development of an export trade in manufactured and partially-manufactured goods shall be the aim;
- (j) that provision shall be made to remedy the ills that flow from the existing relationships between employers and employees, not alone in the industrial sphere, but in all other spheres as well. These interests are not, and should not, be made antagonistic to one another. All have a mutual interest in achievement and maintenance of stable economic conditions and the prosperity for all that will flow from them. All have their rights and their duties. Employers, the right to an honest return of work for the wages and salaries paid, the duty to see that employees are not exploited for the purpose of amassing profits. Employees the right to remuneration adequate to maintenance of a standard of living commensurate with the prevailing prosperity of the Nation, the duty to give of their best in order to secure maximum production. A valuable incentive towards elimination of the present unsatisfactory relationship between employers and employees would be to organise industry on vocational lines so as to allow for workers sharing in the ownership, management and profits of their particular industry.

## AGRICULTURE

In the provision of a balanced national economy, agriculture has an important role to perform. The practice of making agriculture the main source of production with a view to supplying the demands of the British market virtually rules out any hope of a nationally-balanced economy, whilst it leaves Irish agriculturists with little, if any alternative to accepting whatever prices Britain chooses to offer for the products of their labour. In the ultimate, the prosperity of the farming community will depend upon and be governed by the ability of the community as a whole to purchase the maximum amount of agricultural produce at guaranteed prices. The maximum internal market can only be assured to farmers when wages are at a level sufficient to ensure the adequate amount of family goods and food necessary to a decent standard of living. A drastic curtailment of imports in many categories can be instituted. The objective should be that of producing at home all the food required by human beings and live stock. To continue importing food into an agricultural country with four acres of arable land available for each person, is national suicide. Development of native raw materials will provide substitutes for many of those now imported. Importation of wheat and maize can be reduced, and ultimately eliminated through increased agricultural production. Progressive development of agriculture should have the object of curtailing the import of foodstuffs. Farming being, as it is, an exceedingly intricate industry, calls for a high standard of knowledge of such things as soil cultivation, crop production, stock raising and management. More and better education

in these matters is needed if the farming industry in Ireland is to be run efficiently and placed on sound business lines. To raise the standard of education, something more is needed than present courses provided at agricultural colleges.

Another matter calling for serious consideration is the present trend towards mechanised farming in Ireland. Granted that its employment makes life easier for the agriculturist and to some extent that it is necessitated through shortage of labour, the ultimate results of a change over to mechanised farming can have deleterious results on the nation's economy. Already (1952), experts at Geneva place Ireland in the seventh place among European countries, in her possession of tractors. According to these experts Ireland has one tractor to every 88 hectares of land, Denmark having one to every 128 hectares (a hectare approximates to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  statute acres). To say the least, it is an anomalous situation to have farmers hampered through lack of labour assistance whilst the registered number of unemployed in receipt of the "dole" presently exceeds the 110,000 mark for the 32 Counties. Aspects of mechanised farming that must be considered in its relation to the national economy are (a) its displacement of agricultural employment; (b) the enormous sum of money expended, most of it going to foreign concerns to purchase tractors, farm implements, renewals and replacements for both, and for fuel and lubricating oils; and (c) that if generally and exclusively adopted, it will place the Irish agricultural industry at the complete mercy of foreign sources of fuel supplies, both as regards quantity and price.

It is the purpose of Sinn Fein to so organise agriculture:—

- (a) That the land of Ireland now suited to agricultural production shall be utilised to its maximum capacity;
- (b) that land now unsuitable for tillage, through lack of drainage or other causes, shall be reclaimed and rehabilitated to the extent necessary for production of crops;
- (c) that the agricultural community will be encouraged to make the utmost use of their holdings through guaranteed stability of home prices for their products at a level giving a reasonable profit to farmers, and through the provision of the amenities required to raise the standard of rural life;
- (d) that provision shall be made for a scheme of agricultural education to include advisory services and agricultural research, designed to raise the productive capacity of the soil. The scheme to embrace
  - (1) extension of the facilities at present provided by County Vocational Education Committees;
  - (2) a curriculum to include general subjects, in addition to agriculture, allied sciences and woodwork for boys, and domestic economy and household management for girls;
  - (3) attendance by post-primary pupils, between the ages of 14 and 16 years who have elected for an agricultural life, at such centres as may be provided by the Vocational Education Committees;
  - (4) provision of facilities to extend the post-primary education to those over 16 years through evening classes during winter months in convenient premises suitably heated and lighted;
  - (5) facilities for a further extension by provision of short courses of from one to six months' duration;
  - (6) agricultural colleges to cater for courses in excess of six months;
- (e) that through the advisory services, farmers will be advised as to the crops most suitable to the soil of their holdings, of the crop rotation calculated to give the best results, and of the elements in which their land is deficient. The general aim being to zone

the land on the basis of its being capable to produce the best results from the purposes to which it is devoted.

- (f) that the general organisation of agriculture shall be so designed as to meet in full the home needs of an increased standard of living among our people and, in addition, to provide a surplus for export, which, combined with the industrial surplus for export, will be sufficient to meet the cost of essential imports;
- (g) that, when necessary, credit facilities shall be made available to enable farmers to purchase fertilisers and otherwise improve their holdings—such facilities to embrace provision for the purchase of modern farm implements by groups of small farmers working together on a co-operative basis;
- (h) that within the general framework of agricultural organisation occupiers of land utilising it in accordance with the requirements of the Nation, shall enjoy full freedom in the management and occupation of their holdings. Governmental control or direction shall be kept at the minimum necessary to secure an over-all balance of production from the land and ensuring that the requisite surplus is made available for export. The aim shall be to settle on the land of Ireland as many Irish people as the agricultural requirements of the Nation calls for and economic good sense justifies. Only under strict supervision and within the limits that the national economy may require, shall foreigners—either with or without legally-acquired citizenship—be permitted to purchase or acquire agricultural or other property in Ireland;
- (i) that land not suitable or adaptable to agricultural production shall be utilised for Afforestation to the fullest possible extent (1) through a progressive national scheme organised by and under control of the National Government; (2) through promotion of a voluntary scheme of tree planting operated by the occupiers of the land;
- (j) that in order to secure a balanced economy, a National Economic Council be established, whose main function it shall be to (a) survey and explore the potentialities of the agricultural, industrial and other resources of the Nation; (b) design a national economic system based upon planned development along progressive lines; (c) determine the best manner of utilising the resources of the nation's industrial plant, land, minerals, waters, labour power, etc.—in the interests of the citizens as a whole; (d) devise a method for the co-operative distribution and sale of agricultural, industrial and other products with the object of realising fair prices for producers, lower prices for home consumers, and enabling products destined for export to compete on foreign markets.

## EDUCATION

Education means "to draw out." It should be designed to work on what is good in a person, and to utilize these qualities for building the best possible spiritual and intellectual edifices. To use school time to "cram" in an allotted amount of knowledge seems a denial of the literal meaning of education. Cramming the intellect can produce similar effects to cramming the body with food. At the least, it may produce an aversion from later study. It is not a system that is likely to produce a fine character.

Education, in the home and school, should be designed and planned to help the child to realise the purpose of life. He has rights, he must be taught that others have rights, and that where there are rights there is an obligation to respect these rights. The child must be led to see the dignity of man clad in love and surrounded by rights. A series of "don'ts"

will not inspire him. It is much more appealing to show him the positive good that arises from the observance of good laws.

Supreme amongst all laws must be the ten enactments of God. These give soundness and security to nations. Three great loves emanate from God's law — the love of God, his parents, and his country. These three create and foster him; to these he owes a great return of service. The Commandments teach him respect for legitimate authority; respect for the body, life and property of his neighbour. This ideal, when followed, gives security to a nation. Because these ideals are pervaded by a Divine faith and love, they sink deep; because they are supported by Divine sanction, they are likely to be obeyed. If well taught in schools, they give stature of nobility. The teacher then becomes a prophet to children and a custodian of the nation's welfare.

The teacher must be one who understands the necessity for the moral development of the child; otherwise, the school hours will be lost as an adjunct in preparing good citizens. With such high vocation on the teacher's brow and high destiny in his hands, the State must be careful that its teachers are endowed with sound mental and moral qualifications. Teaching children is a vocation; and the State must not look on teachers as civil servants. The teacher's work is on a plane that approximates to the "Sanctuary," and if children are to respect education and educators, the teachers must be surrounded by reverence.

Many children grow up to adult stage discontented because they have had a way of life thrust upon them for which they have no aptitude. It is bad to force children of small ability or minimum brain-power into professions or a way of life that demands continued or considerable study. Youth may become despondent or defeated; with dire results to character and happiness. The Department of Education should not become an arbiter of the children's fate. It should not seek to standardise or regiment or produce labelled children. The education authorities must seek to draw out what is good in children; not force them to accept standards that are of little utility to many; or for which many have not the capacity. Any class in a school will have many diverse stations in later life—educators must realise that a stereotyped system for all the children will not produce the best results in adult life.

A result of the examination system and standardisation may be that the children will be divided in their own minds into two categories—the "successfuls" and the "failures." Their young minds do not grasp the idea that "failures" in this set standard may make a greater success in life than those school children with keen brain or retentive memories; that many children have a good brain power that is slow to develop; that later it will outstrip the more precocious. Successful school children may not have an understanding of the unsuccessful ones; the standard they achieve in school may go with them through life, creating contempt or arrogance in the minds of the successful. If the examination failure of fourteen or eighteen years becomes the successful businessman of thirty years, the more brilliant of his class are inclined to quote childhood mental failure against him. That is not good for the individual or the nation. Worse still is the sense of inferiority that develops in so many. The backward child develops the feeling that he or she must always be second rate; consequently, initiative is stifled in many; hesitancy becomes characteristic; shyness of defending even a principle before other people will deprive such of self-expression.

Ireland is primarily an agricultural country; and some bias must be given towards a system of education that will provide sound scientific knowledge for the farming community. Agricultural scientific knowledge

emanating from a government department will not be readily accepted by a farming community that has not been trained to understand it or profit by it. Farming must not be treated as ploughing of land, planting of crops, breeding and grazing of animals. The Irish of a thousand years ago understood all this as fully as to-day. Are we to take it that there has been scientific progress in every walk of life for the welfare of man, but no progress in that which is the very lifestream of our nation. Agricultural science must never be pushed into the background. It is to be the daily occupation of many in the rural classrooms; it should be their daily study. It will make the land take on a new meaning. The beauty and cultivation of flowers, the financial benefit of fruit trees, the vital necessity of afforestation for preservation of soil and grasslands, if well taught, will curb the destructive tendencies of many, and make many fulfil the patriotic duty of creating new beauty, security and wealth for the country.

Domestic economy is a subject still in embryo stage. Our education system must not teach girls primarily to be secretary-stenographers, or civil servants. The health of the nation and the happiness of the home can be improved considerably if the school devotes special attention to cookery, household management, elementary hygiene and first aid.

The morning classes, when the brain is clear and keen, should be devoted to the Irish language, which gives access to our ancient culture, and will give national dignity to the present and future generations; to the English language as a means of communication and unifying link with brother Gaels throughout the world. A nation should aim at being bi-lingual, for a second language helps to precision of thought, and broadens and enriches the mind. **OUR AIM IS NOT TO REMOVE ENGLISH AS A LANGUAGE FROM THE NATION, BUT TO PUT IT IN ITS PROPER PLACE, i.e., AS SECONDARY TO OUR NATIONAL LANGUAGE.** Once we clarify our minds on this point, we shall strive to have Irish and English well taught. The child must not come from our schools slovenly in speech in either language. It must learn to know and love the Irish language, and to know and admire the English language.

History is a good educator, and some lectures on the philosophy of history would help to save the growing generation from the pernicious errors of past generations.

Two languages, the history of the Nation and elementary arithmetic should be sufficient for four-fifths of the schoolday or week, leaving the remaining fifth for agricultural science and domestic economy.

A level national examination system involves colleges in a death or victory struggle for honours. Practically all the pupils come from the colleges fitted with the same knowledge and directed to the one end — the medical, legal or clerical world.

The Government, in conjunction with the colleges, should devise a system by which individual genius could be given scope. A few colleges where boys are taught skilled farming and girls are given skilled instruction on the domestic side of life have been established with great success. These must be multiplied throughout the nation; and the Government must not be content with a few county council scholarships given to them, but must subsidise them or give scholarships in proportion to the number of rural schools or pupils. This will give continuation study to rural children; and send skilled people back to the land.

Scholarships for children of fourteen years of age are far more important and urgent than the travelling scholarships given to those of more mature years. They cover a great field; they provide for far more than normally send their older children to the nation, and they allow parents who all the children equal opportunities, to work on behalf of the younger to give link forged between the primary schools and the university. The growing

boy or girl of proven ability can be financially assisted through the university; or, as in other countries, avail of the extension night classes.

It is the desire of Sinn Fein:—

1. (a) That children be prepared for a way of life in which they will find most happiness for themselves and be of the greatest benefit to the community;
- (b) that set minimum standards be provided in a few subjects suitable to the child's ability and the common good;
- (c) that inspectors be instructed to seek general cultural development and to give sympathetic consideration to teachers who display initiative in developing a love amongst the children for agricultural or domestic science, the arts or crafts, the history and language and games of our country, and cultural developments in the district;
- (d) that the teachers be encouraged to develop as far as possible the natural ability of each child; that constant vigilance be exercised in the training of teachers to fit them for the above tasks.
2. (a) That children be given clear ideas on patriotism and that they be made to realise that this country is theirs to mould and to love;
- (b) that they be taught to avoid all that would besmirch its fair name, and to be aflame with the desire to promote its spiritual and economic welfare;
- (c) that they be taught self-reliance, and that the desire be fostered to develop their latent abilities in arts, crafts, music, painting, horticultural, or agricultural, or domestic science;
- (d) that RURAL schools have rural science as an obligatory subject on the curriculum;
- (e) that the children in rural schools be taught to look on agriculture as a noble profession, demanding high skill;
- (f) that the evils of soil erosion, the methods of promoting soil fertility, grass conservation, and the national and local benefits of afforestation be emphasised;
- (g) that domestic economy be obligatory in all schools for girls;
- (h) that film units be sent through the country to give the children a knowledge of the work in the above subjects in other countries;
- (j) That numerous small scholarships be established by the State to help children who have shown special aptitude in any subject beneficial to the nation to enter a continuation school.
3. (a) That existing colleges be encouraged to specialise rather than to compete; that the present standardised system tending solely to the professions be set aside, and each college taken on a distinctive sphere;
- (b) that colleges placing special emphasis on the arts, crafts, or sciences outlined above, will be assisted by State continuation scholarships.

### **SOCIAL WELFARE**

The first thing that springs to mind in regard to the supply of Social Welfare Services is that their cost must be met out of revenue collected through taxation in one form or another from the tax-paying public. Generally speaking, the tax-paying public embraces all members of the population, because all are caught within the network of taxation either in its direct or indirect form, or in both. Granted that the burden is generally lightened by a "spread-out" of taxation, it remains, nevertheless, a fact that those who benefit from the provisions of social welfare services

contribute some share of their cost. Unemployment and the maintenance of remuneration for work at a level below that required by wage-earners to support themselves and their dependents are two of the main factors contributing to the need for provision of social services at a high over-all cost to the community. The need for the "dole," home assistance, free milk schemes, children's allowances, health services administered through dispensaries, etc., is mostly due to unemployment and low wages. It goes without saying that adequate provision must always be made for the mentally defective, the physically deformed, the aged; in a word, for all who through the visitation of God, in one form or another, are unable to provide for themselves. Having made adequate provision for such, surely a sane approach to providing a solution for the problem of social welfare would be to make those capable of providing for themselves and their dependents independent of any need for State assistance, through full employment at the necessary standard of remuneration for work accomplished. Periods of temporary unemployment, either through illness or slackness of work will always have to be provided for. The former can be covered through a contributory scheme designed to meet claims for sickness benefits. The latter can be met, in part or in whole, through capital development schemes of reproductive character.

In the sphere of Social Welfare, the aim of Sinn Fein is:—

- (a) To correct the National outlook that has grown up among the people, of which it may be said that its chief characteristic is to rob them of a spirit of independence and self-reliance and prompt them to seek State and other aids for many things which their own industry and enterprise could provide.
- (b) To make adequate provision from State funds for the care of the mentally defective, the physically deformed, the aged, widows and orphans, and for others incapacitated and unable to support themselves.
- (c) To reduce to a minimum the need to provide unemployment benefits by directing development of the national economy towards achievement of full employment at a family wage for all. Periods of unemployment may be unavoidable, but every effort shall be made to ensure that these will be as short as possible in duration and as limited as possible in extent. To meet whatever requirements that may arise through unavoidable unemployment, provision will be made for adequate cash payments to those out of work, from a fund to be established on the basis of a contributory scheme or from State finances or from a combination of both.
- (d) To provide a comprehensive scheme of National Health Insurance on a contributory basis — contributions to be graded in accordance with the scale of family income. The scheme to be administered through a Health Council acting under the direction of a Health Ministry, and to embrace, on an agreed basis, all Health Services (such as Dental, Ophthalmic and Optical, Specialist and Consultative, Midwifery, Pharmaceutical, etc.), including all hospitals — public, voluntary and private. Through the scheme, provision will be made for payment of unemployment (through sickness) benefit, for marriage, maternity, disablement and mortality benefits, on scales commensurate with maintaining the solvency of the scheme. In addition, provision could be made to meet the cost, in part or in whole, of specialised medical advice and care in cases where the family income is not equal to bearing the extra cost of specialised services. The aim shall be to draft a good scheme suitable to the national economy, based on an expert actuarial estimate of the

costs involved and financed by contributions from the State, employers and employees.

- (e) In the provision of Social Welfare Services, to be guided by the paramount interest of the Nation in preserving the Family Ideal, the sanctity of the home, and as a general guiding principle, that only those incapacitated and unable to provide for themselves and their dependents shall require assistance from the State.

## TRANSPORT

The most striking feature of Public Transport in Ireland is the failure to provide a properly organised and co-ordinated service suited to the Nation's requirements and to supply transport facilities, both passenger and freight at a reasonable cost. Freight charges, and to some extent those of passenger as well, are always an influencing and in many cases a main factor in determining the cost of consumer goods. For this reason alone, if no other existed, it is essential to the economic welfare of the Nation that transport charges be maintained at the lowest possible level. Apart from the revenue accruing from fares paid by passengers and from freight charges paid by industrialists, traders and others, maintenance of public transport services has come to be a public charge on both taxpayers and ratepayers alike. For lack of sufficient traffic, the railway systems are being operated at a dead loss, whilst road services are operated by the railway concerns parallel to and in competition with their rail services. To make good the financial loss sustained by the railway concerns, arising mainly from diversion of traffic from the railways to the roads, the taxpayers are mulcted for a substantial annual subsidy and at the same time the ratepayers have to bear the main burden of the increasing costs of maintaining trunk and main roads in a condition suitable to the passage of heavy lorry and bus traffic. For example, in one of the Midland Counties, the road estimate for 1952-3 called for a rate of 17/6d. in the £, notwithstanding a grant from the road fund of over £100,000. In an adjacent county, the road estimate for the same year calls for an expenditure of over one-third of the total rate. In other words, the paradoxical situation has been reached in which ratepayers are compelled to contribute rates which, in effect, help to bankrupt the railways, and the taxpayers are compelled to subsidise the concerns which the ratepayers have "assisted" into a state of insolvency. High costs of transport by rail and the insufficient service provided have led to increased use of private haulage by individuals and organised concerns. This, in turn, has added to the diminishing volume of trade carried over the railway systems and has contributed to the increasing costs of road maintenance.

Another aspect of the diversion of traffic from the railways must also be considered, i.e., the country's dependence on foreign sources for essential supplies of oil fuel to maintain road transport. Whatever chance may exist of maintaining rail and canal services on native fuel, road transport can be brought to a complete standstill through lack of oil fuel.

Sinn Fein proposes the setting up of a public Transport Authority whose functions it shall be:—(a) To co-ordinate the operation of railways, canals, air services and waterways, and all forms of public transport. (b) To organise and co-ordinate rail services so as to provide an efficient system for transport of passengers and goods over the railway network at the minimum charges commensurate with providing family wages for railway employees and defraying other overhead costs. (c) To develop transport by canals and waterways to the maximum extent. (d) To reduce road transport to the minimum required to provide transport over routes not served by the railways and as a means of feeding the rail and waterway services. (e) To devise a system of road maintenance, whereby

- (i) upkeep of trunk and main roads shall cease to be charge on the rates;
- (ii) a fund shall be established to meet the costs of maintaining trunk and main roads through a fuel tax and contributions from Central Government Funds—the fuel tax to be at a rate calculated to provide not less than two-thirds of the total costs, and to substitute for the dual system of the fuel tax and road licences operating at present. (f) To aim at the maximum use of native fuel and electricity as the source of motive power for the rail and waterway services.

## FISHERIES

Amongst the maritime countries, Ireland rates very low in the consumption of fish. To a greater extent, this is due to the absence of a distributive system organised on lines that would ensure availability of ample supplies of fish in a fresh condition throughout the entire country. It is said of the Irish people that they are not great eaters of fish. This is quite true. Most of them never had the opportunity to cultivate a taste for fish, and few of them have any idea of the nutriment value of fish diets. Fishing in Ireland, both as an industry and a source of valuable and essential food supply, has never been organised in a manner to provide anything approaching, even minutely, its potential value as a national asset. Lack of proper equipment for deep-sea, inshore, and inland fishing; absence of the requisite facilities for curing, and the want of a quick, frequent and regular system of distribution, have all contributed to depriving the country of an industry of great potential value to the nation's economy. Another matter that calls for redress is the established practice of vesting fishing rights in private individuals and concerns so that pleasure and/or profit may accrue to those having little, if any, right to own or to determine who shall fish the lakes and waterways of the nation. The absence of properly equipped stations in sufficient numbers for the curing of fish for export and for the processing of fish meal, fish oil, and fertilisers, retards development of the industry, whilst a potential foreign market for shell and tinned fish is virtually neglected.

The proposals that Sinn Féin make in regard to fisheries are:—

- (a) That all fishing rights in inland lakes and waterways and within the territorial waters of the nation be vested in the National Government acting as trustees for the Irish people.
- (b) That all necessary measures be taken to prevent poaching and that fishing for pleasure be restricted to those in possession of fishing licences— the fee for such licences to be scaled so as to differentiate between occupiers whose land touches on inland fishing grounds and who wish to fish only within the stretch of waterway bounding their own properties, and others, such as tourists, etc., who adopt fishing as a pastime.
- (c) The control of all fisheries be under the charge of a central authority, whose functions shall include: (i) the provision of suitable and sufficient equipment for deep-sea, inshore and inland fishermen engaged in the industry on a whole-time or part-time basis; (ii) the provision of an efficient system for the distribution and marketing of fish, both for home consumption and for export; (iii) the provision of an instructional scheme to enlighten the people on the value of fish as a food, and to otherwise expand the home market; (iv) the provision of curing and canning stations to deal with fish destined for both home and export markets and provision of machinery to handle the by-products of such stations; (v) the fixing of fees and the issuing of fishing licences; (vi) the expansion, in

the measure necessary, of existing precautions to prevent poaching within the nation's territorial waters and inland lakes and water-ways.

- (d) That the territorial waters of the nation be extended to conform with a decision of the International Court of Justice at The Hague, viz., "that the territorial waters extend for three miles from a base line running from headland to headland, or from headland to outlying islands and not from the low water-mark of the nearest land."

## HOUSING

For a considerable number of Irish families, in both town and country, there is a grave need for better housing accommodation. A fairly substantial portion of our dwindling population lives in slum, or near slum conditions. In some instances, due to high rent and rates and lack of constant or perhaps any, employment, many of the new housing schemes provided are rapidly deteriorating into a condition not far removed from the state of those slum dwellings in which some of the tenants were previously housed.

Provision of ample housing accommodation to satisfy the needs of all in town and country at rentals commensurate with the income of tenants can only be accomplished when housing is taken as an integral part of a National re-organisation. Such a re-organisation calls for an economic basis of full employment and adequate family wages. There is little point in providing houses for families, no matter how dire the need may be, if the family income is unequal to meeting the economic rents which are forced to a high level because money wherewith to build is advanced at a high rate of interest and because exorbitant prices are charged for the sites on which the houses are erected. The expedient of subsidising house rents by compelling ratepayers to contribute the subsidy is, indeed, a poor substitute for provision of adequate family wages, and in the final analysis cannot be accepted as either a wise or an effective approach towards a solution of the National housing problem.

Generally speaking, it may be said of the methods employed to finance house building, that they would appear to be directed more towards providing the Commercial Banks and the class having money for investment with a profitable source of income rather than with a view to meeting the housing needs of the people. It is estimated that the toll of interest necessitated by the employment of such methods doubles the cost of building houses, and that, consequently, the economic rents are approximately double what they should be. Local rates, and Government subsidies raised by taxation, are used to help defray interest and repayment of loan charges because the income of many tenants is not sufficient to pay the economic rents that must be charged to meet these liabilities. Those not favourably enough circumstanced to pay the economic rents are, nevertheless, through rates and indirect taxation, compelled to contribute a share of the subsidies in virtue of which their rents are reduced below the economic rent level.

Sites for the erection of houses are mostly purchased at prices out of all proportion to their land value and, in addition, in many instances are bought subject to payment of an annual ground rent payable to the landowner from whom the sites were purchased. In public Housing Schemes, the purchase price of sites, plus interest thereon, adds considerably to the economic rents that must be paid in full or in part by the tenants.

Owners who sell lands for housing sites are entitled to a fair price for the land sold. The price, however, should be determined by the agricultural value of the land. It should not be given an artificial value.

It is the industry and enterprise of the community which in city and

town areas create the need for expansion. The more industrious and enterprising the community, the greater this need. But the financial exploitation of this need by the imposition of exorbitant land values for sites reacts against the social and economic interests of the community, becoming a fine on industry, a hindrance to the enterprise which it is the purpose of the State to promote and encourage.

Ground rents in general, as well as rents payable to middle landlords, are a burden on those compelled to pay them. Generally speaking, they have the effect of forcing up the cost of living for sections of the community, and ultimately within the scope of a national economic re-organisation, the question of terminating them on an equitable basis must be faced.

Sinn Fein proposes the setting up of a National Housing Trust, whose main functions shall be:—

- (a) To make a National survey of the housing needs of the community and to provide an ample sufficiency of new houses whereby it will no longer be necessary for people to live in dwellings unfit for human habitation or to pay rack rents to landlords of tenements of slum dwellings, or of any other type of dwelling.
- (b) From credit authorised by the National Government and issued to it, the National Housing Trust shall make credits available, as and when required, to Corporations, public authorities and individuals for the erection of houses and for site development. Credits, so advanced to be free of interest and to be repaid to the National Housing Trust (1) out of rentals; (2) from the sale of houses to those in a position and prepared to purchase outright; and (3) in the case of public site development by local authorities from rates levied on the areas benefitting from the development. All moneys thus accruing to the N.H.T. to be placed to the credit of the National Government in a National (or Central) Bank.
- (c) To fix a purchase price for all housing sites in accord with and closely related to the agricultural value of the land to be acquired.
- (d) To devise and initiate a scheme of terminable rents for all houses whereby (1) on the expiration of a fixed purchase period, tenants shall become owners of the houses they occupy; (2) provision shall be made for a tenant to dispose of his interest in a rented house while the purchase price is still running (the value of his interest to be the sum of the rent paid during his occupation); (3) during the purchase period and after its expiration, the tenant of a house shall be under strict obligation to maintain the condition of the house in consonance with the prevailing health regulations; (4) the rental system shall make provision (either through spreading arrears over a period, or by an extension of the purchase period) for arrears of rent accruing when as a result of sickness or unemployment the family income falls below a fixed minimum;
- (e) To examine the entire question of ground rents and those payable to middle landlords with a view to finding an equitable basis and implementing a policy for their termination.
- (f) To ensure that improvements to house property shall not increase valuations unless such improvements increase the income of the owners. When increase of valuation follows improvement the increase to be based upon the improvements made and not on the property as a whole.

## FORESTRY

Of all the national resources which a Divine Providence provides to be developed for the use and maintenance of the Irish people it may be

affirmed that there is no single one of similar potential value to the Nation so neglected and under-developed as afforestation.

The deliberate destruction of Irish forests was for a long period pursued by Britain as part of a set policy aimed at depriving the Irish nation of its economic independence. The rulers of Britain were well aware of the injury thus inflicted upon the economy of Ireland. It is doubtful if the Irish people yet realise fully the extent of the ensuing damage to the prosperity of the nation, and, to-day, it would appear as though the majority of them lack an understanding of forest values, or the extent of land virtually wasted in Ireland.

It is estimated that there are approximately 3,700,000 acres of bog and mountain land in the Twenty-Six Counties alone. In the opinion of those who have made a close study of forestry, 3,000,000 acres of this land, at present put to little, if any, economic use, would be richly productive if under forest. (In the Six Counties, there was, in 1947, only 1.2 per cent. of the total area under forest, i.e., 39,340 acres from a total of 3,353,251 acres.) Of the 3,000,000 acres in the Twenty-Six Counties, roughly 2,000,000 acres of mountain sides are productive of nothing more beneficial than pasture for sheep. The remainder requires drainage and reclamation together with turf fuel development, prior to afforestation or the creation of new arable land. Experts estimate that 2,000,000 acres of sheep run will give employment to 3,000 persons, while the same acreage under forest would give direct and indirect employment to 150,000 persons.

In 1922, 48,000 acres of land, too poor because of its sandy nature to produce anything but trees, was taken over in Norfolk by the British Forestry Commission. In 1952, there were 50,000,000 trees in this state-owned forest. Apart from interest on capital, the forest is now paying its way. Receipts are about £230,000 annually; a new village has been built to house the forestry workers and their families. Work in the forest gives employment to almost 500, of whom 400 are men. Hence it is what was once a large area of useless land is now making a valuable contribution to the national income.

Whilst it may be true that mahogany, teak and others of the higher grade quality woods cannot be grown in this country, it, nevertheless, remains a fact that timber suitable for the manufacture of furniture, house-building and many other essential purposes can be produced at home. At pre-war prices, an acre of spruce forest—forty years old—yielded about £200 for third-class timber, whilst the same area of first class timber was worth £1,200. In a fifty years' rotation, these figures would represent an annual return of between £20 and £30 per acre.

In his book, "The Rape of Ireland," John Mackay quotes the late Lord Lovat, one of the most extensive sheep graziers in Scotland, as putting the inclusive average value per acre per annum of mountain sheep grazing including wool and lambs, at 3/5, and goes on to state that "outside the Twenty-Six Counties, this average value has never been questioned."

Soft woods used in the manufacture of wood pulp are in great demand, due to the extent of modern industries using wood pulp as a basic material for their products, and the tendency is towards further expansion of these wood pulp industries. Taking an acre of soft wood that is suitable to the climate and soil of Ireland, the product is calculated to be 35-40 tons of wood pulp. Basing the price of wood pulp at, say £25 per ton (current prices are far in excess of this sum), the return from an acre of matured wood would be around £900 to £1,000.

A national scheme of afforestation (taken in conjunction with extended turf production, a national housing scheme and expansion of industries using native raw materials) would widen the whole economic base of the country. The present economic base is mainly limited to agriculture and some heavy

industries in the North. Such a widening of the economic base would permit the Irish population to increase and remain in Ireland; would provide full-time economic employment of a reproductive kind, and would supply a steadily increasing internal market for agricultural produce. In addition, a national scheme of afforestation would serve as a valuable means to counteract soil erosion, to assist land drainage and to prevent "silting up" of the main water courses.

It is the aim of Sinn Féin to have a National Forestry Board established whose main functions it shall be:—

- (a) To make a national survey of the land of Ireland unsuited to cultivation and the production of crops, with a view to ascertaining the maximum acreage immediately available and adaptable to afforestation.
- (b) To set up, with the sanction and under direction of the National Government, machinery whereby the land required for a national scheme of afforestation shall be made available to the National Forestry Board. Such machinery to provide for (1) purchase by agreement; (2) compulsory acquisition where owners refuse to sell; and (3) an arbitration board to determine, where necessary, an equitable basis for fixing the rates of compensation to be paid to landowners whose land is compulsorily acquired.
- (c) To design and develop a national scheme of afforestation equal to meeting, in the fullest possible measure, the requirements of the nation, both as regards "lumber forestry" (i.e., timber for building purposes, manufacture of furniture, etc.), and "chemical forestry" (i.e., the production of soft woods for the manufacture of wood pulp and plastics). Note: It is estimated that at present the number of articles, excluding paper, manufactured from wood pulp and similar wood products exceed 6,000.
- (d) To prepare and develop plans for establishment of the plants and factories that will become necessary for the processing of wood pulp and other wood by-products; to examine the feasibility of procuring foreign markets for wood pulp and other by-products, and if such markets become available to so arrange rotational planting that the maximum surplus of these commodities (after home requirements have been met in full) shall be available for export.
- (f) To so organise the National Scheme of Afforestation that it shall embrace: (1) State Forests (i.e., areas that of their nature and extent are too unwieldy for development other than through State organisation and management; (2) town forests (i.e., communal forests owned and managed by city, town and rural committees). Such forest properly established and efficiently managed, can fill an important role in the provision of municipal and other local finances, in meeting local demand for timber and fuel, and in provision of seasonal and part-time employment for those in need of such; and (3) private planting by landowners of shelter belts and such parts of their holdings as are unsuited to the cultivation of crops.
- (g) To set up a "Forest Extension Service" designed to instruct and enlighten the people in forest values and what such values mean to the economy and prosperity of the Irish Nation.

## INSURANCE AND ASSURANCE

In the sphere of activities covered by Insurance and Assurance Companies, activities that can and do play an important role in the nation's economy, a factor worthy of particular note is that even within the Twenty-Six Counties, the annual premium incomes from business transacted

within the area by foreign companies is substantially in excess of that collected by the companies operating under Irish control and management.

Take, for example, the figures for the year, 1949. In that year, the combined premium income of the Irish companies amounted to £5,014,974. To this figure may be added the sum of £620,299, income, accruing from "interest, dividends and rent," making a total of £5,635,275. The respective figures for the foreign companies were £6,911,915, and £256,553, giving a total of £7,168,468. These latter figures do not include figures for the business transacted through Lloyds. Assuming that dividends accruing from investments account for a major portion of income under the heading, "interest, dividends and rent," the respective figures of income under this heading, indicate the disparity between the amount of capital invested within the Twenty-Six Counties by the foreign companies and that invested as shown above, £4,508,828 charged to payment of "claims," £705,915 as "commission," and £841,749 for "expenses of management within Ireland," there remained a net gain to the foreign companies for the year of £1,111,978. (Note: Since the above figures apply in respect of the Twenty-Six Counties only, to get an over-all picture for Ireland, it is necessary to add the relevant figures for the Six Counties. So far as is known, foreign companies operating within the latter area do not publish separate returns indicating the extent of their business within the area.)

It is safe, however, to assume that through the addition of relevant figures, the totals given for the foreign companies would be considerably increased. It is also worthy of note that in the twenty-three years from 1927 to 1949, the annual premium income of foreign companies from business transacted within the Twenty-Six Counties shows a remarkable increase. The figures for life and industrial assurance alone being: For 1927, £1,829,730, and for 1949, £3,717,360.

The foregoing particulars are given merely as a rough outline of the drain imposed upon the economy of the Irish Nation through the business operations of foreign Insurance and Assurance Companies. While such companies are permitted to function within the shores of Ireland, this drain on the resources of the Nation and the savings of its people will remain. And if present trends may be taken as correctly indicating what the future holds, not alone will this drain remain at present levels, it will continue to expand to the further detriment of Irish economy.

It is the aim of Sinn Fein to have legislation enacted by the National Government whereby, after a given date, foreign Insurance and Assurance Companies shall be debarred from transacting "new business" within Ireland. Existing business to be liquidated thereafter as and when policies already in force reach maturity. If, after an actuarial computation of the financial issues involved, other means of a nature more beneficial to the Irish people, can be evolved to terminate more rapidly the business transactions of the foreign companies, then such means should be adopted.

## SHIPPING

In order to attain full economic independence, Ireland will require amongst other things, a Mercantile Fleet of her own. With her own shipping, and having an exportable surplus of agricultural and industrial products, she would be well on the way to a realisation of economic independence.

Situated geographically as Ireland is, between the American Continents and European Countries, and being an Island Nation, it is only right and prudent that she should develop a substantial shipping industry. Being, as she is at present, unable to carry in her own vessels more than a fraction of her imports and exports, she consequently loses to other coun-

tries practically all the profits and employment involved in the transport of her sea-borne trade.

Closely allied to the economic necessity of Ireland owning a mercantile fleet on a scale at least equal to her total shipping requirements, is the further necessity for Irish ownership and control of all Marine Insurance required to cover the risks entailed in the transport of her sea-borne trade.

To the fullest measure practicable, ships destined for an Irish Mercantile Fleet should be built in Ireland and all necessary repairs to ships already in commission should be carried out in the home shipyards. Full utilization of the present capacity of Irish shipyards (and there seems to be no valid reason why their present capacity could not be extended, if and when the need arises, to meet in full the requirements of the Nation) would eliminate the practice of utilising Irish capital to purchase foreign-built ships and to meet repair costs of work carried out in foreign shipyards. In addition, the loss which Ireland suffers in reproductive employment in this respect would also be eliminated.

In the sphere of Shipping, it is the purpose of Sinn Fein:—

- (a) As a minimum, to have Ireland provided with a Mercantile Fleet under native ownership, control and management, equal to the transport of her entire sea-borne trade.
- (b) To secure to Ireland full control and management of the Marine Insurance required to cover her own Mercantile Fleet, and all cargoes carried therein.
- (c) To secure that, in the fullest possible measure, moneys devoted to purchase of ships of an Irish Mercantile Fleet and to defraying costs of repairs shall be expended in Ireland.

As stated at the outset, the foregoing may be taken in broad and general outline, as indicating the Social and Economic Programme of the Sinn Fein Organisation. The matters dealt with therein are those considered, in the main, as having the most direct and fundamental bearing on the economy of the Nation. By those who examine the proposals in a friendly spirit and who will, perhaps, offer constructive criticism, it will be recognised and appreciated that, in order to keep the proposals within the confines of a reasonably-sized and convenient document, many details of a necessary and elaborate character had to be omitted. It will also be recognised, as it is admitted by those responsible for its drafting, that the outline given does not cover many matters, such as Electricity, Turf Development, a National Film Industry, etc., each of which plays its own particular and important role in the formulation and development of a Social and Economic Programme suited to the needs of our country.

The programme, as outlined, is not submitted as being of such a rigid character that alteration or amendment is debarred, provided such alteration or amendment be of a nature calculated to make the programme more beneficial and of more practical value to the citizens of all Ireland. On one point, and on one point only, is there complete rigidity of purpose and determination, and that is, that the Economic Independence of Ireland and its concomitant — an improved standard of living for those of her people in need of it — must be achieved through whatever practical means it may be found necessary to employ.

Throughout, the main aim, the guiding thought, has been to formulate, in conformity with Christian, Social and Economic principles, a programme on National Lines and wide enough in scope to embrace all Irish Citizens, irrespective of their class or creed. The plea is made that those who take the trouble of examining the programme will bear this in mind, and where criticism is volunteered that it be of a constructive character, taking due cognisance of the purpose in view and, above all, that it be free from the bias of personal, sectional, or party interests.

