

NATIONAL RECOVERY

THE NEXT PHASE.

Fianna Fáil
The Republican Party

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Completing the task of National Recovery



Progress toward national recovery over the last two years has been more rapid than we could have expected.

The economy is growing strongly again, and unemployment is falling steadily. Government borrowing has been reduced and brought under control. The prospects over the next few years for sustained growth in employment are encouraging, provided that the atmosphere of confidence which we have restored is maintained. Our opponents and critics have been confounded by our performance.

It is the support of the social partners — trade unions, farmers and employers — for the Programme of National Recovery which has enabled so much progress to be made. 1988 was the best year for industrial peace for a very long time.

The continuation of sound leadership and good government by Fianna Fáil is essential, if progress is to be maintained.

A minority Government can only be effective, if it can count on the Dáil support needed for it to pursue its policies. Recently, there have been growing challenges in the Dáil to the Government's right to govern and to pursue its financial strategy. The Government needs a reasonable working majority, so that it can deal successfully with all the challenges facing the country in the crucial run-up to the completion of the Single Market in 1992.

Fianna Fáil has fulfilled all the key undertakings we gave the Irish people in our 1987 Election Programme, to create conditions for growth, to control expenditure, to reduce taxation and to develop the sectors with good employment potential.

Only Fianna Fáil had the courage and the ability to do what needed to be done.

No other party or combination of parties could establish the same degree of trust and co-operation with all the social partners. A return to weak Coalition Government divided on policy and ideology would be disastrous at this stage.

We are asking the Irish people to vote for the continuation of successful Fianna Fáil Government.

In this way confidence will be maintained and investment will continue to increase. Investment means more jobs and a reduction in emigration. Our policies for economic development will provide the resources to lessen the burden of personal taxation and improve the situation of all those on low incomes or who are deprived or disadvantaged.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Charles J. Haughey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

AN TAOISEACH

The Economy Turned Around

The New Approach

Winning the battle for Employment

Restoring Order to the Public Finances

Creating the conditions for Growth

- Low Inflation
- Lower interest rates
- Stable exchange rates

Delivering growth

- Ireland's trade performance

Overall Prospects for the Economy

The New Approach

In the coming months, Fianna Fáil will begin discussions with the social partners to seek a new agreement to succeed the current Programme for National Recovery and build on the success it has achieved.

Within seven months of taking office, Fianna Fáil brought to Ireland a new approach to economic management.

In October 1987, the Fianna Fáil Government agreed the historic Programme for National Recovery with the social partners. Trade unions, farmers and employers joined with the Government in drawing up a 3-year programme with four main elements:

- Reduced Government borrowing
- Tax reform
- Greater social equity
- Development measures to promote employment

The Programme has been an outstanding success. The employment targets have been reached, and the other commitments have either been fulfilled or are on target for fulfilment.

The consensus approach involves a Central Review Committee monitoring progress and resolving any problems that arise.

Fianna Fáil intend to build on this approach, and to make it a permanent way of managing our affairs.

The National Development Plan recently submitted to the European Commission flows directly from the Programme for National Recovery. It envisages the investment of £9 billion in the development sectors identified in the Programme as having employment potential.

Winning the battle for Employment

The entire thrust of Fianna Fáil economic policy is to create more jobs at home. Under the National Development Plan, Fianna Fáil will step up the annual gross rate of job creation to 35,000 a year. Net growth in employment is expected to reach 13,000 in 1989, and 30,000 by April 1990 compared with 1987.

The legacy of the previous Government was unemployment that reached an all-time peak of 254,500, a fall in the numbers at work of 50,000, and a resumption of large-scale forced emigration — about 90,000 during the Coalition years.

In office, Fianna Fáil are succeeding in our objective of providing employment.

By the end of May unemployment was down to 228,600, below 230,000 for the first time since 1985 — still unsatisfactory, but a major step in the right direction. Job creation in 1988 totalled 29,000.

Even more important, the total numbers at work have under Fianna Fáil begun to grow again — by 11,000 in our first year of office, and when more recent figures are available they will show this trend is continuing. Confirming this is the fact that redundancies so far this year are down by 41%.

A generation ago, Fianna Fáil policies eliminated forced emigration. The only possible way to do so again is by creating growth in the Irish economy through good management. The application of sectoral measures in the National Development Plan will help to accelerate a broadly-based increase in employment.

Restoring order to the public finances

Having successfully stabilised the debt/GNP ratio, Fianna Fáil will now begin reducing it — to 120% by 1993. Exchequer borrowing will be reduced to no more than 3%, also by 1993.

The Fine Gael-led Coalition doubled the national debt. Government borrowing exceeded £2 billion a year. Their deficit on current spending reached the record level of 8½% of GNP, and the debt/GNP ratio was escalating out of control. A serious loss of confidence in the economy and the public finances in late 1986 pushed interest rates up to an all-time high, as hundreds of millions of pounds left the country.

In two years Fianna Fáil have:

- reduced the current budget deficit by half,
- reduced Government borrowing by more than half,
- stabilised the ratio of National Debt to GNP.

Now that the ratio of National Debt to GNP has been stabilised, the next step is to start reducing it. At present it is 133%, and by 1993 it will be brought down to 120%. By that date Exchequer borrowing will also be reduced to no more than 3%.

This means that tight control over Government expenditure will have to be continued. In addition, the expertise of the Department of Finance is being strengthened to ensure that the National Debt portfolio will be managed by skilled professional financial managers.

In this way, complete confidence in the handling of Ireland's public finances both at home and internationally will be ensured, and the right conditions maintained to secure the levels of investment we need for increased growth and employment.

Creating the conditions for Growth

Fianna Fáil will continue to resist inflationary pressures, in order to maintain Ireland's new competitive position. We will effectively defend our new interest rate status, by maintaining a favourable domestic climate. And we will continue to maintain exchange rate stability, through prudent management of the Irish economy.

LOW INFLATION

In 1988 inflation was down to 2.1%, the lowest since 1960.

This achievement is of critical importance. It lays the foundation not only for improvements in living standards, but also for the competitiveness which is vital for export growth.

The moderate wage increases agreed in the Programme for National Recovery contributed much to the improved performance on inflation. Equally important was the Government's successful programme to stabilise or even reduce certain key costs. Electricity, telecommunications, insurance and petrol were some of the areas in which this policy of price containment was vigorously pursued, with considerable success.

Fianna Fáil will continue to resist inflationary pressures. Though world inflation has again begun to rise and will affect us, price increases in Ireland still run at less than half the British level, 3.3% compared with 8%. Fianna Fáil are determined to preserve and extend this competitive advantage in our most important export market.

LOWER INTEREST RATES

A major achievement of this Government has been the decoupling of Irish interest rates from the higher levels obtaining in Britain. Base rates in Ireland are 9% compared with 14% in Britain. Better economic management under Fianna Fáil has increased international confidence in Ireland. This has allowed us, for the first time ever, to maintain interest rates at European levels.

STABLE EXCHANGE RATES

Under Fianna Fáil, a stable exchange rate has been maintained within the EMS. This has encouraged outside investors, and removed uncertainty for Irish exporters. An influx of German money into Irish Government bonds has helped to keep interest rates down. Within the past few weeks, Irish Government bonds linked to the Deutschemark were issued.

Delivering growth

Fianna Fáil will maintain real growth of 3% under the National Development Plan, and if possible exceed it. We will seek to maintain a healthy trade and balance of payments surplus.

Fianna Fáil have not only created the conditions for growth. We have begun to deliver it.

In the three years 1987 to 1989, economic growth will have averaged at least 3% a year. This contrasts with zero economic growth between 1982 and 1986, when Ireland turned in the worst performance in the entire OECD. The growth achieved exceeds the target of 2½% set by Fianna Fáil at the time of the last election - a target that was then regarded as highly optimistic.

IRELAND'S TRADE PERFORMANCE

In the year before Fianna Fáil took office, Ireland's exports actually fell by 4% - half a billion pounds. Fianna Fáil has restored growth to the export trade on which the economy depends - buoyant growth, at an average of 15% a year. From £9.3 billion in 1986, Ireland's exports have risen to £12.3 billion in 1988. This growth is continuing strongly this year, with exports likely to top £14 billion.

Under Fianna Fáil, our trade surplus has quadrupled - to over £2 billion in 1988. Our first year of office produced a surplus in the balance of payments, for the first time in 20 years. This surplus, which continues strong, is a remarkable achievement for a country at Ireland's stage of development.

Overall prospects for the economy

The foundation for sustained growth in output and employment over the medium-term has been laid by Fianna Fáil. The Fianna Fáil Government have recognised the need for a clear economic strategy, and the National Development Plan sets out the main lines of that strategy.

The essence of the strategy is to continue to make progress with budgetary adjustment, to increase competitiveness and to foster the growth and employment potential of the economy. A central feature of this process will be to secure a steady decline in the burden of debt over time. This will allow a progressive freeing of resources now used towards servicing this debt. The resources released will increasingly give us a real option over time of enhancing the quality and scope of public services or reducing the burden of taxation.

The reduction in debt will diminish the vulnerability of the Irish economy to external events and will increase our attractiveness as a location for industrial investments.

In its Annual Review published on 1 June the Central Bank stated: 'The improvement in the Irish economy evident in the past two years is, in general, expected to continue in 1989. Real GNP growth is likely to accelerate and become more broadly based, thus leading to an increase in employment'. They go on to argue that 'the resumption of sustainable economic activity would not have been possible without a marked improvement in the public finances'.

This represents a clear indication of the success of Government economic policies and the need for their continuation.

Tax Reform

Reforms implemented

Future Tax Policy

Reforms implemented

This Fianna Fáil Government have already carried out major reforms of the tax system.

These include:

- * The standard rate of income tax has been reduced from 35% to 32%.
- * The top rate of tax has been brought down from 58% to 56%.
- * Under Fianna Fáil, 63% of taxpayers are now on the standard rate.
- * Tax concessions cumulatively totalling £700 million have been given, far exceeding the £225 million commitment over three years in the Programme for National Recovery.
- * The PAYE allowance was raised from £700 to £800.
- * Self-assessment for the self-employed has been successfully introduced.
- * Low-income families with children have been exempted from tax, or had their tax bills substantially reduced, through the addition of £200 per child to the exemption limits.
- * Section 23 incentives have been reintroduced, providing an important boost for the construction industry.
- * Benefit-in-kind restrictions have been eased for business car expenses.
- * Farmers are now taxed on the same basis as other taxpayers, according to income, with the farm profile system easing compliance for those on low or non-taxable incomes.
- * A withholding tax and tax clearance arrangements for public sector contracts have improved collection.
- * A very successful tax amnesty collected £500m in back taxes. Better enforcement will produce significant follow-on revenue this year. A general tax avoidance provision was included in the 1989 Finance Bill.
- * The administrative burden for very small employers and traders has been eased, through the option of once a year remittances of PAYE, PRSI and VAT.

- * The yield from capital taxes has improved very substantially.
- * There has been a major reform of the Corporation Tax System, with a rationalisation of the number of rates, a reduction in the standard rate to 43% and a corresponding reduction in allowances to widen the tax base. Measures were adopted in 1989 to curtail the cost of Section 84 loans. The changes in 1988 and 1989 will lead to a significant increase in corporation tax yield over the next few years.
- * The 48-hour customs rule has stemmed the outflow of purchasing power from the economy, which was having a disastrous impact on border towns.

Future Tax Policy

Fianna Fáil will continue its programme of reducing the tax burden, aiming to increase fairness and remove disincentives to employment. The Government's programme of tax reform will continue.

The Government intend:

- * To lessen the burden of personal taxation by steadily reducing the rates of income tax and by broadening the bands.
- * To broaden the tax base, including further improvements in collection and enforcement, and effective sanctions against evasion.
- * To make the system of self-assessment presently applying to the self-employed mandatory and to extend it to companies later this year.
- * To change the corporation tax system so as to make it more conducive to job creation.
- * To simplify the tax system generally.

The movement to mandatory self-assessment will be made after full consultation with interested groups on the steps necessary to ensure achievement of a satisfactory system.

Fianna Fáil will further reduce the burden of taxation, as improvements in economic conditions permit. Such reductions will be fairly distributed, and have due regard to the interests of the economy. International experience shows that major upheavals in taxation can have serious economic consequences and affect tax revenue.

Income Tax Fianna Fáil accepts that income tax rates are too high; that the income tax burden is too heavy; that it is hampering initiative and enterprise and hindering efforts to increase employment. The Government's objective is to devote further substantial resources to income tax reductions in coming years within overall budget constraints. Incentives and reliefs will be critically examined to ensure that they are fulfilling their roles efficiently, and to see to what extent they can offer scope for extending the income tax base and thus contribute to the cost of further income tax reductions.

Corporation Tax The 1989 Budget statement contained a commitment to review the position regarding the standard rate of tax (43%) and the accelerated capital allowances for the 1990 Budget. In addition, two important exemptions from corporation tax expire in 1990, namely, export sales relief and the Shannon exemption. The companies now availing of these exemptions will be liable from next April at the 10% rate. While the addition to corporation tax yield from this source is at present difficult to estimate and will take some time to build up its full value, it will certainly ease pressures on the other aspects of the taxation system.

Indirect Taxation The modest increases in excise duties in recent years have reflected the Government's concern to moderate indirect taxation levels. For two successive budgets prior to the current year there were no increases in excise duties on alcoholic beverages. This year, minimal increases in line with the current low rate of inflation were applied. Similarly, there have been no increases in VAT levels in recent years, and in fact VAT on a number of items has been reduced. This year, VAT registration thresholds are being raised and collection processes eased to help smaller businesses.

Tax Enforcement The 1988 tax amnesty resulted in a major clearance of tax arrears. Considerable progress has also been made by the Revenue in making the tax collection system more effective and the Government has allocated additional resources to this task. The Government are committed to ensuring that a backlog of arrears does not build up again, through the utilisation of enforcement powers and through further improvements in the effectiveness of the tax collection system.

National Development

Ireland and the Single European Market

National Development Plan

Promoting Industrial Investment

International Financial Services

Major Developments in Science and Technology

Commercial State Enterprise

Tourism

A Thriving Agriculture and Food Sector

Horticulture

Forestry

Marine

Ireland and the Single European Market

All Fianna Fáil's efforts will continue to be directed to making sure Ireland can compete effectively in the Single European Market — which is the framework our economy must operate in after 1992.

These steps have been taken by the Government:

- * We secured the decisive ratification of the Single European Act, approved by a 70% 'Yes' vote in the 1987 Referendum.
- * We successfully mounted the vigorous European campaign to heighten awareness of both the opportunities and challenges of 1992. This campaign has led to greatly increased preparedness in Irish industry.
- * We secured the agreement of the European Council to the proposal to double EC Structural Funds. In doing this, we achieved the long sought-after objective of using these funds to create a meaningful impact on regions such as Ireland.
- * We secured agreement that the least prosperous regions (including Ireland) would qualify for a doubling of EC assistance, and that the level of support for projects could be as high as 75%.
- * We secured agreement that Structural Fund aid can be given for investment in private/public partnership projects. This was critical for Ireland, where limited public funds would otherwise have restricted our ability to take up the assistance available.
- * We set up a close working partnership at top-level between the Government and the European Commission. A Committee of Ministers and Secretaries of Government Departments, chaired by the Taoiseach, now deals directly with a similar committee from the Commission, chaired by President Delors.
- * We submitted, on schedule, a comprehensive National Development Plan for the use of aid from the Structural Funds. This involves the largest development budget ever planned in Ireland. For the first time, extensive sub-regional consultation was undertaken as part of the process of preparing

the National Development Plan and the operational programmes under it.

To implement the National Development Plan successfully, Fianna Fáil will continue the close partnership we have built with the Commission. We will approach constructively and realistically such issues as indirect tax harmonisation and steps towards economic and monetary union, in a way which nevertheless effectively secures our essential interests.

The National Development Plan

The National Development Plan envisages the investment of Irish and Community resources totalling £9.1 billion in key areas where there are structural deficiencies in our economy. Within five years it will transform our ability to compete within the Single European Market.

The implementation of the Plan will help:

- to increase the productive efficiency of the economy;
- to improve communications with our principal markets;
- to overcome the competitive disadvantages of our peripheral location;
- to broaden the scope for enterprise and innovation;
- to improve the quality of our management techniques; and
- to maximise the natural endowments of skill and expertise in our work force.

There is a separate Plan addressing the difficulties of the long-term unemployed and the creation of first-time jobs. The National Development Plan is backed up by eight operational programmes covering:

- Industry
- Tourism
- Roads
- Transport
- Sanitary and other local services
- Human Resources: Education, Training and Employment
- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Energy
- Telecommunications and postal services

Securing early Commission approval of the Plan has been one of the Government's highest priorities. Commitments have already been made by the Commission to seek to give approval by the end of July.

* The services of the Commission have now agreed provisionally to commit and pay Community support in 1989 on the basis of the 75% rate of intervention (formerly 55%) for major improvements to National Primary roads and 50% (formerly 40%) for major improvements on other selected road projects

* The Government have secured recognition from the Directorate-General for Regional Policy of the Commission of the importance for regional development of the following four flagship projects:

- Tallaght Regional Technical College
- Boyne Valley Archaeological Park
- Ballinamore/Ballyconnell Cross-Border Waterway Development Project
- Farranfore Airport Development

Priority examination will be given to these projects for funding in 1989, subject to the relevant regulations.

The National Development Plan is designed to mobilise Community support for all the principal areas of development described in the following sections.

Promoting Industrial Investment

Fianna Fáil will deliver 100,000 additional industrial jobs over the next five years, and we will double the market share of Irish firms in Europe.

- * We have set new directions for Government support of industry, channelling scarce resources to where they produce the biggest pay-off. This new approach includes **employment grants** to shift the emphasis from fixed assets to job-creation in new projects, and **management development grants** to upgrade the management capability of small business.
- * As a direct result of these Government initiatives, the **employment decline in industry has been halted**. More than 37,000 new jobs were created in manufacturing in 1987-88. We have achieved the ambitious job-creation of 20,000 a year set for manufacturing and international services employment in the Programme for National Recovery.
- * **New investment**, including inward investment from overseas, is at the highest level since the 1970s. Some 1,000 new IDA projects have started up during the Government's period of office. There have been particularly important new developments in agri-food, electronics, engineering and clothing.
- * We have successfully revived **inward investment** from overseas. Strategic new investments have come from the US, while we have successfully persuaded countries in the Far East (especially Japan), that Ireland is an excellent base for the European market of 320m people. World leaders in electronics, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals have chosen Ireland for significant new projects over the past two years.
- * Meanwhile, **indigenous Irish companies** are beginning to share in the recovery — their exports last year increased by more than exports overall. The Government has been actively encouraging successful Irish firms to invest more in Ireland, and this is already beginning to show results in new projects. New programmes to promote industrial linkages are also generating business for Irish firms in meeting the input needs of larger manufacturing companies. The Banks have been

requested by the Government to give encouragement to young entrepreneurs at preferential rates.

- * **Small native enterprise is thriving** — a survey by the Small Firms Association forecasts that fully half of small companies expect to increase employment before the end of this year.
- * **Fianna Fáil will substantially increase industrial employment**, as a central element in creating greater employment opportunities overall. **We will deliver 100,000 additional industrial jobs over the next five years.**

These will be divided as follows:

— Small industry	27,000
— Mainstream Irish industry	28,000
— Overseas projects	45,000

- * **Bolstering the marketing effort of Irish companies will be a critical part of achieving this growth.** Among other initiatives, CTT will undertake an increased marketing drive in the context of 1992: this will aim to double the market share of Irish firms in the rest of the Community by the mid-1990s.

International Financial Services

Fianna Fáil will build on the remarkable initial success of the International Financial Services Centre in Dublin.

This project is one of the most imaginative initiatives ever undertaken in this country. Promised by Fianna Fáil at the last election and implemented on taking office, it has received top-level Government priority. As a result, the project has attracted widespread international interest, and is already a resounding success.

- * 57 projects have already been approved, with job commitments totalling 1,287.
- * More than half of these are already in operation in temporary premises, in advance of the completion of the Centre at the Custom House Docks.
- * These include some of the most important US, Japanese and European financial institutions, as well as leading Irish firms.

A considerably larger number of further projects are in the pipeline, and international interest has been stimulated further by additional tax incentives for unit trusts which were created in this year's Finance Act. By the end of this year, it is expected that 90 projects will have been approved, with employment commitment of 2,000. The eventual potential is considerably greater.

The new centre has given a major boost to the construction industry, with 500 jobs created on-site alone. Over 400,000 square feet of world-class offices are now under construction, and occupation will begin by March of next year.

Fianna Fáil's vision of Ireland as a world centre for financial services is not restricted to Dublin. Shannon is also being promoted as a centre for financial services, and significant activities already take place there. Even more significantly, we are already seeing the establishment by overseas firms of remote data processing facilities in other centres throughout the country. The projects at Castleisland and Loughrea show the employment potential from this area, and growth in it will be aggressively pursued.

Major Developments in Science and Technology

Fianna Fáil aims to double the level of industry related Science and Technology programmes over 1989-1993, with increased EC Structural Fund support. Our policy is to narrow the significant technological gap between the richer and poorer areas of the EC, a gap reflected in the relatively low technological capability of Irish industrial firms.

Before coming to office, Fianna Fáil had recognised that a major impetus was needed in science and technology. Our commitment was reflected in the immediate appointment of the first Minister for Science and Technology.

Significant developments over the past two years have included:

- * Setting up a unified national science institution, Eolas.
- * Initiating a major Science and Technology Development Programme, to demonstrate how science and technology can assist in the development of Irish industry.
- * Setting up 14 centres of excellence throughout the third-level education sector, focussing on the key areas of biotechnology, optoelectronics and advanced manufacturing technology. These centres develop new technology and transfer it to industry.
- * Setting up a programme to improve the intake of graduates by industry, which is often the most effective way to upgrade the technological capability of companies.
- * Securing of contracts for Irish companies worth £9.5 million under the EC ESPRIT programme for information technology, and the setting up of a European Space Agency base in Cork.
- * Initiating a 5-year research programme to delineate the Irish continental shelf, to validate Ireland's claim to a national marine territory twelve times the size of Ireland's land mass.

Commercial State Enterprise

Fianna Fáil will encourage the development and expansion of State companies, if necessary in joint ventures, so as to create wealth and sustain employment. Fianna Fáil remain fully committed to the maintenance of a viable and profitable commercial semi-State sector, in providing vital services. The strategic value these companies can assume has been underlined by recent events in the oil industry.

Since 1987 under Fianna Fáil some of the State companies have performed exceptionally well. For example:

- * Aer Lingus has expanded its fleet and its services, has taken on new staff, and recorded substantial profits. It has recently opened new engine-overhaul projects.
- * Aer Rianta has opened a duty-free shop at Moscow Airport in joint venture with the Soviets and is also engaged in refurbishing the Aeroflot fleet.
- * The ESB has expanded its business in overseas consultancy, in commercial fisheries and in local trans-shipment from Moneypoint.
- * Great Southern Hotels have carried out major refurbishment from their own resources.
- * A new semi-state company, Coillte, has been set up to bring a commercial orientation to management of the State forests.

Many State companies now pay a regular dividend to the Exchequer, providing the public with a financial return on these investments.

Tourism

Fianna Fáil will deliver the growth targets we have set for tourism — to double tourist numbers, increase foreign tourist revenue by £500 million, and create 25,000 new jobs.

Fianna Fáil identified tourism as a major development sector, with potential for a substantial increase in employment. To realise this potential, we have put in place policies and resources aimed at achieving ambitious growth targets.

Specific development measures included:

- * £1.25 million for a crash programme for the 1987 tourist season, in parallel with more attractive access fares from key markets.
- * £4 million in 1988 to implement recommendations from our Task Force on Tourism. This was backed up by £2.5 million from the industry.
- * A £10 million programme at the end of 1988, funded jointly by the Government and the industry, for additional marketing in 1989.
- * Extension of the Business Expansion Scheme to tourism. In its first year this stimulated investment of over £100 million in 77 tourism projects.

Fianna Fáil's priority development of tourism is already paying off. The results are dramatic:

- * In 1987 and 1988, visitor numbers were up by 540,000 (29%), and foreign tourism revenue was up by £193 million (over 30%).
- * 12,000 extra jobs were created.
- * Several new hotels are building in Dublin, while new castle-type luxury hotels have opened in the West and South.

Building on the success of this strategy, Fianna Fáil's emphasis for the next five years will be on substantial investment in product development, especially in all-weather and leisure facilities.

The operational programme for tourism submitted to the European Commission proposes new investment of over £300 million, mostly for product development. This is the largest ever investment programme in Irish tourism infrastructure, and will be backed up by marketing initiatives aimed specifically at attracting visitors to the new amenities.

Fianna Fáil will continue to work in Europe for a more liberal policy on access transport, while encouraging the expansion of capacity and the opening of new transport links.

A Thriving Agriculture and Food Sector

Fianna Fáil will accelerate both rural development and the adaptation of Irish agriculture to a more competitive environment. We will implement our strategy to build on Ireland's reputation as a producer of quality pure food, reflecting this emphasis in policy at farm level. As a central objective we will promote farm viability, and this will include increased headage payments.

Since Fianna Fáil took office in 1987, a new confidence has returned to the agriculture and food sector, after many years of depression, falling incomes and an accelerated flight from the land.

- * Farm income in 1988 was over 40% higher than in 1986, with Irish farmers enjoying in 1988 the highest income increase in the EC.

The reduction in inflation and interest rates, due to the Government's firm economic management, made a major contribution to the increase in income. Green pound changes negotiated in the Farm Prices discussions in the period were worth £120m to Irish farmers.

- * Exports of food, drink and live animals exceeded £3 billion for the first time in 1988 with a major increase in higher value-added food exports. For example, exports of vac-pak beef reached almost 50,000 tonnes in 1988, an increase of over 50% on 1986 levels.
- * In the milk sector, dairy farmers have benefited from very significant price increases, especially in 1988 and into 1989. Milk prices now stand at £1.05 approx. per gallon compared to £0.73 in April 1986. The value of exports of dairy products in 1988 was worth a record £1.45 billion.
- * In the latest price fixing negotiations, we succeeded in getting agreement to the abolition of the Coresponsibility Levy on milk, with major savings for Irish farmers.
- * The improvement in cattle prices over the past two years has led to a major recovery in cattle numbers. The December 1988

livestock enumeration showed an increase of 114,000 in the beef cow herd, or 27%. The number of heifers-in-calf in the beef herd also showed a dramatic increase.

- * The sheep sector has now become a most dynamic sector of Irish agriculture. An increase of 1 million ewes was registered between December 1986 and December 1988, an increase of 35%.
- * While the cereal sector has had certain difficulties as EC policy measures have reduced guaranteed prices, there have been some encouraging developments such as the increased production and export of high quality malting barley.

The progress outlined above has been contributed to by a broad range of economic and sectoral policies put in place by the Fianna Fáil Government over the past two years. In particular:

- * The revision and extension to all Disadvantaged Areas of the Programme for Western Development (or Western Package). This provided higher rates of grant for pollution control measures and animal housing, as well as attractive levels of support for roads, water services, electricity and forestry.
- * The recently launched £10m Rural Tourism scheme will provide major new possibilities for generating additional income in rural areas.
- * The extension of the beef cow scheme to beef cows in dairy herds within the Disadvantaged Areas — (£70 per cow on first 8, and £66 for the next 22).
- * An increase in the suckler cow grant to £55 for each suckler cow, in all parts of the country with no off farm income limit.
- * An increase in the beef premium to £31 per bullock up to a maximum of 50.
- * The commencement of a five-year Strategy for the Food Industry 1988 — 1992 (IDA/Department of Agriculture and Food). The strategy provides for accelerated development programmes involving investment of over £500m in the pigmeat, beef and dairy sector and resulted in record allocations from the FEOGA Guidance Programme of over £36m over the years 1987 and 1988. In the pigmeat sector, expansion of pig numbers to supply the new rationalised processing industry will continue to be a basic aim.

- * Development measures have been undertaken for non-thoroughbred horses. A grant incentive scheme for the Irish Draught breed has been introduced as well as the extension of headage payments for mares in Disadvantaged Areas.
- * The support services to agriculture have been rationalised. ERAD — the Eradication of Animal Diseases Board — was established with funding guaranteed over a four-year programme. New and increased rates of compensation for reactor animals under Animals Disease Eradication schemes have been approved.
- * TEAGASC, the unified research and advisory authority, was also set up.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDIUM-TERM

The first priority must be to continue to a successful conclusion the effort to correct the public financial position and to maintain a low inflation, low interest rate economic environment. This is one of the two vital elements in determining the context in which the development of the agricultural and food industry can take place.

The second vital element is the framework provided by the Community support arrangements. In most sectors, these arrangements have now been thoroughly overhauled. While this overhaul has led to changes of a substantial nature, the system continues to provide a critical and indispensable safety net for both producers and processors. Ireland is determined to ensure that the essential elements of the system are protected both in negotiations within the Community and in the Uruguay round negotiations on the GATT.

In the context of Community arrangements there are a number of important aims for Ireland in the short- to medium-term:

- * The adjustment of the beef management system in a way that removes the imbalance that works to the disadvantage of producers who overwinter cattle for spring disposal.
- * To ensure that the review of the milk quota régime to be completed before end July next results in additional quotas for smaller scale and other priority category producers and that in the decisions to be taken by the Council on the milk

régime to apply from 1992 onwards permanent arrangements are put in place to meet the problems of such farmers.

- * To protect the interests of Irish sheep producers in the negotiations this year on the reform of the sheepmeat support system.
- * To get a review of the cereal support system so that more effective measures are put in place to control overall production and so limit the pressure on the prices paid to cereal growers.
- * To ensure that in the GATT negotiations the Community continues to press for an agreement which, while involving greater discipline on the application of agriculture support and protection, will result in more stable trading conditions and a more secure agricultural environment.

Given greater stability in a somewhat slimmed down but more rational Community support system, development in the Irish agriculture and food sector will depend on our ability to maximise our advantages especially in grass based production. Policy will be geared towards the continued market-led growth in beef, sheep and pig numbers. Greater emphasis on quality, on added value products and on effective promotion and marketing will be of critical importance in this area. Milk volume is controlled by quotas, so the value of our fixed output must be maximised through continuation of the move away from commodities towards a more diversified range of added value products.

Public policy and especially public investment aid must be geared towards creating a dynamic agriculture capable of supplying the quality products demanded by the modern consumer. Such an agricultural sector is central to the wider rural development aims contained in the National Plan 1989-1993. The specific programme for agricultural and rural development allied to the comprehensive investments envisaged for infrastructure, industrial development, tourism and training will have major implications for national growth and, in particular, for economic and social development in rural areas.

The main policy measures in that programme to be implemented, when specific decisions on the Community's financial

contribution are taken by the Commission and/or the Council, include:

- * The promotion of farm viability. Special emphasis will be placed on assisting investment to prevent farmyard pollution. The support for this objective which is currently available in the area covered by the Programme for Western Development will be extended to the rest of the country. In addition, investment support will continue to be available to enable farmers to reduce costs, improve quality and promote on-farm diversification.
- * An increase in headage payments up to the level permitted under Community rules, broadening the scope of the headage scheme in some areas, and an extension of the areas in which payments are made. Surveys of areas seeking inclusion in the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme will be completed by September 1989.
- * Further investment is envisaged in food processing and marketing, in line with the Government's Strategy for the Food Industry. This is required to underpin the switch to more diversified and higher value production, improve employment security in the sector and to meet the challenges of 1992.
- * A national programme for integrated rural development will be launched, which will take account of the lessons learned in the pilot programmes and will be based on the ideas and enterprise of rural communities themselves. Rural tourism will be an important component of the rural development programme.
- * As part of the overall development of rural areas, further investment will be made in the development of the forestry and fisheries industries.
- * Underpinning development in the various sectors of agriculture and food, forestry, fisheries, industry and services is the need to acquire new skills, to improve existing standards and to increase quality. The twin and linked mechanisms to achieve these objectives are the development of human resources and the application of modern technology. Thus, investment in education and training, research and advisory services and the promotion of linkages between educational institutions and

economic and community development will be an important element of a programme for regional and rural development.

The development and application of technology in the agricultural and food sector will be provided for through further education and training facilities for this key economic sector.

The strategy is clear. The major investment programme envisaged for the economy as a whole will provide the environment in which the specific agricultural and rural development programme will facilitate the growth of prosperous rural economies centred on a healthy and outward looking agriculture.

Horticulture

Fianna Fáil will realise the potential it has identified in horticulture, implementing a five-year programme to create over 3,000 jobs and create business worth £58 million.

Fianna Fáil's aim is to reverse the decline in Irish horticulture and to replace as much as possible of the fruit and vegetable imports that could be home-produced as well as packaging more for export.

The Government appointed a Minister for Horticulture and established an interim non-statutory Bord Glas with a mandate to develop all aspects of horticulture pending legislation to set up a statutory Board.

The Board produced a five-year development programme at the end of 1988, which aims at a combined market share recovery and export expansion of £58 million and the creation of 1650 full-time and 1500 part-time jobs.

Positive developments have taken place as follows:

- * 350 jobs were created in horticulture in 1988 and this figure is expected to be exceeded in 1989.
- * Imports of potatoes in 1988 showed a further marked reduction. Agreement of EC has been secured to extend Producer Group Aid to potatoes.
- * A new 25% grant scheme for the glasshouse sector is being introduced (subject to EC approval) to replace and renew glasshouses and avail of natural gas.
- * Mushroom production has expanded rapidly, and the target of 40,000 tonnes production annually by 1992 is already ahead of projection. This sector alone is expected to create 400 full-time and 1500 part-time jobs by 1992.

Forestry

Fianna Fáil will build on its spectacular success in forestry with a further expansion programme that will create 2,000 additional jobs.

Fianna Fáil targeted forestry as a key developmental sector, and success in this area is without parallel in any period in the past.

- * Coillte Teo, a semi-State body, was established in 1988 to manage the State forests on a fully commercial basis.
- * Planting of trees has increased from 9,000 hectares in 1986 to over 15,000 hectares in 1988. (Private planting from a nil base a few years ago has grown to 7,000 hectares). A range of new domestic and EC incentives have been put in place.
- * The timber industry is enjoying its best expansionary period ever, and now supplies 60% of the Irish construction market. Inroads are being made into the export market and added value timber products for the building industry.
- * Building on these spectacular successes, Fianna Fáil is now planning a further dramatic increase in national planting to 30,000 hectares, create over 2,000 additional jobs, and complete negotiation at EC level on major financial aid to enable this programme to be effectively carried through.
- * New grants for the planting of broadleaf trees have been introduced.

Marine

Fianna Fáil will implement its major development plan for the fishing industry — which will create 4,400 new full-time jobs in sea-fishing, aquaculture, processing and ancillary industries.

The Department of the Marine was established by Fianna Fáil in March 1987 so as to give a new priority and importance to Ireland's marine resources. For the first time, the administration of all the marine-related matters was brought together, the fishing industry (marine and inland), merchant shipping, harbours, marine safety, environment and marine recreation.

Progress to date:

Sea Fisheries

- * Since 1986, fish landings have increased by over 50% in value — to almost £100 million in 1988.
- * Fish exports have topped £100m for the first time.
- * A major programme of exploratory fishing for new species like blue whiting, horse mackerel and argentines has been launched with EC support.
- * 67 vessels have received EC grants for modernisation.
- * £7.5 million has been invested in fish processing plant, and ice plant capacity is being substantially increased.
- * We have initiated major harbour development at Dingle and Rossaveal at a cost of £5 million.

Aquaculture production has expanded by nearly 60% since 1986 to 20,000 tonnes in 1988. The value of farmed salmon has already increased fivefold since 1986 to £25m; direct employment has grown to 2,000.

Inland Fisheries. We have made progress in setting up a framework for the optimum development of the inland fisheries industry and tourist angling. We have implemented new legislation to put the financing of the fishery service on a sound footing. We have purchased new naval vessels for inshore salmon protection.

Shipping. We have put in place a package of grants and tax incentives which have increased the Irish merchant fleet by over 10%.

Marinas. 14 marina projects are currently in planning or construction, including the £10 million project for the Lower Shannon.

Ports. The National Development Plan provides for an investment of £72m in developing the main commercial ports of Dublin, Cork, Rosslare and Waterford. The plans provide for the purchase of 9 container cranes and port infrastructure. The Harbours (Shannon Estuary Development Corporation) Bill has been circulated and an updating of the Harbours Acts is under way. The first free port in Ireland has been established at Ringaskiddy.

Research. Legislation to establish a Marine Research Institute is almost ready. The research vessel Lough Beltra has been fully utilised to carry out round the year research programmes, including cooperative projects with other countries, for example, a comparative marine pollution joint study of the Elbe and the Shannon. A joint marine research vessel for both parts of Ireland has been grant-aided by the International Fund for Ireland.

Pollution. Tough legislation has been introduced to deal with marine pollution.

Air/Sea Rescue. Dauphin Helicopters will be located at Shannon on a 24 hour response basis all year round.

Fianna Fáil will take all possible further steps to realise the full maritime potential of Ireland. Total investment in the sea fisheries and aquaculture programmes is projected at £150 million, while investment in fish processing is projected at £45 million. Over £19 million will be invested in fishing harbour development. The National Development Plan also provides for investment of £65 million in shipping fleet (including sea shuttle services). Fianna Fáil will establish a network of international marinas and marine recreation facilities at suitable locations around the coast, so as to encourage the expansion of yachting tourism.

The Infrastructure for National Development

Creating a modern Roads System

Transport

Securing competitive Energy Supplies

A New Era in Communications

Streamlining the Public Service

Creating a modern Roads System

Fianna Fáil will spend £1 billion on roads, and stimulate private investment in them, to improve Ireland's competitiveness after 1992.

The provision of a modern, efficient roads system is a priority objective of Fianna Fáil under the National Development Plan. The Plan commits the Government to provide almost £1 billion for the improvement of the road network, of which £755 million will be for national roads. This is the first time an Irish Government has published a firm 5-year expenditure commitment. It represents a 50% increase in spending in real terms, compared with the five-year period 1982 to 1987.

Priority will be given to certain strategic sections of national routes (Euroroute E01 Rosslare to Border including the Dublin Ring Road, Euroroute E20 Portlaoise to Dublin and N4 Dublin to Kinnegad on the Galway/Sligo road). Twelve major projects costing £216 million are planned to start this year, including the Newbridge, Bray/Shankill, and Dunleer By-passes.

A total of £230 million will be spent over the period 1989 to 1993 on the improvement of non-national roads.

In 1987 the Government increased the county road strengthening grant to £15 million compared with £5 million in 1986. A further £15 million was provided in 1988.

In recognition of the importance of county and regional roads to rural development, Fianna Fáil have introduced a three year £150 million programme of discretionary State grants for these roads. (£47.4 million is being provided in 1989). For the first time local authorities have a medium-term commitment to State funding of these roads and have been given increased discretion as to how grants are spent.

PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN ROADS

Fianna Fáil have actively promoted the case for private investment in road improvements. We have made it clear in the National Plan that such investment will be in addition to State expenditure and will be used to accelerate the road development programme.

Such investment could amount to £50 — 100 million over the years 1990 to 1994.

- * The section of the Dublin Ring Road known as the West-Link is being constructed at no cost to the State. It will be opened to traffic early next year.
- * The Department of the Environment is now examining proposals for a toll franchise for the Dublin Ring Road. The total cost of the Ring Road (including West-Link) is £142 million. It will be the largest road project ever undertaken in Ireland and is due to be completed in 1994.

Three other potential toll road projects provide possibilities for private investment. These are:

- Newbridge/Kilcullen By-Passes
- Lucan/Kilcock Road
- Downstream Crossing of the River Lee

The National Roads Authority was set up in July 1988, to supervise and accelerate the development programme for national roads.

COMPENSATION FOR UNINSURED VICTIMS OF ROAD ACCIDENTS

By agreement with the Motor Insurers Bureau of Ireland (MIBI) the Government have improved compensation arrangements for uninsured victims of road accidents. The main features of the Agreement are:

- Victims of road accidents involving unidentified or untraced 'hit and run' drivers will be entitled, as of right, to compensation for all personal injuries. (Up to now, the MIBI has paid compensation on an 'ex gratia' basis, but only for injuries causing death or serious and permanent disablement).
- The MIBI will introduce compensation for property damage caused by uninsured (including stolen but not unidentified or untraced 'hit and run') motor vehicles in road accidents occurring on or after 31 December 1992.

Transport

Fianna Fáil will continue its high priority for transport — creating a new diesel commuter rail service for the West Dublin suburbs, improving the mainline rail network, developing Rosslare Harbour as the major hub port for Continental traffic, continuing the encouragement of new and cheaper air routes, and working in Europe to liberalise still further the road haulage industry to Ireland's benefit.

Since coming to office, Fianna Fáil has given priority to improving the efficiency and quality of transport services to achieve our economic objectives.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- * A reduction of almost 16% in real terms has been achieved between 1986 and 1989 in the Exchequer subvention to CIE, and further reductions of 3.5% will be achieved in 1990 and 1991. Services have been substantially maintained, and in many cases upgraded and extended — in particular, commuter services from the provinces to Dublin.
- * The mainline rail carriage building programme approved by Fianna Fáil in 1981 has been completed. 24 diesel commuter rail units will be completed this summer.
- * Local suburban bus services have been introduced.
- * Penalties for vandalism have been increased.

Future developments in public transport:

- * **Suburban Rail Extension** The National Development Plan proposes a high quality public transport service for the densely populated areas of West Dublin. A new diesel commuter rail service will be provided from Clondalkin to the City with new stations at Clondalkin, Cherry Orchard, Ballyfermot, Inchicore, a new Heuston suburban station, the Phoenix Park, Cabra and Drumcondra. Upgrading of the existing commuter service from Maynooth to the City with new stations at Leixlip (Confey), Coolmine, Castleknock and Broombridge (Cabra) is also a priority. Spending on both projects is estimated at £28m. Areas such as Tallaght would be provided with feeder

bus services to the railway. It is also proposed to improve bus services throughout the country.

- * **Rail Freight Improvements** on the mainline rail network are planned. Renovations to the rail infrastructure will facilitate the handling of bigger containers. A direct rail link for combined transport operations to ship-side facilities in Dublin Port will be provided. These developments will help overcome the disadvantages of our peripherality, so as to make the most of the trading opportunities presented after 1992.
- * **Rosslare Harbour** The Rosslare Harbour Development Programme will be completed in July, providing one of the best terminal buildings in Europe. We plan to develop Rosslare Harbour as the major hub port for passenger and freight traffic to Continental Europe. This involves improvement works to facilitate the faster and more efficient loading/off-loading of vessels and to enable the harbour to cater for bigger ships.
- * **The Aran Islands** ferry service will be upgraded.

AIR TRANSPORT

Since coming to office the Government have pursued radical policies to secure liberalisation in air transport.

- * Fares to London and Continental Europe have been reduced by 20 — 30%.
- * Increased competition and an increased range of services have been provided on routes from Dublin, Cork and Shannon. Passenger traffic at the three State airports has increased by 44%.
- * New routes from regional airports to Dublin and principal destinations in Britain have resulted in passenger through put of 300,000, which is set to increase further. A major Development Plan for Regional Airports was announced by the Government in 1988.
- * A radical new bilateral agreement with the UK gives us the benefit of one of the most liberal air transport régimes in Europe.
- * Special concessions to Ireland in the EC liberalisation package of 1987 allow Irish airlines to operate services to a range of Continental destinations via the UK.

- * Aer Lingus made a profit of almost £38m in the year to March 1988, and has been able to acquire additional and replacement aircraft without recourse to State resources. Aer Rianta has achieved a surplus of £23m as a result of booming passenger traffic and successful ancillary activities.
- * A new runway at Dublin Airport and an extended runway at Cork have nearly been completed.
- * United States Immigration Preinspection at Shannon has now been established permanently.

Further measures in air transport;

- * Further liberalisation in the EC will be negotiated under the Irish Presidency. This would provide for lower air fares and better market access for Irish airlines.
- * Greater opportunities for Irish airlines to serve more destinations in the US and Canada will be sought.
- * Air services agreements will be negotiated with increasingly important trading partners such as Japan and Australia;
- * We will seek to develop special channels for air and sea freight shuttle services to improve access to European markets and reduce costs for Irish exporters. The Government is seeking financial assistance of £200 million from the EC Structural Funds to ensure rapid, reliable and low cost access to Europe for our exporters.
- * Major investment is provided in the National Development Plan for extensions and improvements at the State airports.
- * Further investment of £5m is planned at the regional airports.
- * The complete renewal of the country's Air Traffic Control and air navigation equipment is currently underway and is due to be completed by 1991-2.

B & I RECOVERY PROGRAMME

Fianna Fáil have continued to support the B & I in its recovery from severe financial difficulties.

After the current Government entered office, it became apparent that the first B & I rescue plan, approved by the previous Government in February 1986, was not succeeding. In May 1987, the Minister for Transport directed the Board to draw up a viable rescue plan by Autumn of that year. Following intensive negotiations, a radical rescue plan emerged after long consultations between the Department of Transport, the management of the B & I and the unions.

On foot of this plan, which involved major internal rationalisation, the Government decided to support the Company with equity in 1988 and continued that support into 1989 following a review late last year of the progress which had been achieved.

The trend of spiralling losses in B & I has now been reversed and the Company can look forward to achieving commercial viability within a realistic timescale.

ROAD HAULAGE

The Government is fully committed to liberalisation of the road haulage industry both at national and international level. The final move in the liberalisation of the national sector was accomplished last September.

At international level, this Government are fighting strongly for increases in Ireland's allocation of EC road haulage licences, so that Irish hauliers can enjoy the benefits of access to the wider European Market. Our special peripheral position was acknowledged last year in the allocation of an exceptional number of these licences, now totalling 940 for 1989. This represents a massive increase of over 177% on the allocation available for 1987 (341).

At the June Council of Ministers of Transport, Ireland will be supporting the existing proposal for a phased introduction of cabotage, whereby Irish hauliers will be able to operate more freely within another Member State than at present.

Other measures will be taken to reduce transport costs for Irish road hauliers:

- the maximum weights of commercial vehicles will be adjusted
- speed limits (especially for commercial vehicles) will be revised.

Securing competitive Energy Supplies

Fianna Fáil's policy is to secure energy supplies at a competitive price, making full use of available domestic energy sources, exploiting national resources like Whitegate, and encouraging accelerated exploration for oil and gas.

OIL SUPPLIES

In July 1987, petrol prices were reduced by 10p by order of the Minister for Industry and Commerce. In April 1989, substantial proposed price increases were temporarily frozen due to the abolition of gifts and the making available of cheaper priced product at Whitegate.

WHITEGATE REFINERY/WHIDDY OIL TERMINAL

- * The Whitegate refinery, acquired for the State by Fianna Fáil in 1982, has had £26m made available to it to upgrade its facilities
- * A Task Force has been established to examine technical options and make investment recommendations.
- * Whiddy will be reactivated as a storage and transshipment facility.

OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- * Licensing terms were revised in 1987 to make Irish terms fully competitive with other oil producing countries in North-West Europe.
- * In 1988, agreement was reached with Marathon for a programme to drill up to 10 wells by 1991. The first of these wells flowed gas at a very encouraging 29 million cubic feet per day, and follow-up appraisal on this discovery is now underway. If it proves commercial, it will add significantly to the reserves already available from the Kinsale Head field.
- * Further drilling programmes by other companies are expected in 1990.

NATURAL GAS

- * An agreement signed with Marathon in 1988 provided for increased offtake from the Kinsale field and a \$50m exploration programme with up to 10 new wells.
- * Bord Gais Éireann acquired the assets of Dublin Gas in November 1987. A financial package was successfully concluded with the banks.
- * All the short-and medium-term recommendations of the independent report on safety in Dublin Gas have been implemented. Longer term recommendations are on target for implementation.
- * The North-Eastern pipeline extending the gas network to Drogheda and Dundalk was completed in 1988. A spur line from this to serve the Swords/Airport area has also been constructed, and other spurs to serve the horticultural areas of North County Dublin are now ready to begin.

ELECTRICITY

- * Prices are now in line with the EC average due to sustained reductions. The ESB have announced a further price freeze until 1991.
- * New legislation now enables the ESB to set up subsidiary companies. It provides a framework for the ESB to launch a major drive to diversify in order to create added wealth and employment.

PEAT DEVELOPMENT

The priorities for peat are:

- * Continued efficiency improvements to achieve stronger profitability.
- * Introduction of new technologies.
- * Development of new markets for peat and expansion of existing markets.
- * Protection and creation of viable employment.

VALOREN PROGRAMME

Grants amounting to £19.3 m from the EC over five years have been negotiated to finance development work on indigenous energy. The bulk of these funds are being used to exploit peat and hydro resources.

MINERALS EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- * Fianna Fáil are determined to facilitate the maximum development of the country's mineral deposits. Prospecting licences have more than doubled in the past two years.
- * There have been significant finds of zinc at Galmoy (Laois/Kilkenny) and gypsum at Glangevlin (Cavan).
- * In April 1989, the State's shares in Tara Mines were sold to Outokumpu Oy of Finland for US \$50m. Part of the proceeds will be invested in the strategically important State-owned Whitegate refinery. This was a most satisfactory outcome from a dormant investment that had never yielded any direct financial payback to the taxpayer.

A New Era in Communications

RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING

Fianna Fáil will make the new régime in broadcasting a reality within the framework we have already created, and continue the downward trend in telecommunications charges, while developing a world-class service.

Fianna Fáil have resolved the prolonged political impasse and have legislated for the establishment of independent radio broadcasting and television. This introduces competition in national TV and radio broadcasting, and a range of radio services serving local communities round the country.

This legislation provides for:

- a new national independent radio service
- a new independent television channel
- local radio
- community radio services

* The Independent Radio and Television Commission has selected the successful applications for the independent national radio channel and the third TV service as well as for 15 local radio stations. The radio services will be operational by October. The third TV channel may be operational in the first half of 1990.

* Between 600-800 new jobs in broadcasting will be created as these services develop.

* The Government decided that the Multipoint Microwave Distribution System represents the best way of providing greater TV choice in areas where cable is uneconomic. Franchises will be awarded shortly. MMDS and cable will be the means for distributing the 3rd TV channel. The system will have the capacity for up to 11 channels.

* Radio Tara, the long-wave service to be operated by RTE in collaboration with Radio Luxembourg, will be inaugurated in August. It will be supported by advertising and will have significant coverage of the UK.

* RTE is associated with Telegael, a TV production based in Spiddal on the initiative of Údarás na Gaeltachta. It is aimed at training and employing staff in post-production work. RTE's first major undertaking at Telegael is a £100,000 dubbing project.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

As a result of strategic decisions taken by a Fianna Fáil Government in 1979-80, Ireland now has one of the most advanced telecommunications networks in the world. Telecom Éireann are well advanced in the building of a countrywide integrated digital network, which places Ireland in a strong position to provide advanced telecommunications services immediately. Almost 50% of Telecom Éireann customers are already connected to digital exchanges.

A new Ireland/UK fibre optic cable has been brought into service. Telecom Éireann are investing in a new transatlantic fibre-optic cable, which will have a spur to Cork.

In line with the Government's policy to bring down costs, substantial price reductions were introduced last October. The call charge to EC countries and Switzerland was reduced by 20%. Calls to North America now cost 25% less and a 30% reduction applies to calls to Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia and South Africa. Further reductions in cross-channel charges, of between 10% and 40%, will be announced shortly.

The quality of service has improved. Almost 80% of faults are cleared within two working days. The trunk call failure rate is now below 3%, the average waiting time for a telephone is two months, and the number on the waiting list is down to 13,000.

The Government have used Ireland's transformed telecommunications facilities to promote the establishment of many international financial services in Ireland.

Postal charges have not been increased since 1986 and will be maintained at existing levels for a further year, in keeping with the Government's policy of keeping downward pressure on inflation.

Streamlining the Public Service

Fianna Fáil will continue to make the public service better value, and to increase accountability in public spending.

REFORMS IN THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

On taking office Fianna Fáil placed new emphasis on important development areas by the appointment of Ministers for the Marine and for Tourism linked to responsibility for access transport. Offices headed by a Minister of State were created with special responsibilities for Trade and Marketing, Science and Technology, Food, Horticulture and Forestry.

REDUCING THE COST OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Through the embargo on recruitment, restrictions on filling vacancies, and the early retirement/voluntary redundancy scheme the number of non-industrial civil servants has fallen by about 3,000 since March 1987, a reduction of 10%. Some 650 staff have been redeployed within the public service to areas of high priority work. In the wider non-commercial public sector, numbers are down by 7½%.

These reductions have helped to reduce the cost of the country's overheads, which are principally borne by the taxpayer. Apart from the abolition of the Department of the Public Service, about 25 Government or semi-State agencies have been either abolished or amalgamated since March 1987.

DECENTRALISATION

The programme of decentralisation first announced by Fianna Fáil in 1980 is finally being implemented after having been abandoned by the Coalition. The construction of office accommodation has been, or is being, completed in Galway, Sligo, Cavan and Ballina, and the voluntary transfer of staff to these centres from the Departments of Defence, Social Welfare, Agriculture and Environment will begin this year. This will be followed by the transfer over the next couple of years of staff to the other centres (Limerick, Nenagh, Ennis, Athlone, Killarney, Letterkenny, Waterford and Dundalk) designated in the Government's decentralisation programme.

FUTURE ACCOUNTABILITY AND BETTER VALUE FOR MONEY

The Government have embarked on three major initiatives which will lead to better management of resources.

- * As announced in the last Budget, the Minister for Finance will introduce fundamental changes in financial procedures. These will allow departments and managers greater discretion in managing their operation through being able to allocate administrative costs and organise staff more flexibly. A three-year budget cycle will provide greater certainty about the level of resources. This greater freedom should encourage managers to seek more efficient ways of utilising resources, including staff. Managers will be held accountable for the use of resources and results achieved. These measures will improve internal management, organisation of staffing and accountability.
- * This greater delegation was recommended by the Efficiency Audit Group. Much has been established to make working methods and practices in the public service more efficient and cost-effective. Other recommendations by the Group to improve efficiency are being considered.
- * The Government are also taking steps to improve public accountability for the use of taxpayers' money. Following a review of the role of the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Minister for Finance is to widen the scope of his functions so as to enable him to present to the Dáil a clearer picture of the extent to which value for money is achieved in public spending.

PUBLIC SERVICE PAY AND SPECIAL INCREASES

The negotiation of the current public service pay agreement in association with the Programme for National Recovery

- * greatly facilitates Government management of the economy,
- * contained pay costs within acceptable limits for the period 1987-1990;

- * provides predictability in public service pay developments, and;
- * was instrumental in securing industrial peace in the public service.

A draft agreement has recently been included on special increases in the public service which will

- * guarantee full implementation of special increases for significant numbers of public servants in a structured way;
- * will ensure that the cost of such increases will be maintained within the budgetary provision for 1989;
- * ensure that the cost of public service pay up to 1993 will be within the parameters underpinning the Government's National Development Plan.

Environment

Protecting the Natural Environment

Combating the Nuclear Threat

Urban Renewal / Designated Areas

Protecting the Natural Environment

Fianna Fáil will continue to give top priority to the protection of our natural environment, making environmental issues central to national policy-making and giving Ireland a strong international voice on these matters. We will complete the comprehensive protective framework for our environment that we have been rapidly building over the past two years.

The Taoiseach has for well over a decade been directing attention to the need to protect the natural environment and give it top priority. Care for the environment will remain central in every aspect of national policy-making and Ireland will support enlightened policies in all international fora.

The present Government put Ireland's natural environment centre stage and more protective legislation and regulations have been brought into force in the past two years than in any previous Dáil session.

AIR POLLUTION

- * The Air Pollution Act which became law in 1987 established a comprehensive legal framework for dealing with problems such as smoke, sulphur dioxide, lead and nitrogen dioxide.
- * This year Ireland has signed a Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, which requires stabilisation of nitrogen oxide emissions by 1994. The ESB is to fit low nitrogen oxide burners to its plant at Moneypoint at a cost of £6m.
- * The Dublin local authorities have made special control area orders to control smoke pollution. The first order, for part of Ballyfermot, was made by the Minister in November 1988. A scheme of grants to assist householders to meet the requirements has been put in place, with £1m provided in 1989.
- * A policy directive has been issued under the Planning Acts requiring that development in smoke problem areas takes account of the need for non-polluting heating systems.

OZONE LAYER

The Government ratified the Montreal Protocol requiring 1986 consumption of controlled chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) to be halved by 1998. A total phase-out by the year 2000 was agreed by the EC Environment Council as proposed by Ireland.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- * Based on a report commissioned in 1988, which established the need for a central hazardous waste incinerator, the Government is actively engaged in securing the establishment of such a facility by private interests.
- * Grant assistance to meet 50% of the costs of developing or extending other commercial hazardous waste disposal services was introduced in 1988.
- * Regulations made in 1988 provide for effective control of shipments of hazardous waste into and out of the State.
- * Grant assistance of up to 75% of costs was introduced in 1989 for recycling glass, paper, cans and plastic wastes, with a total budget of £0.25m this year.

UNLEADED PETROL

- * A National campaign 'Let's get the Lead Out' was launched in 1988.
- * Tax adjustments in the 1988 and 1989 Budgets transformed a disadvantage of over 4p per gallon into a 5p per gallon differential in favour of unleaded petrol.
- * A national distribution network of over 400 outlets now is expected to increase to 600 by the end of the Summer — about 20% of the total number of outlets.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

- * Funds were made available for Ireland's successful participation in European Year of the Environment in 1987/1988 (£230,000) and for other environmental awareness programmes.
- * Environment awards schemes for local authorities, industry and for voluntary organisations were put in place.

- * The range of information and promotional materials has been improved.
- * The 'Environment Bulletin', a quarterly review of developments in the area of environmental protection, has been published since September 1987.

WATER POLLUTION

- * A comprehensive programme was introduced in late 1987 after a high number of serious water pollution incidents that summer, including farm surveys in each county, a review of industrial licences under the Water Pollution Act, and an environmental awareness campaign by TEAGASC (seminars etc. attended by 20,000 farmers). The dramatic drop in the number of fish kills — from 122 in 1987 to 50 in 1988 — is an encouraging result of this programme.
- * A Bill has been introduced to increase the penalties under the 1977 Water Pollution Act and to provide far more effective action by local authorities and fisheries boards to combat water pollution.
- * Since 1987, £193m has been invested in new public water and sewerage schemes throughout the country, and 63 schemes were completed.

CLEANER BEACHES

- * Regulations were made in 1988 giving full effect in Irish law to the EC's bathing water directives and establishing strict national standards. In 1989, further regulations brought to 64 the number of bathing areas around the coast monitored for compliance with these national standards.
- * Financial provision was made in 1989 for a special programme of major amenity and environmental works at large beaches. A total of 21 beaches are being assisted.

FUTURE POLICY

Fianna Fáil will take action on growing public concern about the environment in the following ways.

- * Environmental impact assessment will have a central role in the Government's preventive approach to pollution, and will,

in conjunction with other statutory environment controls, ensure that development conforms to acceptable environmental standards.

- * Waste management will be tackled and solved by a coherent policy. Toxic wastes will be monitored at source and in transit. A national facility for environmentally-friendly disposal of such material will be established. Improved disposal systems for other industrial wastes and for domestic wastes will be introduced.
- * Re-cycling of glass, paper, cans etc, will be encouraged, and retailers such as supermarket chains will be asked to provide bottle bank and other storage facilities for re-cyclable waste. Major industries will be asked to include constructive waste management as key aspect of their operational planning.
- * A new information resource centre within the Department of the Environment will provide environmental data for the public and educational establishments. The new resource — ENFO — will also give such access to all research findings of the Environmental Research Unit.
- * Labelling of environmentally friendly products will be intensified so that consumers will be able to judge the impact on the environment of individual purchases.
- * Air and water pollution monitoring will be greatly enhanced. A new monitoring system will be funded partly by those industries whose operations carry an implicit threat to our environmental quality.
- * Investment in water supply and sewerage schemes will exceed £300 million between 1989 and 1993, with nearly 150 new schemes scheduled to commence under the National Development Plan. Special attention will be given to the elimination of pollution blackspots on inland waters and in coastal areas.
- * A £13 million scheme in progress in Dun Laoghaire will eliminate all foul discharges in Dublin Bay and ensure that effluent is treated at the Ringsend Treatment Works. The main pipeline across the Bay will be completed this year.
- * Smoke pollution in Dublin will be controlled so that national and EC standards are met.

- * Inter-departmental action on environmental issues will be greatly stepped up. Co-operation between the Departments of the Environment, Marine and Agriculture and Food in 1987/1988 more than halved the number of fish kills. In future, joint action programmes will be run by Health and Environment, Agriculture and Environment, Industry and Environment, Energy and Environment.
- * Aerosol sprays which damage the ozone layer will be phased out as soon as possible. The manufacturing and distribution sectors will be pressed to find replacements urgently for harmful foam-based packaging, insulation, solvents and refrigerants.
- * Emissions from new cars and other vehicles will be reduced by strict new controls.
- * The sale of unleaded petrol will be further promoted. All vehicles owned by Government Departments and other public bodies will change over to unleaded petrol as soon as possible.
- * Noise pollution problems will be investigated and the need for new controls will be examined.

Combating the Nuclear Threat

Fianna Fáil will continue to put Ireland at the forefront of those countries seeking to close down unsafe nuclear installations and to impose stringent safety standards on the remainder.

Since 1983 Fianna Fáil has consistently campaigned to highlight the dangers of nuclear accidents, particularly from installations like Sellafield, situated on the Irish Sea. Following a series of incidents at Sellafield and the major accident at Chernobyl, the Dáil passed an all-party motion in December 1986 at the instigation of Fianna Fáil seeking the closure of Sellafield.

Since coming into office in 1987 Fianna Fáil has taken many initiatives on issues of nuclear safety.

- * At the Paris Commission meeting in 1987, Ireland called for the closure of Sellafield, and demanded a pledge that member countries would use the best available technology to minimise and eliminate all discharges into the Irish Sea.
- * On the instructions of the Government, the ESB withdrew from involvement in a contract for the construction of the Sizewell-B nuclear power station.
- * The Government indicated to the British Government strong opposition to the burying of nuclear waste from Sellafield under the Irish Sea.
- * The Government has objected to the building of a nuclear power station at Trawsfydd in North Wales, and by making strong representations helped to prevent the carrying out of a dangerous nuclear experiment there which many feared might lead to another Chernobyl-type accident.
- * The Government has repeatedly sought the setting up of an EC nuclear safety inspectorate.
- * At the UN Third Special Session on Disarmament the Taoiseach opposed the dumping of radioactive waste at sea, and raised Irish concern about the passage of nuclear submarine traffic in the Irish Sea.
- * In 1988 the Government reached agreement with shipping interests that ships carrying uranium or other nuclear cargoes would no longer use Dublin port.

* In 1989 the Government decided in agreement with the ESB that the site reserved at Carnsore Point for the building of a nuclear power station should be disposed of for agricultural use or afforestation.

The Bill to abolish the Nuclear Energy Board and to establish in its place a National Radiological Protection Institute will be published shortly. An Emergency Plan, for the event of a nuclear accident, has been approved by Government.

Urban Renewal/ Designated Areas

Fianna Fáil will build on the success of the urban renewal programme by intensifying redevelopment efforts in existing designated areas and extending urban renewal designation selectively to other suitable areas.

This scheme, which has been vigorously and imaginatively implemented by Fianna Fáil, is breathing new life into derelict central areas of 14 towns and cities, including the following 10 new areas into which the scheme was extended by the Minister for the Environment.

* Athlone, Castlebar, Dundalk, Kilkenny, Letterkenny, Sligo, Tallaght, Tralee, Tullamore and Wexford.

In these 15 areas, urban renewal work, between projects completed, in progress or in planning, has been generated with a value of £150m, with a benefit in construction employment of some 4,000 jobs. Further projects amounting to some £60 m are at the preliminary planning stage. Without designation these developments would never have happened.

The Government will build on the success of the urban renewal programme by extending designation for urban renewal, and related tax incentives to a number of new areas in Dublin Inner City (North and South) and to parts of the following towns:

Ballina, Bray, Carlow, Clonmel, Drogheda, Ennis, Longford and Portlaoise.

The £250m Custom House Dock scheme is a catalyst for the revitalisation of the entire city centre area. Development in Dublin has taken off. The first building of the Custom House Docks will be substantially completed by September 1989. Special provision has been made to maximise employment from the North Docks area.

AN END TO DERELICT SITES

Legislation introduced in February will end the eyesore of derelict sites in our cities. The measures taken apply to land in public as well as private ownership. There will be a new tax on owners

of derelict sites, and where a local authority or a semi-State body has a derelict site, it can be directed to sell it.

PEDESTRIANISATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS IN INNER CITY AREAS

To complement urban redevelopment by the private sector, we have initiated two new schemes:

- * An intensive programme of pedestrianisation in Dublin. This programme will in 1989 include Wicklow Street, North Earl Street, Duke Street, Cathedral Street, Crown Alley and Harry Street.
- * A £2m grants scheme to finance a varied programme of environmental works in all urban renewal areas. This is designed to make these areas more attractive for private sector investment. Works of this kind will be developed further to consolidate the physical improvement of urban renewal areas.

PLANNING LEGISLATION

The Government will enact the Local Government (Planning and Development) (No. 2) Bill, 1988 and the Derelict Sites Bill, 1989 as soon as possible, so that greater weight will be given to the interest of the community in the area of planning compensation, and so that more effective measures will be available to prevent and remedy dereliction.

The Social Dimension

Social Equity

Health

Housing

Education

Recruitment, Training and Employment

—Improved Industrial Relations

Justice

Law Reform

Family Law and the Status of Women

An Ghaeilge and an Ghaeltacht

Arts and Heritage

Youth Affairs

Promotion of Sport

Social Equity

Fianna Fáil will maintain the overall value of social welfare payments — with further special increases for those on the lowest payments, as resources permit. We will continue to implement the general provisions of the Commission on Social Welfare.

- * At a time of severe pressure on the national finances Fianna Fáil have protected those who rely on social welfare, and improved the position of those on the lowest payments. We also maintained all the free schemes introduced by Fianna Fáil and in some cases improved them.
- * The Government have maintained the position of all social welfare recipients and have provided special additional increases of 25% between 1988 and 1989 for those on the lowest payments, unemployment assistance and supplementary welfare allowances, at a total cost of £257 million. A family with five children on long-term unemployment assistance can now receive £127 per week, plus children's allowances.
- * The Treatment Benefits Scheme (dental, optical and aural benefits) has been extended to dependent spouses of insured workers, mainly women working in the home. To date 100,000 women have benefited.
- * We introduced a national fuel scheme and extended it to 30,000 long term unemployed.
- * Special provisions have been made for families. A new child-related tax exemption scheme for workers on low pay with families was introduced this year. A minimum payment of £10 a week for the children of social welfare recipients comes in from July.
- * For workers on low pay with families, the Family Income Supplement has been improved and extended. A husband and wife with five children can now get a supplement of £41 per week to an income of £140.
- * A fullscale review is being carried out into the regulation and control of moneylending.

- * Social insurance has been extended to the self-employed to provide pensions as of right for old age and surviving spouses, and to introduce greater equity into the financing of social insurance. Prior to this, seven out of ten self-employed people had to fall back on means-tested payments in their old age.
- * There has been an unprecedented success from measures taken to eliminate fraud, abuse and unwarranted claiming. This has helped us in providing extra increases for genuine claimants.

FUTURE SOCIAL POLICY

- * The insurability of part-time workers, who include many young people and married women, will be reviewed to provide social insurance protection for them.
- * A social assistance scheme for parents bringing up children on their own will be introduced.
- * We will continue our special focus on families with the aim to further improve Children's Allowances and other child-related benefits as resources permit.
- * A separate Social Welfare Information Office will be set up to improve information to applicants, and so that the system is perceived to be fair and independent.
- * We will continue to develop closer working relations with Voluntary Organisations in preparing and implementing our policies in the social welfare area.
- * New measures will be introduced to protect the benefits and rights of workers in private occupational pension schemes, and to ensure equal treatment for men and women.
- * Means Tests for Social Welfare will be simplified with a view to having a uniform system for similar categories of recipients. The review of the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme will be completed, and steps will be taken to ensure uniformity and improve the service to recipients.
- * We will make the social welfare system more flexible and responsive to people's changing needs and improve the quality, privacy and efficiency of the service.

- * We will give strong support to the development of the social dimension of the European Community under the Single European Act. We will press for special European travel concessions for the elderly.
- * We will arrange for reciprocal social insurance cover to cater for those at work in non-EC countries. We are already well advanced in negotiating agreements with the United States, Canada, Australia and Austria.

Health

Having taken and implemented the difficult decisions necessary to provide a health service at a cost we can afford, Fianna Fáil have now put in place a framework for a service that will be caring, efficient and effective. An action programme on hospital waiting lists and emergency services, funded from within the overall health allocation, will alleviate problems that have arisen in the necessary reconstruction of the health services.

HEALTH EXPENDITURE

The central purpose of Fianna Fáil policy is to provide a caring, efficient and effective service. To achieve this Fianna Fáil are spending 20% of total Exchequer funding on our health services. This year's expenditure will be in excess of £1,363 million.

The over-expenditure of previous years and the large over-runs have been brought under firm control. The difficult decisions necessary to provide a health service at a cost we can afford have been taken and implemented.

HOSPITAL MODERNISATION

The reorganisation of the acute hospital system has, since the 1960's, been a necessary pre-requisite to the development of a modern hospital system. This has now been tackled in a planned way.

The corner has been turned; and a framework is now in place for the further development of a modern, cost-effective and caring hospital service.

Already, a number of hospitals and facilities have been developed to the highest modern standards of patient care. The major new hospital at Beaumont has been opened; Cavan, Castlebar, Mullingar and St. James' are opening this year.

The building of new hospitals at Ardkeen in Waterford, Wexford and Sligo are underway.

Construction of the new Tallaght Hospital will begin in 1990. Further development of the Mater Hospital, and a new hospital to replace Temple Street Hospital in the same area, will be completed in the next few years.

ACTION PROGRAMME ON HOSPITAL WAITING LISTS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Child Deafness

In October 1987 the Minister for Health established a Working Group on the Review of the National Audiology Service. The Group has looked especially at the problem of child deafness, and in view of the potential seriousness of Glue Ear as a cause of hearing loss, each Ears, Nose and Throat Department will be asked to suspend non-urgent elective surgery for a fixed period of weeks to deal with the backlog of cases awaiting grommets. This procedure is carried out on a day-patient basis.

An additional £100,000 will be made available to enable the throughput of ENT Departments to be increased for the rest of this year, thus ensuring that all children who need this minor surgery will have this procedure carried out as a matter of urgency.

Hip Replacement Operations

The number of hip operations has increased by 10% between the end of 1985 and 1988, when 2,000 joint replacements were carried out.

However, in the light of the continuing increase in waiting lists, new facilities have been developed and resources directed to tackle the problem. Additional facilities include 2 new theatres in Cappagh Hospital, which will cater for an additional 300 hip replacements per annum and which will open in November. New orthopaedic theatres in St. Colmcille's, Loughlinstown, now completed, and new theatres in Kilkenny for which tenders will be sought later this year, will further improve the position, by creating more capacity within the orthopaedic service.

From 1 July additional resources will be directed to a special programme designed to bring the waiting time for hip replacement operations down to six months by the end of 1990. An extra 250 operations will be carried out this year.

Accident, Emergency and Casualty Services

The Minister for Health has for some time been concerned with improving the operation of the Accident and Emergency and Casualty Service, particularly in the Dublin area with a view to avoiding unnecessary delays in casualty departments for patients. He has had the situation reviewed in depth with representatives of the hospitals concerned and officials of the Eastern Health Board.

As a result of this analysis, it is proposed to institute new arrangements from 1 September already each of the major Dublin hospitals will provide its own Accident & Emergency and Casualty Service on a 24 hour basis.

Cost Implications

The cost of the Action Programme described above, which will be implemented almost immediately, will be met by a reallocation of resources within the Estimate for the Health Services (from appropriations-in-aid).

HEALTH PROMOTION

The prevention of illness and handicap and the promotion of good health has been, and will continue to be, a central part of Fianna Fáil policy.

The necessary structures to enable this to develop are now in place, and considerable work has already been achieved through the new arrangements.

Major health issues, such as the hazards of smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, cancer and Aids have been tackled and programmes put in place. Ireland's anti-smoking campaign has been taken as a model for EC anti-smoking measures. Food hygiene, nutrition, exercise and safety promotions have been effectively undertaken, as has a major mumps, measles and rubella immunization programme.

In the short time since its establishment, the Health Promotion Unit in the Department of Health has undertaken a very extensive

programme of activity, and its Advisory Council has developed policies for the further encouragement of good health practices in the country.

VHI

The necessary decisions and actions have been taken to resolve the major financial problems of the VHI. To ensure that the VHI could continue to provide effective cover for its 1.2 million members, expert consultants were appointed to develop a Recovery Programme for the Board. This major programme is now in place and being implemented, and the confidence and support of the subscribers to the VHI have been retained.

NEW CONTRACT FOR DOCTORS IN THE GMS

One of the most significant developments in the delivery of the health services in recent years was the completion of the negotiations between the Department and the Health Boards and the Irish Medical Organisation on a new form of contract for doctors participating in the General Medical Service. The main feature of the new contract is that doctors are now remunerated for services to eligible patients on the basis of a capitation payment. This new agreement constitutes a sound basis, not only for the future of the GMS on a cost-effective basis, but also for the development of general practice as a whole, enabling it to fulfil its full potential as the core of an integrated and comprehensive health service.

IMPROVED MANAGEMENT OF THE HEALTH SERVICES

Our Health Services continue to cater for ever increasing numbers of patients — a total of almost ½ million in-patient and 1½ million out-patient services were provided in 1988.

In light of the size, cost, and complexity of these services the Government established a major Commission on Health Funding to examine in a comprehensive way and to advise on future funding and organisation of our Health Services.

Following receipt and consideration of the recommendations of the Commission, the Government will decide upon and put into place any revised arrangements for the management and delivery of the services which it considers necessary in ensuring that the

best possible patient care is provided from the available resources.

In the current year a major initiative has been taken to improve the level and quality of management information. This will facilitate and improve decision-making processes in the service and ensure that appropriate resources are identified and directed to areas of greatest need in terms of patient care.

CARING FOR THE ELDERLY

Significant progress has already been made in implementing recommendations of the Working Party Report — 'The Care of the Elderly — The Years Ahead', which was launched in December last.

The development of the pilot project by the Eastern Health Board at Baggot Street Hospital, where a range of services for the elderly, including respite care, are being provided on a community basis, is a prime example of the future direction of services for the elderly.

PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

In the past two years much has been achieved in developing the community-based Psychiatric Services, including the provision of Day Centres, Day Hostels, High Support Hostels and Acute Psychiatric Units in General Hospitals. This steady progress will be maintained.

CARE FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

The allocation for services for the mentally handicapped was maintained in real terms over the last two years. The development of Community Services by State and voluntary agencies for the mentally handicapped has been quietly spectacular. We will continue to provide for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and management of mental handicap.

DRUGS REFUND SCHEME

As already announced, a new Drugs Refund Scheme will be introduced in the Summer. It will ensure that no person on continuous medication will have an outlay of more than £28 per month for their drugs.

GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

The major restructuring of the Health Services has been tackled effectively. The fundamental reorganisation of the Hospital Services has been achieved. The basic change in the delivery of the family doctor services necessary to realise the full potential of community health care has also been carried through.

A framework for the future of our Health Services is in place. Fianna Fáil will build upon this framework with a view to ensuring that all our citizens can enjoy a healthy active lifestyle and have access to appropriate services when this is necessary.

Housing

Fianna Fáil will continue to create the conditions for wider home ownership and for growth in the construction sector.

Increased output in the Construction Industry

Fianna Fáil's economic policies, leading to low interest rates and renewed investment confidence, have created the environment for the revival of a healthy construction industry.

This year will see the first increase in output in the construction industry since 1981. This 6% recovery holds the potential for sustaining 3,000 new jobs, and has been spurred by the extension of the designated areas (urban renewal) scheme, the Custom House Docks project and the reintroduction of Section 23-type incentives for private rented dwellings.

Building Societies Bill

The Building Societies Bill, 1988, recently passed by Dáil Eireann, fundamentally reforms the law on building societies. It will also allow the building societies to provide a full range of financial services, to invest directly in residential and commercial property development and to provide conveyancing and auctioneering services. It will enable societies to make a fuller contribution to the economy and will bring benefits for the house purchaser, the user of financial services and the building society investor.

Cheaper Mortgages

Fianna Fáil's firm handling of the economy has brought the mortgage rate down to its lowest level in 20 years. Despite the recent rise brought about by international factors it is still 3¼% below what it was when the Government took office. Not only are mortgages cheaper — but there is also more mortgage finance available.

More Private Houses Being Built

Low interest rates, low inflation and renewed confidence have halted the 8-year decline in private housing. Registrations of new houses under the National House Building Guarantee Scheme went up by almost 17% in 1988, and by 43% in the first four months of this year.

Waiting Lists for Local Authority Housing

Significant progress has been made in reducing local authority waiting lists for housing. Since 1986, the number of approved applicants on waiting lists for local authority housing has decreased by almost 3,000 or 14%. Many applicants now on waiting lists for housing have already been offered accommodation but prefer to wait for a house in their preferred choice of location. Homeless people and single people who would have little prospect of being housed in the past are now being regularly housed by local authorities.

Finance for low-income house purchasers

Low-income house purchasers, as a direct result of Government intervention, now have radically improved options. Banks and building societies have agreed to take up part of the demand for house purchase formerly catered for by the local authorities alone. Purchasers who cannot obtain bank or building society finance are still catered for by local authorities. This is tangible evidence of the Fianna Fáil Government's commitment to further increase the level of home ownership, already the highest in Europe.

Taking care of the Homeless

The Housing Act, 1988, for the first time recognised the housing rights of the homeless and put the onus on local authorities to take account of their needs, while also giving local authorities new power to help them meet those needs. The scheme of assistance for the provision of housing by voluntary housing organisations was revised in 1988 and the capital finance available to voluntary bodies for this purpose is now 95% of cost, subject to a limit of £20,000 per unit. To fund this scheme the Government provided £3 million over three years in the 1988 Budget.

Tenant Purchase

Everyone aspires to owning their own home. The Government is making that dream a reality for local authority tenants through the Tenant Purchase Scheme which has resulted in over 40,000 applications to purchase.

Remedial Works Scheme for local authority houses

In recognition of the importance which the Government attaches to improving the living conditions of tenants the works scheme for the refurbishment and upgrading of local authority estates has been considerably expanded and developed. The capital available for this purpose has been increased from £1.6 million in 1986 to £15 million in 1989. Work is in progress currently on over 80 schemes countrywide involving almost 12,000 houses.

Local Government (Multi-Storey Buildings) Act, 1988

This legislation was enacted following the explosion at Raglan House and gives statutory effect to a central recommendation of the Task Force on Multi-Storey Buildings, in the interests of reassuring the occupiers of such buildings and the general public using them. The Task Force had recommended that certain buildings should be structurally appraised to determine their resistance to disproportionate collapse.

FUTURE HOUSING POLICY

Public Housing

As future resources permit, the following initiatives will be considered in a new approach to public housing:

- * The use of 60% of proceeds of the sale of local authority houses under the tenant purchase schemes by local authorities as capital to assist in the provision of housing for households unable to house themselves from their own resources and in the upgrading of existing substandard local authority rented housing.
- * The use of the remaining 40% of these proceeds as revenue by local authorities to compensate for the loss of rental income which will result from the sale of houses.
- * The local authority house purchase and improvement loans will be entirely financed by the Housing Finance Agency.
- * The Housing Finance Agency will provide the funding for a revised scheme of assistance for voluntary housing.

These changes will release more resources to deal with ongoing social housing needs without affecting the overall Exchequer Borrowing Requirement.

Social Housing

The role of authorities in the provision of housing for households on low incomes will be expanded:

- * They will be able to use capital monies from the sales scheme to expand their housing programmes.
- * Housing programmes will, where it is appropriate and cost effective, consist of the purchase of existing houses by local authorities as well as the traditional new building.
- * Local authorities will provide sites to voluntary and co-operative housing organisations involved in meeting social housing needs, and the cost of providing such sites will be met from the capital monies from the sales scheme.
- * Local authorities will, as a more effective and faster alternative to providing new houses for persons who are eligible for local authority housing, be enabled to carry out such repairs and improvements to the existing houses of such persons who are living in unfit and overcrowded conditions.

Substandard Local Authority Estates

The programme of remedial works to upgrade substandard estates will be further expanded, particularly in the larger urban areas, by the use of some of the proceeds of house sales.

Tenants in these estates can look forward to a major improvement in their living accommodation and environment. Local authorities will be required to improve the management and maintenance of their estates and ensure that tenants are directly involved in the running of their estates. In addition, the programme will provide for the installation of bathrooms, showers and other basic facilities in older local authority houses that lack them.

Low-Start Mortgages

Substantial savings will be realised over the next few years as the now-terminated new house mortgage subsidy scheme tapers out. Fianna Fáil propose to use some of these savings to finance a new low-start mortgage scheme to assist tenants of local authority houses and persons on approved waiting lists to provide houses for themselves.

The scheme will provide for payment of a subsidy of £3,300 in instalments spread over five years as follows, £1,000, £800, £600, £500, £400 and will be paid directly to the lending agency. This will substantially reduce the burden of mortgage repayments on such households in the critical early years of a mortgage, and will reduce the pressure on local authority waiting lists.

Voluntary and Co-operative Housing

Fianna Fáil wish to expand the role of the voluntary and co-operative housing sector. Local authorities will actively encourage this sector by the provision of sites and other technical assistance. In addition:

- * The present scheme of capital grants to approved voluntary housing bodies will be revised so that the capital grant is increased from 80% to 90% of the cost and the maximum per unit of accommodation is increased from £20,000 to £22,500 for one or two person accommodation and £27,000 for family accommodation.
- * The HFA will take over the funding of this scheme from the Exchequer, with a direct subsidy being paid to the Agency in respect of the loan charges.
- * Housing legislation will be changed to allow local authorities to advance loans by way of block finance to housing co-operatives (to replace the present individual loan system).

Mortgage Finance

Fianna Fáil will continue with the prudent economic and fiscal policies which have been so successful in bringing down mortgage rates.

Under the new Building Societies Bill the societies will be able to develop new mortgage packages such as low-start mortgages, shared equity etc., which will add to and enhance the present mortgage options available to first time purchasers. They will also be freer to offer finance for house improvements. An ombudsman-type system will be established to deal with consumer complaints in relation to the activities of building societies.

Savings Protection

Under the new Building Societies Bill a savings protection scheme will be introduced to protect savings held by the public in building societies.

Private Rented Accommodation

A special review is being carried out with the objective of increasing the supply of accommodation available for private renting, improving standards and protecting tenants, while at the same time recognising the legitimate rights of landlords.

Education

Fianna Fáil will continue to focus the vast State resources that go into education on preparing our young people for a world of rapid economic and social change.

Fianna Fáil are spending £1,260 million on education in 1989. This constitutes 18% of Exchequer expenditure and almost 6.2% of GNP, the second highest in Europe.

Education is the cornerstone of a successful social and economic policy. To that end, we have taken a number of decisions over the last two years which have brought a clear sense of purpose and direction to the education sector.

- * In the area of primary education we have established major reviews of both the structure and organisation of the system as well as the curriculum taught in schools.
- * To promote equity in the education system and to prepare our second-level students for a rapidly changing employment environment, we have embarked on a comprehensive revision of the curriculum to commence in September 1989.
- * In order to benefit fully from the completion of the internal market, a five-year intensive language programme has begun in the schools. Already, this has seen a 50% increase in the number of schools offering German to their students.
- * An increasing number and variety of education and training programmes have been developed and expanded in order to meet the vocational needs of young people.
- * Our commitment to the disadvantaged in our society was evident over the last two years through the support services provided for travellers' children, the development of the Adult Literacy programme and the maintenance of remedial provision in schools.
- * Third-level education will continue to expand in the years ahead and therefore absorb a large share of the nation's resources. An intensive examination of all aspects of third-level education is currently being undertaken by three separate Committees. The first of these reports on third-level entry has been completed. Plans will then be outlined for the anticipated requirements of this sector.

- * In recognition of their outstanding achievements in the area of technological education, the National Institutes of Higher Education at Dublin and Limerick have been established as Universities — Dublin City University and the University of Limerick.

EDUCATION PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The challenges confronting us — changes in demographic patterns, rapid technological developments, the completion of the internal market — require coherent planning and a fundamental examination of our entire education system. Fianna Fáil in Government have already embarked on this developmental process, and intend to continue with it in the years ahead.

Schools

- * The pupil-teacher ratio at both Primary and Post- Primary level will be reduced in the context of demographic decline, as agreed under the Programme for National Recovery.
- * The recommendations of the two review bodies on primary education due to report this year will ensure that we adopt clear and precise strategies for the development of first-level education.
- * On completion of the examination of the scheme of assistance for disadvantaged schools, we will remove the anomalies deemed to exist in its operation.
- * Fianna Fáil will continue its support of co-education, All-Irish and multi-denominational schools as well as parental involvement.
- * At second level a new Junior Cycle programme and examination, the Junior Certificate, will be introduced in the schools in September 1989. Arising from discussions held with those directly involved in its introduction, appropriate arrangements for the implementation of this Certificate programme are now being finalised.
- * A new subject, Technology, will be added to the curriculum on a phased basis.
- * Initiatives currently in train to promote the study of German, Spanish and Italian as well as French will be enhanced by the

E.C. LINGUA programme recently adopted by the Council of Ministers. These joint initiatives will increase the capacity of young people to communicate with each other and ensure the provision of foreign language expertise in the present and future workforce.

- * The new education and training programmes YOUTHREACH and PETRA will ensure that our young people are equipped with the range of skills and relevant to their working world.
- * Full computerisation of all examination results is to commence in the summer of 1989.

Third-Level Education

- * Revision of the third-level grant system will now be undertaken along with other recommendations of the recently completed report on third-level admission policies and procedures.
- * In order to enhance the capability of third-level institutions to provide the necessary support to industry, new facilities will be provided where existing facilities are deemed to be inadequate. Equipment programmes will be expanded to meet identified deficiencies in the area of Science, Technology and Business Studies.
- * The role of the Regional Technical Colleges will be expanded through new legislation devised to facilitate research.
- * A new Regional Technical College will be built in Tallaght.
- * Starting in academic year 1989/90, the range of courses qualifying for European Social Fund money will expand to diploma-level programmes i.e. both the three year *ab initio* diplomas and the one-year add-on diploma. This should prove a welcome addition to the already substantial level of support at the certificate level.
- * The Educational Opportunities Scheme for the long-term unemployed will be extended in September 1989 to additional centres and expanded nationwide from January 1990. This programme offers to adults second chance education, while allowing them to retain their social welfare entitlements.

Fianna Fáil will ensure through the strategies it has adopted that our education system continues to meet the needs of our young people and to prepare them to live full and complete lives in a world subject to rapid economic and social change.

We have always sought to achieve our objectives in partnership with all those involved in education, and we will continue to do so through our participation with the social partners in the Programme for National Recovery.

Recruitment, Training and Employment

Fianna Fáil will provide our labour force with the skills and training they need for employment in a modern environment. We will also complete the updating of labour legislation, bring forward legislation to reform industrial relations, and support the strengthening of the social dimension in the European community.

FÁS was established in 1988 by Fianna Fáil to coordinate and streamline the functions of AnCO, the Youth Employment Agency and the National Manpower Service with the clear priority of helping the long-term unemployed and early school leavers.

- * In its first 17 months, FÁS has made substantial progress. It has improved its targeting, regionalised its operations, reduced staff by about 400, and cut gross costs by 12% from £198m in 1987 to £173m in 1989. It has set up a Co-Operative Development Council for worker and other co-operatives. Its overseas subsidiary company is already successful.
- * In 1988, 40,000 people got jobs through FÁS offices and training centres. A total of 69,489 people completed FÁS programmes — 33,508 in major training programmes for young people, the long-term unemployed and entrepreneurs, 11,351 on short JobSearch courses and 24,630 on employment programmes. This was an 11% increase on 1987.

CERT Between 1987 and 1989 the number trained by CERT for hotel catering and tourism will have increased 16% to nearly 8,000. CERT has opened new inner city training centres in Dublin and Cork. CERT's 1988 manpower survey showed 107,000 people to be working in the hotel and catering industry, a substantial increase in numbers.

Planning Ahead With the improving employment situation, it becomes even more important to ensure that there are no skill shortages. Total manpower expenditure in the five years of the National Development Plan will be £2.5 billion. FÁS and CERT will increase their activity levels by 31% by 1993 in skills relevant to local employment needs and targeted at early school leavers and the long-term unemployed.

IMPROVED INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Fianna Fáil attaches the greatest importance to good industrial relations, so as to enable the nation to thrive. 1988 was the best year for industrial relations for 25 years. This was largely due to the Programme for National Recovery, its associated pay agreements and its mechanisms for discussing difficulties before they reach a critical point. There were only six disputes about pay in the whole year.

- * Under the Programme discussions were held with both sides of industry on changes in industrial relations legislation. The resultant Bill is in the final stages of drafting.
- * Legislation was passed to facilitate worker participation at sub-board levels in State enterprises and to provide for worker directors in Aer Rianta and the National Rehabilitation Board.
- * A Framework Agreement on hours was also concluded after talks between the Government, the FUE, the CIF and the ICTU.

In accordance with the Programme, several legislative initiatives were also undertaken.

- * The Protection of Employees (Employers' Insolvency) Act, 1984, was extended to employees over 66 years.
- * A review of the legislation governing hours of work, and an assessment of the need of part-time workers for statutory protection are well under way.
- * In April, the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act came into force. It is a radical transformation of occupational safety and health legislation. It introduces a comprehensive system of safety protection for all at work, regardless of status or sector. Its flexible provisions are based on a strongly preventive approach, involving close co-operation with both sides of

industry. The National Authority on Occupational Safety and Health will be established by October to implement the new system.

Updating Labour Legislations

We will complete the updating of labour legislation, by bringing forward Bills on unfair dismissal, payment of wages, and employment equality and by developing any necessary legislation on part-time worker protection and regulation of working hours.

- * Fianna Fáil will bring forward in the next session of the Dáil the Industrial Relations reform legislation which aims to lay the foundations for improved industrial relations into the next century and help create conditions for job growth.
- * The Labour Relations Commission will be established on foot of this.

The Social Dimension in the European Community

Fianna Fáil fully support plans to strengthen the social dimension in the European Community. Ireland holds the Presidency of the European Community in January 1990. Ireland's priority aims are to achieve EC support for the long-term unemployed, free movement of workers and vocational training. Ireland will also promote the social dimension of the internal market, and ensure that developments, especially on a basic social charter, are relevant to Ireland. Fianna Fáil will also be implementing the reformed European Social Fund and maximising its benefits for the country.

Justice

Fianna Fáil will continue to reorganise and remobilise our resources in the nation's fight against crime.

GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

* **Recruitment and Training**

A recruitment competition is ongoing to recruit 1,000 Garda trainees. The first intake is in training since April 1989 and three more intakes are planned this year. A new extended training course has been introduced.

* **Community Policing**

A series of Community policing schemes have been established. These schemes are now in operation in four of the five Garda Divisions of the Dublin Metropolitan Area. Community policing schemes were also recently introduced in Tallaght, Leixlip and Bray. Expansion of the scheme is under constant, active consideration.

* **Neighbourhood Watch**

The Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is a major step forward in crime-prevention, which has won widespread acceptance among the general public. To date, there are 764 Schemes in operation in Dublin involving 169,587 households.

* **Communications**

As part of the new Garda Síochána National Radio Network, a sophisticated new communications system has been provided for the Garda Síochána in the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

* **Computerisation**

An extensive programme of computerisation of Garda systems is being implemented.

* **Garda Advisory Group**

A Garda Advisory Group, consisting of persons drawn from the top ranks of industry, commerce and public administration together with the Commissioner and a representative of the Minister for Justice, has been set up to advise on Garda management.

* **Promotions**

Since October 1988, one in three promotional vacancies arising in the Garda Síochána can be filled, as compared with one in ten in the public service generally.

THE COURTS

- * Fianna Fáil have begun an ambitious programme of upgrading court buildings in Dublin and around the country. A plan for a rationalised District Court network will be announced shortly.
- * Over the last two years progress has been made in extending computerisation in District and Circuit Court Offices nationwide. Computerisation will be extended to all Circuit Court Offices and a large proportion of District Court Offices over the next two years. In addition, a start will be made in computerising the General Office of the High Court.

THE PRISONS

Fianna Fáil in Government have been determined to pursue the modernisation of our prison system.

- * The place of detention at Wheatfield has been completed to cater for 320 male offenders, and funds have been provided to enable opening on a phased basis from mid-1989.
- * Additional accommodation for 50 offenders at Fort Mitchel, Spike Island, will be brought into operation in 1989.
- * Extensive works related to the upgrading of security, services and improvement of facilities generally are being undertaken in all the other prisons and places of detention.
- * Agreed new rosters in the Prison Service have been implemented which eliminate built-in overtime and which provide an improved attendance pattern for staff. 200 additional prison staff have been appointed in association with the revised rostering arrangements.
- * The number of Community Service Orders made in the last two years was almost 2,000, thus contributing to a reduction in custodial costs and providing a tangible benefit to the community. In 1988, approximately 100,000 hours were worked under the scheme.

Law Reform

Fianna Fáil will extend its programme of law reform, continuing the task of providing Ireland with a modern social structure and an efficient framework for today's business needs.

Fianna Fáil in Government has had a very active legislative programme, enacting many important legal and social reforms. They include reforms that are necessary for the efficient functioning of modern business.

- * **Ground Rents.** The low cost scheme of purchase of ground rents administered by the Land Registry has been extended indefinitely.
- * **Insurance Costs.** The Courts Act, 1988, has abolished juries in personal injury actions. Another provision gives the Minister for Justice the power to limit the costs of legal counsel in these actions. The insurance industry have stated that these changes will reduce liability insurance premiums.
- * **The Licensing Laws.** The Intoxicating Liquor Act, 1988 includes measures to curb underage drinking, provides for the issue of special restaurant licences, and amends permitted hours in licensed premises and registered clubs.
- * **The Data Protection Act** protects individual privacy and rights, and also facilitates the development of the International Financial Services Centre at the Custom House Docks.

PUBLISHED LEGISLATION

- * **The Firearms and Offensive Weapons Bill, 1989**
The Bill designates crossbows and stun guns as firearms, subject to all the controls applicable to firearms. It also makes it unlawful in specified circumstances to carry or trade in other dangerous or offensive weapons.
- * **Prohibition of Incitement to Racial, Religious or National Hatred Bill, 1988**
The Bill introduces an offence prohibiting incitement to hatred against groups or persons on account of their race, colour, nationality, religion or ethnic or national origins. It will remove one of the barriers to this country ratifying the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

* **Criminal Justice (Forensic Evidence) Bill, 1989**

The Bill facilitates genetic fingerprinting and other forensic tests.

FUTURE LEGISLATION

The following Bills will be among those brought forward by Fianna Fáil in Government:

* **Larceny (Amendment Bill)**

To strengthen the law relating to receiving stolen goods and possession of housebreaking implements.

* **Criminal Law Bill**

To abolish the division of crimes into felonies and misdemeanours, and to provide for consequential changes in powers of arrest without warrant and in court practice and procedure. Also, to abolish penal servitude, hard labour, corporal punishment, prison divisions and the crime of suicide.

* **Civil Legal Aid Bill**

To place the present administrative Scheme of Civil Legal Aid and Advice on a statutory basis.

* **Criminal Law (Evidence) Bill**

To provide for the admissibility of computerised evidence in criminal cases and to deal with the giving of evidence by spouses and other relatives of an accused.

* **Bill to implement any recommendations of the Committee to investigate fund raising for charitable and other purposes.**

* **Bill to provide for the confiscation of the proceeds of crime**

This Bill will be prepared when the Law Reform Commission who are examining this topic publish their report.

Family Law and the Status of Women

Fianna Fáil will continue our major programme of law reform aimed at improving the position of women in society and enhancing the family.

LEGISLATION ENACTED

* **Abolition of status of illegitimacy**

The Status of Children Act, 1987 did away with the concept of illegitimacy and provisions discriminating against children born outside marriage.

* **Adoption**

The 1988 Act extends the categories of children eligible for adoption to include children whose parents have failed in their duty towards them so that they are not perforce assigned to institutional care.

* **Child Abuse**

Guidelines and additional funds have been made available to improve services in relation to child abuse. The Child Care Bill provides a new framework for the needs and well-being of all our children by strengthening child care and family support services.

* **Enforcement of Judgements**

As a result of legislation enabling Ireland to ratify the 1968 EEC Judgements Convention, speedy and informal procedures are available to enforce civil judgements (including maintenance orders) given in one Member State in another.

* **Family Law Act, 1988**

This abolishes the old action for restitution of conjugal rights.

* **Judicial Separation**

The law on judicial separation has been reformed by an Act, which was initiated as a Private Members Bill, and agreed after extensive changes made at the instance of the Minister for Justice.

PUBLISHED LEGISLATION

* **Reform of the Rape Law**

The Bill fulfils a strong commitment made by Fianna Fáil prior to the last Election. The Criminal Law (Rape) (Amendment) Bill, 1988, makes marital rape a crime, increases the penalty for aggravated sexual assaults, provides that rape and aggravated sexual assault trials will be held in the Central Criminal Court in the absence of the public, and extends the protection at present afforded to rape victims to the victims of all sexual assaults.

The Rape Crisis Centre has been provided with a State grant to enable their continued operation as a source of support and counselling for rape victims.

* **Ban on Video Nasties**

The Video Recordings Bill, in fulfilment of a strong Fianna Fáil commitment, controls violent and pornographic videos, an important and necessary step for the protection of our young people and the dignity of women.

PLANNED LEGISLATION

* **A Family Home Bill** to give each spouse equal rights of ownership in the family home and contents.

* **Child Abduction**

Legislation is being prepared to give effect to European Conventions on child abduction.

WOMEN ON THE BOARDS OF SEMI-STATE BODIES

As a Government Fianna Fáil have increased the number of women appointed to State-sponsored bodies including financial institutions, such as the Central Bank and Irish Life.

SOCIAL POLICY AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN

* Fianna Fáil policy is to firmly eliminate sex stereotyping from the education system.

* Employment equality legislation is to be amended. A monitoring system has been set up on equal opportunities in semi-State bodies.

- * New powers in the Housing Act, 1988, to secure accommodation for homeless persons enables local authorities to house women threatened with homelessness as a result of domestic violence.
- * **The extension of treatment benefits to dependent spouses**, mainly women working in the home, will continue. To date, over 82,000 women have received optical, dental and other benefits since October 1987.
- * **Caring for the elderly**
Many women make increased financial sacrifices in helping to look after elderly parents incapacitated in the home. To provide greater recognition of the work they do, the prescribed relatives allowance in future cases is to be paid direct to the person caring for the elderly relative.
- * **Extension of PRSI to the self-employed**
Hitherto, many women married to self-employed men would on bereavement have had to rely on a means-tested pension, because no provision had been made for their welfare, but in future such widows will obtain a pension as of right.

An Ghaeilge agus an Ghaeltacht

Creideann Fianna Fáil gurb í an Ghaeilge an gné is leithlí d'ár bhféiniúlacht mar náisiún. Cheana féin, tá moltaí á bplé ag Comhairle Chultúir an Chomhphobail faoin tacaíocht a chuirfear ar fáil chun cabhrú le gnéithe éagsúla de na cultúir seo, agus ár dteanga féin in a measc.

'Sí an Ghaeltacht foinse na Gaeilge; gan Gaeltacht bheo, bhríomhar, bheadh laghdú mór i ndán don teanga. Is dá bhrí sin a rinne an Rialtas seo iarracht ar leith chun saol eacnamaíochta agus sóisialta na Gaeltachta a fheabhsú, agus fostaíocht a chur ar fáil.

CÉIMEANNA TÁBHACHTACHA

Le cúnamh ón gCrannchur Náisiúnta tá tograí móra curtha i gcrích, mar seo a leanas:

- Tugadh £1m do Ollscoil na Gaillimhe chun láthair do léann Gaeilge a chur ar fáil.
- Rinneadh aththógáil ar an bpiara ar Oileán Chléire i gCo. Chorcaí.
- Cuireadh cúnamh breise ar fáil do Chumann na bhFiann agus do Ghlór na nGael.
- D'éirigh le Taibhdhearc na Gaillimhe — Amharclann Náisiúnta na Gaeilge — a hamharclann a fhorbairt agus a mhaisiú.

Athbhunaíodh Comhchoiste an Oireachtais don Ghaeilge chun ceist na Gaeilge i dTithe an Oireachtais agus cur chun cinn na teanga i gcoitinne a scrúdú.

Tá comhlacht ann anois chun táirgí agus áiseanna telefíse a fhorbairt. Tá obair ar siúl inti fé stiúrá an Údaráis a d'fhéadfadh bheith in a bonn do sheirbhís telefíse lán-Ghaelach. Is é polasaí Fhianna Fáil an seirbhís seo a chur ar fáil.

Cuireadh Bille tríd an Dáil agus an Seanad le fíordhéanaí chun Páirc Náisiúnta Stairiúil a dhéanamh den Bhlascaod Mór.

ÚDARÁS NA GAELTACAHTA

Tá Údarás na Gaeltachta ag déanamh deimhin de, chomh fada agus is féidir é, go bhfanfaidh an Ghaeltacht chun tosaigh 'san teicneolaíocht nua-aimseartha telechumarsáide agus faisnéise.

Fostaíocht

Ag deireadh na bliana 1988 bhí 5,134 duine fostaithe go lánaimseartha i dtionscail sa Ghaeltacht a fuair cúnamh ó Údarás na Gaeltachta i gcomparáid le 4,695 duine ag deireadh 1986. Go dtí seo i mbliana tá timpeall 250 post nua cruthaithe i dtionscail faoi scáth an Údaráis.

Airgead don Údarás

Anuraidh nuair a bhí ganntanas caipitil ar an Údarás cuireadh soláthar breise de £3m. ar fáil dóibh chun a chur ar a gcumas éilimh ar dheontais a bhí tagtha chun aibíochta a íoc.

Tionscnaimh straitéiseacha

Le féachaint chuige go mbeidh páirt thábhachtach ag muintir na Gaeltachta san fhorás eacnamaíoch agus 'sna deiseanna fostaíochta a eascraíonn as teicneolaíocht chumarsáide nua-aimseartha, bhunaigh an tÚdarás dhá mhórhionscnamh nua — Telegael Teo agus G-Comm Teo.

Acmhainní Nádúrtha

Tá an Ghaeltacht rí-oiriúnach d'fheirmeoireacht éisc agus do shaothrú na mara i gcoitinne. Tá lántacaíocht tugtha ag an Rialtas d'iarrachtaí an Údaráis chun an tionscal sin a fhorbairt agus a chur chun cinn ar mhaithe le deiseanna fostaíochta a chur ar fáil i dtionscal saothrú na mara sa Ghaeltacht. Meastar go méadóidh an fhostaíocht ann go dtí timpeall 2,000 duine, idir dhaoine lánaimseartha agus daoine páirtaimseartha, faoin mbliain 1993.

BÓITHRE AGUS TITHÍOCHT

Cuireadh £430,000 ar fáil mar chabhair chun bóithre áise agus portaigh sa Ghaeltacht a fheabhsú le dhá bhliain anuas: níor caitheadh ach £315,000 sa tréimhse *ceithre bliana* roimhe sin.

Tá scéim thábhachtach tithíochta i bhfeidhm sa Ghaeltacht faoinar caitheadh níos mó ná £1.79m. in 1987 agus níos mó ná

£1.72m. in 1988, sé sin níos mó in aon bhliain acu ná mar a caitheadh ar thithíocht sa Gaeltacht in aon bhliain eile roimhe sin.

TOGRAÍ LE CUR I BHFEIDHM AMACH ANSEO

Imeasc na dtograí móra eile a mbeidh airgead ón gCrannchur Náisiúnta á caitheamh orthu is féidir a lua:

- * Caithfear £700,000 ar feachtas fógraíochta chun an Ghaeilge a chur ar argheidh mar theanga bheo. Tosnóidh an feachtas seo san bhFómhar agus leanfaidh sé ar feadh dhá bhliain.
- * Amharclann nua do Shiamsa Tíre i dTrá Lí; agus
- * Áras na Gaeilge, Coláiste na hOllscoile, Gaillimh.

Tá tús curtha le hoibreacha feabhsúcháin mhóra sa Daingean agus tá beartaithe ag Roinn na Gaeltachta £50,000 a chur ar fáil don Chomhairle Chontae chun carr-chlós a fhorbairt sa Daingean.

Arts

Even at a time of straitened financial resources, Fianna Fáil has increased the amount spent on the arts and on the cultural institutions of the State.

- * Funding for the Arts Council is now 20% higher than in 1986.
- * National Lottery funding amounting to £17.9 m has been made available for a large number of arts projects, including the construction and improvement of arts centres in Galway, Letterkenny and other places throughout the country. The Abbey and Olympia Theatres, Siamsa Tíre, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, the Project Arts Centre and the new City Arts Centre at City Quay have all been allocated lottery funding.
- * European funds for the arts amounting to £2 m have already been secured, and substantial additional funding is being negotiated. The Boyne Valley Archaeological Park was established, and is now being examined by the EC Commission for priority funding.
- * Space has been allocated and work has begun for the establishment of a major new Gallery of Modern Art at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham.
- * The first phase of a refurbishment project costing £5.3 m has commenced at the National Gallery. Additional staff is also being provided for the Gallery.
- * Major refurbishment works costing £720,000 are underway at the National Museum, Kildare Street. The Natural History Museum, Merrion Street, is also being refurbished, and proposals have been drawn up for the establishment of a museum of decorative and folk arts at the Custom House Docks Site.
- * The taxation provisions for the encouragement and promotion of the arts have been further strengthened and extended.
- * Encouragement has been given to investors in Irish film productions by the provision of tax relief on sums up to £600,000 per project.
- * VAT on the sale of works of arts is to be reduced from 25% to 10% from the 1 July 1989.

- * Tax measures to encourage the restoration of houses of architectural significance in designated centre city areas have also been included in this year's Finance Act.

A National Heritage Council with responsibility for archaeology, architecture, flora and fauna landscape, heritage gardens and certain inland waterways has been established. Its task is to formulate policies to identify, protect and increase public awareness of Ireland's physical heritage and to provide funding for heritage projects. Lottery funding amounting to £1 m has been provided, and to date a wide variety of projects have been funded throughout the country. Such projects include:

- * Restoration works at the Damer House, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary.
- * Development of a Museum of Labour History at Beggars Bush, Dublin.
- * Post excavation works connected with Waterford City Viking excavations.
- * Conservation of plasterwork of two ceilings at 15 Henrietta Street, Dublin, the headquarters of Na Piobairí Uileann.
- * Purchase by the Irish Architectural Archive of a unique collection of 2,500 drawings of the 19th century Churches throughout Ireland.
- * The report of the Dublin Heritage Area Development Group set up by the present Government has been completed. It recommends the development of six major heritage/tourism projects in historic areas of Dublin.
- * A National Task Force on genealogical tourism has been established to make recommendations on the development and promotion of this tourism asset. The service provided to the public by the Genealogical Office has been improved.

Fianna Fáil have always had an enlightened approach to the development of the arts and will continue to ensure that the Arts are properly funded; that the major cultural institutions of the State are allocated sufficient funds for repair and refurbishment; and that the development of an arts centre/theatre infrastructure at locations throughout the country will continue.

In 1991 Dublin will become the cultural capital of Europe. A programme is being drawn up to ensure that this will be a memorable year in its cultural history.

Youth Affairs

Fianna Fáil will develop still further our major emphasis on youth. Since 1987 we have more than doubled the funding of youth activities from £3.7m in 1987 to £8m in 1989.

- * New grants have assisted disadvantaged youth — young homeless, young substance abusers, young travellers, young unemployed and other young people at risk. Projects assisted have focussed on community-based initiatives and partnership between voluntary and statutory agencies.
- * The services of youth organisations have been extended through new development grants and the recognition of new youth organisations.
- * A network of youth information centres has been created through the National Youth Council of Ireland.
- * Local Voluntary Youth Councils have been established in nine pilot areas to co-ordinate local youth services.
- * Public relations and training groups have been established to improve the image of youth work, to recruit volunteer youth leaders and to create more efficient local training structures.
- * The Youth Exchange Bureau has been expanded to take on board new cultural exchange schemes and to act as a resource centre for youth mobility.
- * The first Gaisce awards, i.e. the President's Award, have been presented.
- * A joint research project by the Department of Education and the Irish Youth Foundation is analysing youth service provision, to identify gaps and focus the direction of future youth service funding.
- * A programme is being developed to increase awareness of a European as well as a national cultural identity.
- * Youth information requirements are to be assessed with a view to developing a comprehensive policy in this area.

Promotion of Sport

Fianna Fáil will create the National Sports Centre, spend £11.6 million on regional and other major sports centres, and spend a further £5.3 million on local sports facilities countrywide.

Fianna Fáil in Government has brought about a very substantial increase in funding for Sport with an increase from £1.6 m in 1986 to £5 m in 1988. This has enabled these developments to take place.

- * Increases of 20% in grants to national sporting organisations for coaching, administration and equipment.
- * Increase of 10% in grants to national sporting organisations for participation in international competition.
- * Increase of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % in annual grant to the Olympic Council of Ireland from £175,000 in 1987 to £500,000 in 1988.
- * The allocation of £300,000 to 18 sporting organisations for administration and coaching personnel.
- * The setting up of a House of Sport for sporting organisations with modern office facilities. Seven organisations are at present being catered for. It is proposed to allocate a further six offices immediately.
- * The provision of £400,000 enabled the provision of staff resources for eight Outdoor Education Centres.
- * The establishment of a new national coaching structure to improve coaching standards.
- * The appointment of a full-time recreation manager with responsibility for improving the management of sports and recreation centres.
- * The allocation of £500,000 to national sporting organisations for the introduction of opportunities for participation in sport to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- * The extension of the provision of walking routes throughout the country.
- * The launching of a major initiative in the Sport for All area with the introduction of a Be Active — Be Alive Week of sporting and recreational facilities.

- * The extension of the Outstanding Sportspeople Grant Scheme to enable Irish sportspeople to prepare properly for major competitions.

THE SPORTS FACILITIES OF THE FUTURE

National Sports Centre

The Government have announced that the National Sports Centre is to be located on a site adjoining the new financial services centre on the Custom House Docks site. Site acquisition is well underway. This building is of the scale and complexity that puts it, even in international terms, at the frontier of development in indoor sports facilities. Construction is due to get underway early next year.

Regional and other major Sports Centres

The Government have initiated a capital programme amounting to £11.6 million for major sport facilities at Galway, Athlone, Cork, Waterford, Limerick, Sligo, Tallaght, Baldoyle and Morton Stadium, Co. Dublin. In Waterford a 400 metre synthetic running track has been completed at a cost of £0.3 million while work to the value of £0.1 million is about to begin at the National Badminton Centre at Baldoyle, Co. Dublin.

Local Sports Centres

The Government have approved a capital programme of £5.3m for grant-aiding local sports facilities at 18 locations countrywide. Work will be underway on eight or nine of these projects within the next few months, and the rest next year.

National Affairs

Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations

The Irish Presidency of the European Community

Ireland's Place in the World

Defence

Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations

Fianna Fáil believe it is only in an all-Ireland context that a permanent solution to the problem of Northern Ireland can be found. In our view, the reason all attempts to date have failed is that they have been confined to the structure of Northern Ireland.

Fianna Fáil will move toward the establishment of peace through dialogue and political progress based on the principles of justice, equality and democratic rights.

The arrival of the Single Market in 1992 introduces a new dimension. The economic border will disappear, and Ireland itself will be a single market within the wider European one, with the economies North and South inevitably converging. Fianna Fáil will seek to establish through dialogue a common approach to the needs and challenges that face the island as a whole in the Single Market.

Fianna Fáil will maintain the invitation to the leaders of the Unionist community to enter into dialogue on the future without preconditions.

A cessation of violence would open up the possibility of establishing a broader consensus among Nationalists, and would allow efforts to be more constructively directed towards the creation of a new partnership of equals between the two traditions on this island.

The framework of Anglo-Irish cooperation set up in 1980 has been fully used and strengthened to promote political progress and reform in Northern Ireland. An Anglo-Irish parliamentary body is to be set up shortly under the auspices of the 1981 Intergovernmental Council.

The review of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 has just been completed. The instruments of the Agreement have been actively used by Fianna Fáil for the benefit of the people of Northern Ireland. The pace of work has, if anything, been intensified, with ten full meetings of the Conference being held in 1988 compared with seven in 1986.

Specific achievements since 1987 have included:

- * The introduction of new, strengthened fair employment legislation; this is scheduled for adoption by the British Parliament in the coming weeks. The Government have had a detailed input into this legislation.
- * New emphasis on aid to areas of economic and social deprivation. Programmes have been launched to tackle the problems of the most disadvantaged areas of Belfast, and to stimulate economic activity in Derry.
- * A new focus in the work of the International Fund for Ireland to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged areas are given priority, including the direct recruitment of development workers from the disadvantaged areas. Major projects, such as the creation of an archaeological park at the historic site of Emhain Macha (Navan Fort) near Armagh, and the restoration of the Ballinamore/Ballyconnell canals linking up the Erne and the Shannon, are being promoted with IFI funds.
- * Active role of the Secretariat and Conference in monitoring and defusing July marching season. The 1987 marching season was described as the quietest on record, and 1988 followed that pattern.
- * A new Code of Conduct for the RUC was published in March 1988. The ending of harassment has been given a particularly high priority. In this regard, the Northern Ireland Office has recently established a high-level Committee, with input from the Secretariat, to monitor the nature and pattern of complaints against the security forces.
- * Considerable progress has been made on prisons. Special reviews, with positive outcome, were carried out on young prisoners and special category prisoners. Special category compounds in the Maze were closed.
- * Continuing efforts are being made to locate arms and explosives, with considerable success.
- * Legislation to give full voting rights to people from the South who are resident in Northern Ireland was adopted in March 1989, and they were able to vote in the May local elections.

THE PERIOD AHEAD

- * The Review of the working of the Conference, just published, sets out the agenda of the period ahead. The intention is that the work of the Intergovernmental Conference will be broadened and deepened.
- * North-South cooperation on economic and social issues will be fully integrated into the work of the Conference. The challenge of 1992 will be confronted jointly, so that economic opportunities for the island as a whole will be maximised.
- * Intensive work will continue in areas of fundamental importance to the Nationalist community, including the administration of justice and relations with the security forces. An end to harassment of the Nationalist community will be a particular priority.

The Irish Presidency of the European Community

Ireland will preside over the Council of Ministers in the first half of next year. The Taoiseach and 14 Ministers and Ministers of State will chair upwards of 47 meetings during the Presidency. The European Council will meet in Dublin Castle, which has been refurbished as a Conference Centre, in June 1990.

Our Presidency will be dominated by work on the completion of the internal market

Other important issues will include proposals to move towards Economic and Monetary Union, indirect tax harmonisation, agriculture prices for 1990, the Social Dimension of the Internal Market and the Community's External Relations, especially relations with the United States, Japan and Eastern Europe.

During the Presidency, Ireland will speak on behalf of the Community in the various international economic fora, eg the GATT, where major negotiations will be in progress shaping the international trading environment through to the end of the century.

Since the end of last year the Government have had a number of discussions on the implications of the Presidency. Ireland's Presidency programme will be established in close cooperation with the Commission, in line with the partnership developed when President Delors visited Dublin in October 1988.

Ireland's Place in the World

This Fianna Fáil Government have devoted a great deal of careful attention to promoting and enhancing Ireland's international status and reputation.

The Taoiseach has travelled abroad and had meetings with a number of world leaders to ensure their personal understanding of our situation and our policies. These meetings have been very successful and beneficial.

Building on increased interest in Ireland as a member of the European Community, the world's largest market and political grouping, relations have been deepened and improved with a number of important nations and their leaders.

- * On St. Patrick's Day this year the Taoiseach met the new U.S. President and Congressional leaders in Washington.
- * The Taoiseach's meeting with President Gorbachev in Shannon on 2 April 1989 was the first Irish-Soviet meeting at the highest level. It was a great success and has opened up new perspectives for the development of Irish-Soviet relations, especially in the economic field.
- * Following the visit of Prime Minister Hawke to Ireland in 1987, the Taoiseach paid the first ever official visit to Australia during the Bicentennial, and to New Zealand, where there is now a much greater interest in Ireland and Irish affairs.
- * The Taoiseach recently also paid a first-ever official visit to Japan and established an entirely new structure for cooperation in the economic, cultural and financial areas.
- * There has also been an official visit by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, discussions with the Foreign Minister of Austria, and a meeting with President Ortega of Nicaragua.

FOREIGN TRADE POLICY

The Government have paid particular attention to the development of trade and economic relations with a number of key economic countries. Examples of specific initiatives are:

Task Force on Germany

In 1987 the Government set up a Task Force of senior officials to examine ways in which to develop our important economic

relationship with Germany. This Task Force reported to Government last year, and already the bulk of their recommendations have been fully implemented or are at an advanced stage of implementation. One outcome has been the launch in Bonn last year of an Irish-German business association.

Ireland-Australia Economic Committee

During the Taoiseach's visit to Australia last year agreement was reached on the establishment of an Ireland- Australia Economic Committee. The Committee, which will be chaired at Ministerial level and will meet once a year, will strengthen trade and investment links between the two countries. It will have its first meeting in Dublin in June.

Irish-Soviet economic links

The talks with President Gorbachev at Shannon and the further discussions which the Taoiseach had in Moscow have given impetus to the development of Irish-Soviet economic links. Discussions on a counter-trade arrangement involving oil on the Soviet side, and food, manufactured goods and services on the Irish side, are already at an advanced stage. A Ministerial delegation will visit the USSR in the autumn to give final form to the arrangements. The possibility of using Verolme dockyard for repairs to Soviet fishing trawlers is also being explored.

Irish-Japanese economic links

The Taoiseach's visit to Japan, the first by a Taoiseach in an official capacity, has contributed to the promotion of economic relations between the two countries. In addition to meetings with the Emperor, the Prime Minister and the Minister for International Trade and Industry, the Taoiseach met senior board members of a number of Japanese companies and other leading business personalities. An agreement was reached to have regular official consultations on how to further develop Irish-Japanese relations, especially in the economic sphere.

US Taxation Questions

The Government have been particularly active in seeking to minimise the adverse effects on US investment in Ireland of changes in US tax legislation. The Taoiseach discussed this with senior members of the Bush Administration in March 1989, and

the matter has also been raised by a number of Government Ministers on visits to the USA.

Business Associations

During the term of this Government, a number of business associations with other countries have been established with the aim of further development of our economic links.

THE POSITION OF IRISH EMIGRANTS ABROAD

Fianna Fáil since coming to office have carried out our pledge to give the highest priority to seeking legislative reform in the United States to improve the position of Irish immigrants.

The Government have had many discussions with Administration representatives, prominent Irish-American politicians and groups involved in immigration advisory work with a view to alleviating the plight of out-of-status Irish.

Immigration Working Committees have been established, based in our four Consulates-General, comprising the main groups active in the immigration scene.

The US Congress last year passed Immigration Amendments Act which

- * extended the Donnelly visa system for two years
- * provided an additional 30,000 visas under the system
- * introduced a new type of lottery — the Berman lottery under which 20,000 extra visas would be available over a two year period.

It is estimated that upwards of 20,000 of the new visas could go to Irish emigrants including both out-of-status emigrants already in the US and intending emigrants.

UK The funding allocated to DION, the London Embassy-based body which gives financial assistance to welfare advisory bodies in Britain, has been doubled to £500,000 this year.

An Inter-Departmental Committee now coordinates the efforts of Government Departments in the whole emigration area.

THE CONTINENTAL SHELF

The negotiation of a line of delimitation between Ireland and Britain which was satisfactory to Ireland not only ended a long-standing issue of contention, but avoided the need for lengthy and expensive arbitration. Legislation has also been enacted extending Ireland's territorial sea from 3 to 12 nautical miles.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Disarmament The Taoiseach addressed the Third Special Session on Disarmament of the UN on 2 June 1988, in which he advocated a radical new approach at a global level to deal with issues posed by the increasing sophistication of technology both in the area of armaments and also in that of the environment. He called for the eventual phasing out of nuclear weapons, and in the meantime conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

UN Peacekeeping The Government have reaffirmed Ireland's commitment to UNIFIL and to the UN peace-keeping system, the latest contribution to which is the commitment of military observers and Gardaí to the UN force in Namibia (UNTAG).

Apartheid

Fianna Fáil strongly condemn the system of apartheid, and support the imposition of effective international sanctions. The Taoiseach made a joint statement with the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand on Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday, calling for his release.

The double taxation agreement with South Africa is being abrogated. The Government forcefully reiterated their opposition to sporting visits to South Africa by teams representing Ireland.

Central America

Ireland, acting with its EC partners, has participated in political and economic dialogue to assist the peace process in Central America, and supports steps to assist the establishment there of human rights, democracy and social progress.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Despite budgetary reductions in all Departments, Fianna Fáil remain committed to maintaining the basic framework of our

Overseas Development Assistance Programme, the total of which (£34m) has been maintained for the last two years at 0.18% of GNP. Special allocations have been made for disaster relief.

CULTURAL RELATIONS

- * The Government doubled the 1988 allocation for cultural projects abroad to £400,000 (now provided from the National Lottery).
- * The first stage of the work of the restoration of the Irish College in Paris is well under way. It will be opened by the Taoiseach next October.
- * A programme to celebrate the bicentenary of the French Revolution has been prepared.
- * The European City of Culture in 1991 will be Dublin.
- * Ireland celebrated the Australian Bicentennial in 1988 with our biggest-ever programme of cultural events abroad there.

Defence

Fianna Fáil will continue to ensure that the Defence Forces have the necessary personnel, training and equipment to enable them to carry out their tasks effectively.

Well trained and well equipped Defence Forces are of vital national importance to aid the Civil Power in the preservation of the public peace, to protect our vital resources including our fisheries and to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations. During the past two years there have been many positive developments affecting all elements of the Defence Forces and Civil Defence.

- * The capability of the Defence Forces is being enhanced continuously. In the vital area of fishery protection two additional ships have been acquired and a new computerised information system will become operational within the next two months. The new standard general service rifle (the Steyr) which has been procured will be the Defence Forces rifle into the next century.
- * During the past year the Air Corps have significantly developed their search and rescue expertise. The Dauphin helicopters are now performing all weather night-time missions. From September, a Dauphin helicopter will be based at Shannon Airport on a 24-hour basis.
- * The first special review of Defence Forces' pay and allowances for almost ten years resulted in substantial increases; average total remuneration of other ranks is up by 9% from 1 January 1989. By 1 July 1989, the cumulative increase will be 15%, rising to 21% on full implementation. For the first time ever a permanent Review Committee on pay, allowances and conditions in the Defence Forces has been established.
- * Overseas service with the United Nations has brought international acclaim for the Defence Forces, including a share in the Nobel Peace Prize, and has enhanced the reputation of our country. Our commitments in Lebanon and Cyprus have been maintained, and the past two years have seen participation in three new areas with United Nations peacekeeping missions — Afghanistan/Pakistan, Iran/Iraq, and most recently in Namibia.

- * A new military barracks is under construction at Cavan, and will be ready for occupation next year. A major rationalisation programme of existing military barracks and posts is also underway.
- * In 1988 the Married Quarters Purchase Scheme was introduced which afforded an opportunity to approximately 200 members of the Defence Forces to purchase their own homes. Uptake on this scheme has been high.
- * 200 members of the staff of the Department of Defence will take up duty in purpose-built accommodation in Galway at the end of June — a remarkable achievement in the short time since implementation of the decentralisation policy commenced.
- * Fianna Fáil recognise that Civil Defence in addition to their many roles in assisting the community would be a vital element in safeguarding the public in the event of a major emergency. Training is continuing, and equipment, transport and technical facilities are being modernised and expanded.

Fianna Fáil will continue to press ahead with the many programmes at present underway for the improvement and enhancement of the capability of the Defence Forces, and the service that they provide the country.