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Crumlin Notes : Newsletter of Sinn Féin The Workers Party, Crumlin

Sinn Féin The Worker's Party

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crumlin notes

NEED FOR CHEAP FOOD POLICY

by Eric Byrne

THE REMOVAL of food subsidies by the Government has added another burden to workers and their families. It is a particularly bitter blow to low-income groups like Social Welfare recipients and the unemployed and with further increases in food prices on the way it's a safe bet that Ireland will keep its place as the country with the highest cost-of-living in the EEC.

There is no good reason why this should be the case. Ireland has great natural advantages of soil and climate for the production of food. But no government since the foundation of the state has produced either a structural plan or a production plan for agriculture. Inefficient methods of production together with profiteering by banks and fertiliser companies are other reasons why food is costing much more to produce than it should.

Sinn Féin The Workers' Party has a programme for a cheap food policy which is based on planning and control of the production and marketing of agricultural goods.

The Irish Sugar Company processes 400 different food products which are exported to 50 countries yet the Government discourages the company from expanding sales on the home market. The Sugar Company has had

to grow its own vegetables in recent years because the farmers failed to honour contracts. Our Party proposes that the Sugar Company should extend their operations in this area and grow crops on the Bord na Mona cutaway bogs. By the use of efficient modern methods they would produce much cheaper vegetables than at present.

Meat for retail sale should be supplied to the shops from the modern meat factories which now cater mainly for the export market. This would reduce the price of preparing meat for the table and make it possible to operate a realistic system of price-control in the interest of the consumer.

In the meantime there must be a freeze on the price of essential foods. Food prices must not continue to rise while workers' wages are depressed and farmers are not paying their share of taxes.

ELECTION WORKERS

Sinn Féin The Workers' Party will be engaged in major electoral campaigns in the coming year — in particular Local Government and European Parliament elections. We are the only party which will be campaigning in the workers' interest. If you would like to help in our campaign please write to *Eric Byrne, c/o 50 Rutland Avenue, Crumlin Dublin 12.*

THANKS!

The Crumlin cumann of Sinn Féin The Workers' Party wishes to thank all those who assisted in the survey conducted recently in the area. The purpose of the survey is to help us to help you and we are grateful for the courtesy and co-operation shown by so many people. The findings of the survey will be published in the next issue of *Crumlin Notes*.

Corporation housing plan

THE NEWS that Dublin Corporation plan to build new housing accommodation for old people and others in the Crumlin area has been well received by local people.

The housing scheme which is to include thirty-five houses and flats for forty-five old people will replace one of the caravan sites which presently houses many of Crumlin's old folk.

The Corporation plan to start building this year.

Eric Byrne, Chairman of Rathmines West Constituency Council of Sinn Féin The Workers' Party, welcomed the decision as a progressive and constructive step. "Sinn Féin The Workers' Party welcomes this decision by Dublin Corporation to use their land in the interest of the local community. We believe the benefits to the local community will be twofold. Young families will now have a chance to be housed locally and old people, whose needs are often overlooked, will be catered for in a community atmosphere."

Eric Byrne warned, however, that while much goodwill existed in the area for the project, local people would not tolerate shoddy or second-rate housing being built. "Value for money and good housing are what people want," he said, "not easy money for gombeen builders whose stock-in-trade is skimping at the public's expense."

"Ultimately," he continued, "all such projects should be undertaken on behalf of the Corporation by a State Construction Company. This would result in low-cost, high-quality housing by eliminating the element of profiteering. And it would guarantee secure employment to thousands of building workers who are presently unemployed despite the obvious housing shortage."

Social Welfare

Under Sinn Féin The Workers' Party policies our Social Welfare System would not merely prevent poverty but would enable people to achieve their full potential in the economy, to take part in the country's economic growth to the greatest possible extent and to retain both status and living standard in the case of unemployment, illness, disability, widowhood or old age. At present over 20% of our people must be considered poor by any definition — the great majority of these are pensioners, widows, disabled, unemployed and sick persons. The principal demands for which Sinn Féin The Workers' Party is presently campaigning are:

- 1. The immediate introduction of a State Income-related Pension Scheme.** This would give all workers and their dependents a proper and adequate pension increasing automatically in line with wage and price increases.
- 2. Dynamisation of Social Welfare Benefits.** Sinn Féin The Workers' Party is campaigning for the introduction of legislation to ensure that all Social Welfare Benefits, including unemployment benefit, sickness benefits and pensions, increase automatically with increases in average earnings. The fixing of social welfare increases to increases in other workers' wages is crucial from the point of view of those living on social welfare benefit.
- 3. Elimination of Discrimination in Social Welfare.** The two categories most discriminated against are young people and married women. This discrimination must be eliminated.
- 4. Pay-Related Social Welfare Contributions.** Sinn Féin The Workers' Party is seeking the replacement of the present flat-rate social welfare contributions by pay-related contributions. The present system of contribution is a highly regressive tax and represents a heavy burden on the lower-paid workers.
- 5. Farmers and the Self-Employed.** Not only do farmers not pay tax but they make no contribution to our social welfare fund. The majority of the self-employed do not pay any social welfare contributions. Yet farmers and the self-employed got over £100 million

from the social welfare fund in 1976 by claiming unemployment assistance, old-age non-contributory pensions, children's allowances. This £100 million was paid for by workers through the taxation system. Sinn Féin The Workers' Party maintains that farmers and the self-employed should contribute to the cost of social welfare services. Legislation should be introduced making it compulsory for them to pay the full rate social welfare stamp.

6. Dental Benefit Scheme & Optical Benefit Scheme. Sinn Féin The Workers' Party is campaigning for the reform of the social welfare dental benefit and optical benefit scheme to ensure proper coverage for workers and their dependents. At the moment workers who have to go to the dentist or need glasses may, if they have enough social welfare contributions, get a portion of the cost from the Department of Social Welfare but these benefits are not available to the worker's wife/husband or children over 18 who must pay in full for every visit to a dentist or optician.

Sinn Féin The Workers' Party is committed to the extension of dental and optical benefit to workers' dependents and to the establishment of a wholly public dental and optical service to social welfare claimants.

7. Adequately staffed social welfare inspectorate to apprehend employers who don't stamp social insurance cards. The one area where there is massive and increasing fraud is among employers not stamping their employees' cards even though they are making deductions from their workers' wages for a such purpose. Sinn Féin The Workers' Party are demanding an adequately staffed Social Welfare Inspectorate to apprehend these employers. Also there must be a substantial increase in fines, including imprisonment, for such offences.

8. Information Centres. Sinn Féin The Workers' Party considers it imperative that all workers and their dependents should be fully informed of their entitlements. Information centres, run by the State, should be set up in every community.



● Eric Byrne.

Workers' candidate

Eric Byrne has been selected by the Rathmines West Constituency Council of Sinn Féin The Workers' Party as a candidate in Area 8 (which covers most of Crumlin and Kimmage as well as part of Terenure) in the forthcoming Local Elections.

Eric was a candidate in the Dáil elections in June 1977 when he campaigned strongly on the theme of 'Jobs for Dublin'.

Despite the Fianna Fáil landslide, Eric's electoral debut was impressive and he made a big impact — especially with working-class voters.

"Our party," says Eric, "will be putting forward a strong team of candidates in the Dublin area and we are confident that our policies will bring a big response from voters. We are confident also that a strong Sinn Féin The Workers' Party presence on the City Council will go a long way towards making Dublin a better place to live and work in. We are determined that Dublin should be developed in the interest of workers not profiteers."

ADVICE

Eric Byrne, local representative of Sinn Féin The Workers' Party can be contacted —
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