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**AN BILLE LEASA SHOISIALAIGH (FORALACHA
ILGHNEITHEACHA), 1964**

**SOCIAL WELFARE (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS)
BILL, 1964**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. The main purpose of the Bill is to give effect to the decision of the Government, as announced by the Minister for Finance in his Budget Statement on 14 Aibreán, 1964, to increase Social Assistance payments as from 1 Lúnasa, 1964. The Bill also provides for a new development in relation to old age pensions—the payment of allowances for children under both the contributory and non-contributory schemes. In addition, the Bill includes miscellaneous provisions for further extensions and improvements of the Social Insurance and the Social Assistance schemes. On the Social Insurance side, there are provisions relating to the insurability of teachers in training colleges for national teachers and to the amount which may be provided to meet the cost of treatment benefit in any financial year. In regard to Social Assistance, there are provisions removing the minimum age limits and extending the means limit for entitlement to widows' (non-contributory) pensions; modifying the unemployment assistance scheme by easing the means test in the case of seasonal fishermen and enabling retrospective effect to be given to decisions affecting title to qualification certificates.

Social Assistance Increases

2. Section 2 of the Bill provides for increasing all the rates of non-contributory pensions under the Old Age Pensions Acts, including blind pensions, by 2/6d. a week as from 1 Lúnasa, 1964. The new weekly rates will be 37/6d. at the maximum, reducing by steps of 5/- to 7/6d. at the minimum.

Section 3 provides for increasing both the personal and adult dependants' rates of unemployment assistance by 2/6d. in both urban and rural areas. As a result, a recipient of unemployment assistance with an adult dependant will receive an increase of 5/- a week as from 1 Lúnasa, 1964.

Section 4 provides for increases of 2/6d. in the weekly rates of widows' (non-contributory) pension from 1 Lúnasa, 1964, and extends the table of means and rates of pension so as to introduce as from that date, a new minimum weekly rate of pension of 6/- which will be payable to widows whose means were previously just over the limit for pension.

Children of old age pensioners

3. Sections 5, 8, 9 and 10 deal with the children of old age pensioners.

Section 5 determines the children who shall be qualified for allowances as part of non-contributory pensions under the Old Age Pensions Acts, provides the new table of means and rates of pensions which will include allowances for the children at the rate

of 10/- in respect of each of the first two qualified children and 5/- in respect of each subsequent qualified child, the minimum rate of pension being 7/6d. a week, provides for a disregard of £39 in respect of each qualified child in assessing means and makes the overriding maximum means for title to pension variable so as to take account of qualified children.

Section 8 provides for the payment of allowances in respect of qualified children as part of old age (contributory) pension.

Section 9 provides that these allowances shall not be subject to reduction where the contribution conditions are not fully satisfied.

Section 10 provides for the weekly rate of the allowances to be 13/- for each of the first two qualified children and 8/- for each subsequent qualified child.

The provisions of the sections relating to children of old age pensioners shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Minister.

Miscellaneous Provisions: Social Insurance Scheme

4. Section 6 will enable teachers in training colleges for national teachers to be treated for Social Insurance purposes in the same way as national, secondary and vocational teachers and teachers in domestic science training colleges.

Section 7 will remove the limit of £500,000 on the amount that may be paid by way of treatment benefit in any financial year, thus leaving the amount to be determined by agreement between the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Social Welfare.

Miscellaneous Provisions: Social Assistance Scheme

5. Section 11 will enable retrospective effect to be given to a revised decision in relation to a qualification certificate, without which unemployment assistance cannot be paid.

Section 12 provides for the disregard, in assessing means for unemployment assistance purposes, of up to £80 of a person's earnings from seasonal employment as a fisherman whether working on his own account or on a share basis.

Section 13 will remove the minimum age limits for widows' (non-contributory) pensions, i.e. 48 years in the case of a widow with no qualified children and 40 in the case of a widow who had a pension including an allowance for a qualified child who ceased to be qualified not earlier than six months before her 40th birthday.

6. Section 14 contains provisions for short title, construction and collective citation.

*Roinn Leasa Shóisialaigh,
Meitheamh, 1964.*