

DÁIL ÉIREANN

DÍOSPÓIREACHTAÍ PARLAIMINTE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

TUAIRISC OIFIGIÚIL OFFICIAL REPORT

IMLEABHAR 637

VOLUME 637

Déardaoin, 14 Meitheamh 2007.

Thursday, 14 June 2007.

Tháinig an Dáil le chéile ar 3 p.m. — bhí an Cléireach, Ciarán Ó Cochláin, agus an Fó-Chléireach, Rístéard Mac Cafraidh, i láthair.

The Dáil assembled at 3 p.m. — the Clerk of the Dáil, Mr. Kieran Coughlan, and the Clerk Assistant, Mr. Richard Caffrey, attending.

Paidir.

Prayer.

Do léigh an Cléireach Fógra Uachtarán na hÉireann lenar Lánscoireadh agus lenar Comhghairmeadh Dáil Éireann.

The Clerk read the Proclamation of the President of Ireland dissolving and convening Dáil Éireann.

Is mar a leanas a bhí Forógra Uachtarán na hÉireann ag lánscoir agus ag comóradh Dháil Éireann:

The Proclamation of the President of Ireland dissolving and convening Dáil Éireann was as follows:

FORÓGRA PROCLAMATION.

De bhun comhairle a thairg an Taoiseach dom faoi alt a dó d'Airteagal a trí déag den Bhunreacht, déanaimse, MAIRE MHIC GHIOLLA ÍOSA, Uachtarán na hÉireann, Dáil Éireann a lánscoir leis seo an naoú lá is fiche d'Aibreán, dhá mhíle a seacht, agus Dáil Éireann (a mbeidh a comhaltaí arna dtoghadh san Olltoghchán seo chugainn) a ghairm agus a chomóradh chun teacht le chéile i gcathair Bhaile Átha Cliath ar an gceathrú lá déag de Mheitheamh, dhá mhíle a seacht, ar a trí a chlog sa tráthnóna chun cibé gnó a dhéanamh a chuirfear faoina bráid.

Pursuant to an advice tendered to me by the Taoiseach under section 2 of Article 13 of the Constitution, I, MARY McALEESE, President of Ireland, hereby dissolve Dáil Éireann on the 29th day of April, 2007, and summon and call together Dáil Éireann (the members whereof shall have been elected at the forthcoming General Election) to meet in the city of Dublin on the 14th day of June, 2007, at the hour of 3.00 o'clock p.m. for the despatch of such business as shall be submitted to it.

ARNA THABHAIRT FAOI MO LÁIMH AGUS FAOI MO SHÉALA AN NAOÚ LÁ IS FICHE SEO D'AIBREÁN, DHÁ MHÍLE A SEACHT.

Bertie Ahern

Taoiseach

Tuarascáil i dtaobh Eascairí a chur amach agus Craoladh i dtaobh Freagraí

I gcomhlíonadh Bhuan-Ordú Uimhir a Trí de Bhuan-Orduithe Dháil Éireann i dtaobh Gnó Phoiblí, tá orm a thuairisciú go ndearna Cléireach na Dála, díreach tar éis don Uachtarán Forógra an naoú lá is fiche d'Aibreán, dhá mhíle a seacht, a chur amach ag lánscor Dháil Éireann an lá sin, a eascairí a chur amach, de bhun alt tríocha a naoi den Acht Toghcháin, míle naoi gcéad nócha a dó, do na Dáilcheantair seo a leanas go dtí na Cinn Chomhairimh atá ainmnithe anseo thíos:—

**Dáilcheantair
Constituencies**

Ceatharlach-Cill Chainnigh
Carlow-Kilkenny

An Cabhán-Muineachán
Cavan-Monaghan

An Clár
Clare

Corcaí Thoir
Cork East

Corcaí Thiar Thuaidh
Cork North-West

Corcaí Thiar Theas
Cork South-West

Corcaí Thuaidh-Lár
Cork North-Central

Corcaí Theas-Lár
Cork South-Central

Dún na nGall Thoir Thuaidh
Donegal North-East

Dún na nGall Thiar Theas
Donegal South-West

Baile Átha Cliath Láir
Dublin Central

Baile Átha Cliath Thuaidh-Lár
Dublin North-Central

Baile Átha Cliath Thoir Thuaidh
Dublin North-East

Baile Átha Cliath Thiar Thuaidh
Dublin North-West

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL THIS 29TH DAY OF APRIL, 2007.

Máire Mhic Ghiolla Íosa

Uachtarán na hÉireann
(President of Ireland)

Report as to issue of Writs and Announcement as to Returns

In compliance with Standing Order No. 3 of the Standing Orders of Dáil Éireann relative to Public Business, I have to report that immediately upon the issue by the President of the Proclamation of the 29th day of April, 2007, dissolving Dáil Éireann on that day, the Clerk of the Dáil issued his writs, pursuant to section 39 of the Electoral Act 1992, for the following Constituencies to the Returning Officers named hereunder:—

**Cinn Chomhairimh
Returning Officers**

Ms. Mary N. Enright

Ms. Josephine Duffy

Mr. Patrick Wallace

Mr. Michael O'Driscoll

Mr. Michael O'Driscoll

Mr. Michael O'Driscoll

Mr. Martin A. Harvey

Mr. Martin A. Harvey

Ms. Geraldine O'Connor

Ms. Geraldine O'Connor

Mr. Brendan Walsh

Mr. Brendan Walsh

Mr. Brendan Walsh

Mr. Brendan Walsh

**Dáilcheantair
Constituencies**

Baile Átha Cliath Theas-Lár
Dublin South-Central

Baile Átha Cliath Thoir Theas
Dublin South-East

Baile Átha Cliath Thiar-Meán
Dublin Mid-West

Baile Átha Cliath Thuaidh
Dublin North

Baile Átha Cliath Theas
Dublin South

Baile Átha Cliath Thiar Theas
Dublin South-West

Baile Átha Cliath Thiar
Dublin West

Dún Laoghaire
Dún Laoghaire

Gaillimh Thoir
Galway East

Gaillimh Thiar
Galway West

Ciarraí Thuaidh
Kerry North

Ciarraí Theas
Kerry South

Cill Dara Thuaidh
Kildare North

Cill Dara Theas
Kildare South

Laois-Uíbh Fhailí
Laois-Offaly

Luimneach Thoir
Limerick East

Luimneach Thiar
Limerick West

An Longfort-An Iarmhí
Longford-Westmeath

Lú
Louth

Maigh Eo
Mayo

An Mhí Thoir
Meath East

An Mhí Thiar
Meath West

Ros Comán-Liatroim Theas
Roscommon-South Leitrim

Sligeach-Liatroim Thuaidh
Sligo-North Leitrim

**Cinn Chomhairimh
Returning Officers**

Mr. Brendan Walsh

Mr. Brendan Walsh

Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick

Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick

Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick

Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick

Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick

Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick

Ms. Marian Chambers Higgins

Ms. Marian Chambers Higgins

Mr. Pádraig Burke

Mr. Pádraig Burke

Ms. Eithne Coughlan

Ms. Eithne Coughlan

Ms. Verona Lambe

Mr. Patrick J. Meghen

Mr. Patrick J. Meghen

Ms. Imelda Branigan

Ms. Máiread Ahern

Mr. Fintan J. Murphy

Mrs. Máire Tehan

Mrs. Máire Tehan

Mr. William Lyster

Mr. Kieran McDermott

**Dáilcheantair
Constituencies**

Tiobraid Árann Thuaidh
Tipperary North
Tiobraid Árann Theas
Tipperary South
Port Láirge
Waterford
Loch Garman
Wexford
Cill Mhantáin
Wicklow

**Cinn Chomhairimh
Returning Officers**

Ms. Mary Delehanty
Ms. Mary Delehanty
Mr. Niall Rooney
Ms. Marie Garahy
Ms. Breda Allen

Is iad seo a leanas ainmneacha na ndaoine a toghadh chun fónamh sa Dáil, mar aon le hainmneacha na nDáilcheantar dár toghadh iad:—

The following are the names of the persons returned to serve in the Dáil together with the names of the Constituencies for which they have been elected:—

Dáilcheantair
Constituencies

Ceatharlach-Cill Channigh



John McGuinness
(FF)



Bobby Aylward
(FF)



Phil Hogan
(FG)



M. J. Nolan
(FF)



Mary Alexandra White
(GP)

Comhaltáí
Members

Carlow-Kilkenny

An Cabhán-Muineachán



Brendan Smith
(FF)



Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin
(SF)



Seymour Crawford
(FG)



Margaret Conlon
(FF)



Rory O'Hanlon
(FF)*

Cavan-Monaghan

**By virtue of section 36 of the Electoral Act 1992, Rory O'Hanlon has been deemed to have been elected as one of the members for the Constituency of Cavan-Monaghan.*

An Clár

Clare



Timmy Dooley
(FF)



Tony Killeen
(FF)



Pat Breen
(FG)



Joe Carey
(FG)

Corcaigh Thoir

Cork East



Michael Ahern
(FF)



Edward O'Keeffe
(FF)



David Stanton
(FG)



Seán Sherlock
(Lab)

Corcaigh Thuaidh-Lár



Billy Kelleher
(FF)



Bernard Allen
(FG)



Kathleen Lynch
(Lab)

Cork North-Central



Noel O'Flynn
(FF)

Corcaigh Thiar-Thuaidh



Michael Creed
(FG)



Michael Moynihan
(FF)

Cork North-West



Batt O'Keeffe
(FF)

Corcaigh Theas-Lár



Micheál Martin
(FF)



Michael McGrath
(FF)



Deirdre Clune
(FG)

Cork South-Central



Ciarán Lynch
(Lab)



Simon Coveney
(FG)

Corcaigh Thiar-Theas



Christy O'Sullivan
(FF)



Jim O'Keeffe
(FG)

Cork South-West



P. J. Sheehan
(FG)

Dún na nGall Thoir-Thuaidh

Joe McHugh
(FG)



James McDaid
(FF)



Niall Blaney
(FF)

Donegal North-East**Dún na nGall Thiar-Theas**

Mary Coughlan
(FF)



Pat The Cope Gallagher
(FF)

Donegal South-West

Dinny McGinley
(FG)

Baile Átha Cliath Láir

Bertie Ahern
(FF)



Tony Gregory
(Ind)



Joe Costello
(Lab)

Dublin Central

Cyprian Brady
(FF)

Baile Átha Cliath Thiar-Mheán

John Curran
(FF)



Paul N. Gogarty
(GP)



Mary Harney
(PD)

Dublin Mid-West

Joanna Tuffy
(Lab)

Baile Átha Cliath Thuaidh

Michael Kennedy
(FF)



Trevor Sargent
(GP)



Darragh O'Brien
(FF)



James Reilly
(FG)

Dublin North**Baile Átha Cliath Thuaidh-Lár**

Richard Bruton
(FG)



Seán Haughey
(FF)



Finian McGrath
(Ind)

Dublin North-Central**Baile Átha Cliath Thoir-Thuaidh**

Tommy Broughan
(Lab)



Terence Flanagan
(FG)



Michael Woods
(FF)

Dublin North-East**Baile Átha Cliath Thiar-Thuaidh**

Noel Ahern
(FF)



Pat Carey
(FF)

Dublin North-West

Róisín Shortall
(Lab)

Baile Átha Cliath Theas

Séamus Brennan
(FF)



Tom Kitt
(FF)



Olivia Mitchell
(FG)



Eamon Ryan
(GP)



Alan Shatter
(FG)

Dublin South**Baile Átha Cliath Theas-Lár**

Seán Ardagh
(FF)



Michael Mulcahy
(FF)



Mary Upton
(Lab)



Aengus Ó Snodaigh
(SF)



Catherine Byrne
(FG)

Dublin South-Central**Baile Átha Cliath Thoir-Theas**

Chris Andrews
(FF)



Lucinda Creighton
(FG)



Ruairí Quinn
(Lab)



John Gormley
(GP)

Dublin South-East**Baile Átha Cliath Thiar-Theas**

Conor Lenihan
(FF)



Brian Hayes
(FG)



Pat Rabbitte
(Lab)

Dublin South-West

Charlie O'Connor
(FF)

Baile Átha Cliath Thiar

Brian Lenihan
(FF)



Leo Varadkar
(FG)



Joan Burton
(Lab)

Dublin West**Dún Laoghaire**

Mary Hanafin
(FF)



Barry Andrews
(FF)



Eamon Gilmore
(Lab)



Seán Barrett
(FG)



Ciarán Cuffe
(GP)

Dún Laoghaire**Gaillimh Thoir**

Paul Connaughton
(FG)



Michael P. Kitt
(FF)



Ulick Burke
(FG)



Noel Treacy
(FF)

Galway East**Gaillimh Thiar**

Éamon Ó Cuív
(FF)



Michael D. Higgins
(Lab)



Pádraic McCormack
(FG)



Noel Grealish
(PD)

Galway West

Frank Fahey
(FF)

Ciarraí Thuaidh

Jimmy Deenihan
(FG)



Tom McEllistrim
(FF)



Martin Ferris
(SF)

Kerry North**Ciarraí Theas**

John O'Donoghue
(FF)



Tom Sheahan
(FG)



Jackie Healy-Rae
(Ind)

Kerry South**Cill Dara Thuaidh**

Áine Brady
(FF)



Emmet Stagg
(Lab)



Michael Fitzpatrick
(FF)

Kildare North

Bernard J. Durkan
(FG)

Cill Dara Theas

Seán Ó Fearghaíl
(FF)



Seán Power
(FF)

Kildare South

Jack Wall
(Lab)

Laois-Uíbh Fhailí

Brian Cowen
(FF)



Olwyn Enright
(FG)



Seán Fleming
(FF)



Charles Flanagan
(FG)



John Moloney
(FF)

Laois-Offaly**Luimneach Thoir**

Willie O'Dea
(FF)



Peter Power
(FF)



Michael Noonan
(FG)



Jan O'Sullivan
(Lab)



Kieran O'Donnell
(FG)

Limerick East**Luimneach Thiar**

Niall Collins
(FF)



John Cregan
(FF)



Dan Neville
(FG)

Limerick West**An Longfort-An Iarmhí**

Willie Penrose
(Lab)



Mary O'Rourke
(FF)



Peter Kelly
(FF)



James Bannon
(FG)

Longford-Westmeath

Lú**Louth**

Seamus Kirk
(FF)



Dermot Ahern
(FF)



Fergus O'Dowd
(FG)



Arthur Morgan
(SF)

Maigh Eo**Mayo**

Enda Kenny
(FG)



Michael Ring
(FG)



John O'Mahony
(FG)



Dara Calleary
(FF)



Beverley Flynn
(Ind)

An Mhí Thoir**Meath East**

Mary Wallace
(FF)



Shane McEntee
(FG)



Thomas Byrne
(FF)

An Mhí Thiar**Meath West**

Noel Dempsey
(FF)



Johnny Brady
(FF)



Damien English
(FG)

Ros Comán-Liatroim Theas

Frank Feighan
(FG)



Michael Finneran
(FF)

Roscommon-South Leitrim

Denis Naughten
(FG)

Sligeach-Liatroim Thuaidh

Eamon Scanlon
(FF)



John Perry
(FG)

Sligo-North Leitrim

Jimmy Devins
(FF)

Tiobraid Árann Thuaidh

Michael Lowry
(Ind)



Noel J. Coonan
(FG)

Tipperary North

Máire Hochtóir
(FF)

Tiobraid Árann Theas

Tom Hayes
(FG)



Mattie McGrath
(FF)

Tipperary South

Martin Mansergh
(FF)

Port Láirge



Martin Cullen
(FF)



John Deasy
(FG)



Brian O'Shea
(Lab)



Brendan Kenneally
(FF)

Waterford

Loch Garman



John Browne
(FF)



Brendan Howlin
(Lab)



Seán Connick
(FF)



Paul Kehoe
(FG)



Michael D'Arcy
(FG)

Wexford

Cill Mhantáin



Dick Roche
(FF)



Joe Behan
(FF)



Liz McManus
(Lab)



Billy Timmins
(FG)



Andrew Doyle
(FG)

Wicklow

De bhua alt tríocha a sé den Acht Toghcháin, míle naoi gcéad nócha a dó, measadh RUAIRÍ Ó hANNUAIN a bheith tofa mar dhuine de na comhaltaí do Dháilcheantar an Chabháin-Muineachán.

I gcomhlíonadh Bhuan-Ordú Uimhir a ceathair de na Buan-Orduithe i dtaobh Gnó Phoiblí, táim tar éis cóipeanna de na hEascairí toghcháin agus de na freagraí a formhuiníodh orthu a leagan os comhair na Dála.

Tá an Rolla sínithe de réir na mBuan-Orduithe ag na Comhaltaí thuasainmnithe go léir.

De réir na mBuan-Orduithe is é an chéad ghnó eile ná Ceann Comhairle a thoghadh and glacfaidh mé Ceann Comhairle a thoghadh and glacfaidh mé anois le tairiscintí.

Election of Ceann Comhairle.

The Taoiseach: Ba mhaith liom an Teachta Seán Ó Donnchú a ainmniú mar Cheann Comhairle. I wish to nominate Deputy John O'Donoghue to the position of Ceann Comhairle.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: I would like to put forward the name of Deputy Ruairí Quinn for the position of Ceann Comhairle. From memory I do not recall a contest for this position since 1989. I think it is important there be a contest. The position of Ceann Comhairle is a very important role that is recognised in the Constitution. The task of the Ceann Comhairle is not merely to manage the efficient functioning of this House but to apply the rules fairly and impartially. The declaration to be taken by the Ceann Comhairle reads as follows:

I do solemnly declare that I will duly and faithfully and to the best of my knowledge and ability execute the office of Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann without fear or favour, apply the rules as laid down by this House in an impartial and fair manner, maintain order and uphold the rights and privileges of members in accordance with the Constitution and the Standing Orders of Dáil Éireann.

The function of the Ceann Comhairle as set out in that declaration is not merely to manage the efficient running of the House but to uphold the rights and privileges of all Members. For many decades it was the practice that the Ceann Comhairle would be drawn from the Opposition. I think that practice had a great deal to recommend it and in circumstances where the same Government has been in office for 20 years, with a minor intervention of two and a half years, it is especially important that the Chair is taken by a member of the Opposition.

My colleague Deputy Ruairí Quinn is immensely respected as a parliamentarian. He

By virtue of section 36 of the Electoral Act 1992, RORY O'HANLON has been deemed to have been elected as one of the members for the Constituency of Cavan-Monaghan.

In compliance with Standing Order No. 4 of the Standing Orders relative to Public Business, I have laid before the Dáil copies of the Writs of election and the returns endorsed thereon.

All the above-named Members signed the Roll in accordance with Standing Orders.

In accordance with Standing Orders the next business is the election of the Ceann Comhairle. I shall now receive nominations.

has extensive ministerial experience as he held office as Minister for Labour, Minister for the Public Service, Minister for Enterprise and Employment and latterly as Minister for Finance. He has been a Member for a very long time and has the respect of his colleagues. He would be ideally suited to the position of Ceann Comhairle. I have no wish to refight the battles of the 29th Dáil or of previous Dáileanna, but many on this side believe the position of Parliament *vis-à-vis* the Executive has been eroded in recent years. That is not desirable and this House should assert its position as Dáil Éireann. It will be very difficult to do that without reflecting on the candidacy of anyone for this post, if the Taoiseach, having come here in 2002 and nominated the chairman of the Fianna Fáil parliamentary party to supervise the affairs of this House, now proposes to transfer a Minister from Cabinet who is known for his views. I respect him having partisan views, but he has partisan views.

A Deputy: He will not change.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: He has been a vigorous opponent of the parties on this side of the House. To transfer somebody such as that to the Chair, simply to make way—

Deputy Brian Cowen: Scurrilous.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: —is not the way to treat the House. We should revert to the practice of a distinguished Member of the Opposition holding the position of Ceann Comhairle. None is more distinguished than my colleague, Deputy Ruairí Quinn. I have pleasure in proposing him for the position.

Deputies: Hear, hear.

Deputy Enda Kenny: Ba mhaith liomsa cuidiú leis an rún faoi ainm Ruairí Quinn a mholadh mar ainm don Ceann Comhairle.

The convention for many years was that the House would first consider the ability of the outgoing Ceann Comhairle to continue in office given his free pass in terms of re-election. However, that convention was broken by Fianna Fáil in 1973 when the late Deputy Cormac Breslin was withdrawn from office in order to reduce the numbers of the Fine Gael-Labour coalition then seeking office. While we had our jousts with Deputy Rory O'Hanlon in the 29th Dáil, I pay tribute to him on the manner in which he conducted his business nationally and internationally on behalf of this House.

It gives me particular pleasure to second Deputy Rabbitte's nomination of Deputy Ruairí Quinn for the office of Ceann Comhairle. I served for a short period as junior minister with Deputy Quinn when Minister for Labour during the 1980s. He has given outstanding service to the Oireachtas and to the Irish public as a junior and senior Minister, as Leader of the Labour Party and as a parliamentarian. I agree that it is only

right and proper that there be a contest in this regard and that the House should decide on the merits of the candidates put forward. I have great pleasure in formally seconding Deputy Ruairí Quinn's nomination as Ceann Comhairle of the 30th Dáil.

Deputies: Hear, hear.

Cléireach na Dála: Tá dhá thairiscint faoi bhráid an Tí. De réir na mBuan Orduithe, tógfar iad ins an ord a tairgeadh iad. There are two motions before the House and, in accordance with Standing Orders, they will be taken in the order in which they were proposed.

Tá mé ag cur na ceiste: "Go dtoghfar an Teachta John O'Donoghue agus go rachaidh sé i gceannas na Dála anois mar Cheann Comhairle."

I am putting the question: "That Deputy John O'Donoghue be elected and do now take the Chair of the Dáil as Ceann Comhairle."

Question put.

The Dáil divided: Tá, 90; Níl, 75.

Tá

Ahern, Bertie.
 Ahern, Dermot.
 Ahern, Michael.
 Ahern, Noel.
 Andrews, Barry.
 Andrews, Chris.
 Ardagh, Seán.
 Aylward, Bobby.
 Behan, Joe.
 Blaney, Niall.
 Brady, Aine.
 Brady, Cyprian.
 Brady, Johnny.
 Brennan, Séamus.
 Browne, John.
 Byrne, Thomas.
 Calleary, Dara.
 Carey, Pat.
 Collins, Niall.
 Conlon, Margaret.
 Connick, Seán.
 Coughlan, Mary.
 Cowen, Brian.
 Cregan, John.
 Cuffe, Ciarán.
 Cullen, Martin.
 Curran, John.
 Dempsey, Noel.
 Devins, Jimmy.
 Dooley, Timmy.
 Fahey, Frank.
 Finneran, Michael.
 Fitzpatrick, Michael.
 Fleming, Seán.
 Flynn, Beverley.
 Gallagher, Pat The Cope.
 Gogarty, Paul.
 Gormley, John.
 Grealish, Noel.
 Hanafin, Mary.
 Harney, Mary.
 Haughey, Seán.
 Healy-Rae, Jackie.
 Hoctor, Máire.
 Kelleher, Billy.
 Kelly, Peter.

Kenneally, Brendan.
 Kennedy, Michael.
 Killeen, Tony.
 Kirk, Seamus.
 Kitt, Michael P.
 Kitt, Tom.
 Lenihan, Brian.
 Lenihan, Conor.
 Lowry, Michael.
 Mansergh, Martin.
 Martin, Micheál.
 McDaid, James.
 McEllistrim, Thomas.
 McGrath, Finian.
 McGrath, Mattie.
 McGrath, Michael.
 McGuinness, John.
 Moloney, John.
 Moynihan, Michael.
 Mulcahy, Michael.
 Nolan, M. J.
 Ó Cuív, Éamon.
 Ó Feargháil, Seán.
 O'Brien, Darragh.
 O'Connor, Charlie.
 O'Dea, Willie.
 O'Donoghue, John.
 O'Flynn, Noel.
 O'Hanlon, Rory.
 O'Keefe, Batt.
 O'Keefe, Edward.
 O'Rourke, Mary.
 O'Sullivan, Christy.
 Power, Peter.
 Power, Seán.
 Roche, Dick.
 Ryan, Eamon.
 Sargent, Trevor.
 Scanlon, Eamon.
 Smith, Brendan.
 Treacy, Noel.
 Wallace, Mary.
 White, Mary Alexandra.
 Woods, Michael.

Níl

Allen, Bernard.
 Bannon, James.
 Barrett, Seán.
 Breen, Pat.
 Broughan, Thomas P.
 Bruton, Richard.
 Burke, Ulick.
 Burton, Joan.
 Byrne, Catherine.
 Carey, Joe.
 Clune, Deirdre.
 Connaughton, Paul.
 Coonan, Noel J.
 Costello, Joe.
 Coveney, Simon.
 Crawford, Seymour.
 Creed, Michael.
 Creighton, Lucinda.
 D'Arcy, Michael.
 Deasy, John.
 Deenihan, Jimmy.
 Doyle, Andrew.
 Durkan, Bernard J.
 English, Damien.
 Enright, Olwyn.
 Feighan, Frank.
 Ferris, Martin.
 Flanagan, Charles.
 Flanagan, Terence.
 Gilmore, Eamon.
 Hayes, Brian.
 Hayes, Tom.
 Higgins, Michael D.
 Hogan, Phil.
 Howlin, Brendan.
 Kehoe, Paul.
 Kenny, Enda.

Lynch, Ciarán.
 Lynch, Kathleen.
 McCormack, Pádraic.
 McEntee, Shane.
 McGinley, Dinny.
 McHugh, Joe.
 McManus, Liz.
 Mitchell, Olivia.
 Morgan, Arthur.
 Naughten, Denis.
 Neville, Dan.
 Noonan, Michael.
 Ó Caoláin, Caoimhghín.
 Ó Snodaigh, Aengus.
 O'Donnell, Kieran.
 O'Dowd, Fergus.
 O'Keeffe, Jim.
 O'Mahony, John.
 O'Shea, Brian.
 O'Sullivan, Jan.
 Penrose, Willie.
 Perry, John.
 Quinn, Ruairí.
 Rabbitte, Pat.
 Reilly, James.
 Ring, Michael.
 Shatter, Alan.
 Sheahan, Tom.
 Sheehan, P. J.
 Sherlock, Seán.
 Shortall, Róisín.
 Stagg, Emmet.
 Stanton, David.
 Timmins, Billy.
 Tuffy, Joanna.
 Upton, Mary.
 Varadkar, Leo.
 Wall, Jack.

Tellers: Tá, Deputies Kelleher and Tom Kitt; Níl, Deputies Kehoe and Stagg.

Question declared carried.

Cléireach na Dála: Iarraim anois ar an Teachta Seán Ó Donnchú, Comhalta do Dháilcheantar Ciarraí Theas, dul i gceannas an 30ú Dáil Éireann.

I now call on Deputy John O'Donoghue, Member for the Constituency of Kerry South, to take the Chair of this 30th Dáil.

Whereupon Members rose in their places and remained standing while the Ceann Comhairle proceeded to the Dais.

Standing beside the Chair, the Ceann Comhairle, addressing the Dáil, said:

An Ceann Comhairle: A Theachtaí, ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a gabháil libh aš mé a thoghadh mar Cheann Comhairle Dháil Éireann inniu. Is mór an onóir domsa é. Geallaim libh go léir go ndéanfaidh mé mo dhícheall chun cothrom na féinne a thabhairt do gach uile Theachta anseo agus iarraim oraibh cabhrú liom chun dualgas na hoifige seo a chomhlíonadh mar is cóir.

I thank Members for electing me as Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann today. It is a great

honour for me and I promise all Members that I will do my best to deal fairly with each and every Deputy in the House. I ask all Members for their assistance in properly fulfilling the duties of this office.

My aim will be to carry out the work of the Chair in such a manner as to give full expression to all Members consistent with Standing Orders and the due business of the House before us. I realise it is impossible to carry out the work of the House without the full co-operation of all Members and because of this, I sincerely seek such co-operation. A vibrant parliament is a cornerstone of a health democracy. The manner in which we conduct our business as laid down by the Constitution is important to how we as Members of this House are perceived. The occasion of the election of Ceann Comhairle brings a focus to the office and Parliament.

Sometimes, although what are perceived as archaic rules are overly associated with how the Chair is obliged to administer, the two should not be confused. The rules are a matter for the House itself. Almost all reform is on an all-party basis and it is the Ceann Comhairle's job to administer the rules. The Chair has the unenviable task sometimes of being obliged to implement the

rules laid down by Members, which can appear to be overly authoritarian. It can be a case of shooting the messenger and can lead over the years to a certain loss of respect for the Chair. At all times, the Chair must be respected and I encourage Members, as indeed my predecessor has done many times, to change whatever rules they believe have become outmoded. I know I will have Members' goodwill and intend to earn their respect in the fair manner in which I will discharge my duties.

As on the last occasion, there are a significant number of new Members, that is, 49 and I offer them my congratulations on their election. A familiarisation programme for new Members has been undertaken over recent weeks and most of them will be reasonably familiar with their role and surroundings. For my own part, my door is always open. Any Members who may feel aggravated by any decision of mine—

(Interruptions).

Deputy Jim O'Keeffe: Will we form a queue?

An Ceann Comhairle: — will be welcome to come knocking—

(Interruptions).

An Ceann Comhairle: —although this is unlikely as Members appear to be a reasonably compliant set of people.

The people have greatly honoured us by electing us to represent and serve them. To do effectively, we must be efficient, professional and modern in carrying out our business. These disciplines also extend to the administrative services supporting the work of the Houses that have a direct impact on Members' everyday work. As incoming chairman of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission, I will work with the new commission members, when appointed, to build on the significant improvements in parliamentary services that were delivered in the previous Dáil.

In seeking to uphold the best traditions of the House, it is important to remember my many illustrious predecessors. There have been many and I am acutely aware of this as I take up this position today. However, I refer in particular to my immediate predecessor, Deputy O'Hanlon. The outgoing Ceann Comhairle made an invaluable contribution in upholding the dignity and decorum as presiding Member of this House. He performed his duties as Ceann Comhairle in an exemplary fashion and was worthy of the support of all Members. Moreover, the success of the inaugural Houses of the Oireachtas Commission owes much to his sterling work and astute chairmanship.

I must now perform my first official duty as Ceann Comhairle. In accordance with Standing Order No. 8 of the Standing Orders relative to

Public Business, I wish to make the following declaration:

I do solemnly declare that I will duly and faithfully and to the best of my knowledge and ability, execute the office of Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann without fear or favour, apply the rules as laid down by this House in an impartial manner, maintain order and uphold the rights and privileges of Members in accordance with the Constitution and the Standing Orders of this House.

I wish to reiterate my gratitude to fellow Deputies. I shall strive earnestly to prove worthy of the honour, confidence and trust you have placed in me.

The Ceann Comhairle took the Chair.

Business of Dáil: Motion.

An Ceann Comhairle: I call on the Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach, Deputy Tom Kitt.

Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (Deputy Tom Kitt): I move:

That, notwithstanding anything in Standing Orders, the Dáil shall sit later than 4.45 p.m. tonight and business shall be interrupted on the conclusion of No. 5 and the Dáil shall adjourn forthwith; the proceedings on the nomination of the Taoiseach shall be brought to a conclusion not later than 4.30 p.m. and the House shall suspend immediately thereafter until 6.30 p.m.; and that all divisions demanded in the House today shall be taken manually.

An Ceann Comhairle: Is that agreed? It is not agreed.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: I take this opportunity to wish the Ceann Comhairle well in his position. However, all Members must recognise that this proposition, which is time-limited to 4.30 p.m., allows a mere 40 minutes to address the appointment of Taoiseach. Several Members of all opinion in this House will wish to address this important issue. I ask the Chief Whip and Deputy Bertie Ahern, as leader of the Fianna Fáil Party, to accommodate an increased period to allow for a full debate to take place for all parties and all opinions in the House to have the opportunity to have their say. This is critically important, as we have been returned from our respective constituencies and have the right to have our opinions heard. The decision we are about to take is one of the most important in terms of determining the future of the political make-up of the 30th Dáil and the delivery therefrom.

Accordingly, I make the request through the Ceann Comhairle to the Chief Whip and the outgoing Taoiseach to indicate acceptance of the

[Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin.]

proposal to extend the time appropriately in order to allow a proper debate of the propositions that may present.

Question put and declared carried.

Nomination of Taoiseach.

An Ceann Comhairle: The next business is the nomination of Taoiseach. I will now receive motions.

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Cowen): Tairgim:

Go n-ainmneoidh Dáil Éireann an Teachta Bertie Ahern a cheaptha ag an Uachtarán mar Taoiseach.

I move:

That Dáil Éireann nominate Deputy Bertie Ahern for appointment by the President to be Taoiseach.

Over the past ten years, Ireland has been transformed in many ways, the greatest part of which has been the overcoming of the historic challenges of conflict, unemployment and immigration. We have moved from being a nation defined by the problems it faced to one defined by the opportunities it has created.

In this, Deputy Bertie Ahern has played an essential role. That his have been the two longest serving peace-time Administrations in our history stands as a testament to his ability to lead. He has combined high office with a determination to stay close to the people who put him there. In an age where many feel the need to read significance into almost every matter, he has brought a cool head and consistent focus on moving our country forward. In the recent election, he did not seek a reward for past achievements, but a mandate to implement an ambitious and positive programme to help keep Ireland moving forward. The people responded both to him and his message. There is no doubt that he is the people's choice for Taoiseach. It is my privilege to move the motion.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: I dtús báire, a Cheann Comhairle, guím gach ráth ort mar Cheann Comhairle. Ba mhaith liom tacú leis an moladh atá curtha ag an Aire, an Teachta Cowen, maidir le ainmniú an Teachta Bertie Ahern mar Taoiseach na tíre seo. This is a time when the nomination for Taoiseach most clearly reflects the wish of the people who voted for Fianna Fáil in large numbers.

For the six Green Party Deputies — I welcome the newly elected Deputy Mary White, deputy leader of the party, warmly — our support for the nomination of Deputy Bertie Ahern honours a decision taken by the membership of the party throughout this island at a meeting in the Mansion House last night. We are not only voting for Deputy Bertie Ahern to be Taoiseach, but for the

opportunity to play our full part in a Government that will set the country on a course to being a leader in terms of quality of life, energy efficiency, renewable energy technology, good food production, equitable health care and good planning. That government will reflect to some extent the diversity that characterises society.

We in the Green Party have worked hard with our colleagues in Fianna Fáil to put together a comprehensive programme for Government that needs to be implemented urgently. With this in mind, we are giving implementation of that programme the green light through our support for Deputy Bertie Ahern as Taoiseach.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: The Green Party does not have that mandate.

Deputy Richard Bruton: I congratulate the Ceann Comhairle on his appointment. It is a great achievement and I am sure he will fulfil his duties admirably.

I propose Deputy Enda Kenny for the position of Taoiseach. In the recent general election, many voted for a complete change of government.

Deputy Paul Gogarty: There was no mandate.

Deputy Richard Bruton: Some 25% more people voted for candidates who opposed the existing Government than for its supporters.

Deputies: Hear, hear.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: Including the Green Party.

Deputy Richard Bruton: Most of those voters did not want to see the same battered vessel or tired crew put back to sea. They did not want to see it patched up and put out with new bunting. They wanted to see a serious change of government, which is what Deputy Kenny would offer as Taoiseach.

The past seven years have been a period of unique opportunity. Extraordinary wealth was available to the Government to transform our community, the way we live and the way our people are served, but that opportunity has been allowed to slip by. It has not been properly harvested and many have not seen the fruit of the success created. We should be looking back on a seven-year period in which we created a world class health service, made it easier for families to bear their burdens and when there were safer streets than at the beginning of the millennium, but that is not the situation. For this reason, we need far-reaching reform.

In Deputy Kenny, we have a man who has made it possible for the Dáil to vote for a complete change of government, which is a singular achievement. There are enough people who are not part of Fianna Fáil to create an alternative government, to elect a government that, rather than being another pastel shade of Fianna Fáil, is

committed to serious reform across the length and breadth of public services.

I propose a man who does not make promises to voters that he does not intend to honour when he is returned to government. I propose a man who remoulded a defeated party some years ago and created the most vibrant force in politics which won 20 seats in the recent election, unlike any other party in the Dáil. I propose a man who has built a platform for real change with Deputy Rabbitte and the Labour Party that offers the opportunity to transform much in this country that needs change.

We are embarking on more challenging times for which the last Government should have prepared us. We should be in a stronger position to deal with issues of competitiveness, climate change and the delivery of quality public services to those who need them, but we are not. For this reason we need radical change, someone who leads by example and someone who stands up and sets high standards for himself and those around him. This is what Deputy Kenny brings. He is a unique leader for a new generation, a leader not in the old style of “the Boss”, but someone who motivates and who creates self-belief, a winning team and the sort of new and open Ireland that is needed. He is a man who will lead a new type of government where voices that have been long ignored will be heard, where outcomes and not inputs will be the test of performance, where waste will not be rewarded with promotion and where the abuse of public office will finally be put behind us. Therefore, I propose Deputy Kenny for the position of Taoiseach.

Deputies: Hear, hear.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: As someone who does not intend to need to take up the Ceann Comhairle’s invitation to visit him in his office, I take this public opportunity of wishing him every success in the Chair. I am encouraged by his remarks and appreciate that his skills are probably no longer required in Kerry South, given the extent of the booty on its way there—

Deputy Conor Lenihan: If the cap fits.

(Interruptions).

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: —in the back of Deputy Healy-Rae’s car. When the Ceann Comhairle stated that there will be a familiarisation programme for the new Members, I believed he stated that there will be a feminisation programme. We might all examine its introduction for the next Parliament.

It is a great pleasure to have the opportunity to support the nomination of Deputy Kenny for the position of Taoiseach. Deputy Kenny is an immensely experienced parliamentarian. He is immensely popular with his colleagues on all sides of this House. He is an honest politician

whose talents are well suited to the job of managing a Government.

I hoped until recently that he would be elected Taoiseach because he and I set out to offer the people a choice of Government in the recent election. I fundamentally believe it is important in a democracy that there is an alternative on offer to the Irish people. We set out to create such an alternative because the people have a right to expect that its democracy is capable of offering an alternative Government. We sought to do that. We sought to spell out on the big issues confronting our people where we were different and where what we were offering was different, on issues like the management of the health services, the privatisation of the hospitals building programme, criminal justice, policing and a number of other issues.

The people are sovereign and they have made their decision. However, I believe with conviction — I say this with the utmost respect to my Fianna Fáil colleagues in the House — that it is not healthy in a democracy that a single party dominates and is likely to dominate politics in the foreseeable future. Our civil society and institutions badly need a change of Government. That did not happen but I am proud to say that we fought the good fight. The outcome is narrow and the people are sovereign. The Taoiseach, Deputy Bertie Ahern, has won and I entirely accept that. We will have the opportunity to make some remarks about it later. I take this opportunity to support the nomination of Deputy Kenny for the position of Taoiseach.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: I again wish you every success in your position as Ceann Comhairle and confirm that my colleagues and I in the Sinn Féin Party will co-operate with you during the course of the Dáil term before us. There is a collective responsibility on all of us who are elected to the Dáil to govern fairly in the interests of the people. That is something the electorate wants us to do regardless of the party differences that are clearly represented in this House. I remember stating at the outset of the 29th Dáil that there should be co-operation among all parties in advancing progressive legislation on which we can all agree. This is often forgotten in the heat of inter-party rivalry. The Dáil as a whole is elected to legislate for the people. For that reason, it is important that we set down at the outset that it is essential that all voices in this House are respected and treated equally. That is a critical factor on this first day of the new Dáil.

While I regret that the election has reinforced the dominant position of the two main conservative parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, it is also evident that the Labour Party, in tying itself so closely to Fine Gael, has only facilitated the latter’s return here with even greater numbers. There is clearly no electoral benefit for the Labour Party. The outcome has been negative for

[Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin.]

the broad left in Irish politics. Similarly, the decision of the Green Party to form a coalition with Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats is a bad day for progressive politics in this State. The coalition that is presented before us is an extraordinary one, to say the least.

We are particularly concerned that it points to a continuation of many of the most abhorrent policies that the outgoing Government pursued relentlessly, not least in the whole area of the health portfolio. The programme for Government as presented will see the continuation of the scandalous and disgraceful hospital co-location scheme. The Sinn Féin Deputies cannot as a party support the establishment of a new Government that will see Deputy Harney, with respect to her on a personal basis, as the acting head of the Progressive Democrats, return to her ministerial office. We do not know as we speak whether she will have the health and children portfolio, but it is clear that the electorate has spoken and has roundly rejected the malign influence of the Progressive Democrats in the 29th Dáil, which most particularly represented itself in the pursuit of the policies in the health domain for which she was responsible in the concluding two to two and a half years. This encouraged inequalities in Irish society and sought to deepen rather than address responsibly the growing gulf in Irish society between those who have and those who continue to struggle on a day-by-day basis.

For these reasons, we cannot support the nomination of Deputy Bertie Ahern for the position of Taoiseach in the 30th Dáil. He has not demonstrated in the weeks since the election that he intends to change course in this area and many related areas, including the issue of stopovers at Shannon Airport by United States forces intent on continuing their imperialist endeavour in Iraq. There are many issues that we could address here, many of the failures of the outgoing Government that we see being continued by this new Administration under Deputy Bertie Ahern. It is with regret that I say we cannot find it within ourselves to support his nomination or that of Deputy Kenny, who claims to represent an alternative to the outgoing Government now emboldened by the Green Party and a number of Independents.

We cannot support another five years of privatisation of our health services while public hospital beds are not delivered, accident and emergency units throughout the country are overcrowded, MRSA is rampant, and those who provide critical services find it impossible to carry out their work as they would wish. The list is endless. There is nothing in what either nominee presents that will address any of these critical issues. We will therefore oppose both of them and will continue as a party determined to give a radical voice and a real alternative for the Irish people in this Chamber in the coming years, whatever the duration of this Government.

Deputy Mary O'Rourke: It will be five years.

Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I begin by congratulating you on your election to the Office of Ceannt Comhairle. We will certainly miss your wit and humour in the Cabinet room. You have been a loyal and committed colleague of mine for the past ten years and I thank you for that. You are a quintessential Irishman and a very appropriate person to represent this House. The Office of Ceannt Comhairle is probably not taken as seriously here as it is in many parliaments around the world. Your legal background will be enormously beneficial in interpreting the rules of this House and keeping order.

I rise also to support the nomination of Deputy Bertie Ahern for the Office of Taoiseach. I do so for the third time in ten years. I do so because I believe he has the capacity to lead a stable, coherent and effective Government in the next five years and because of the unique skills he has to run a coalition Government on the basis of mutual respect and partnership. The fact that he is about to be elected Taoiseach for the third successive time, something that has not happened in this House for more than 60 years, when the political landscape was very different, is a tribute to his unique personal and political qualities, not least of which was the negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement and its successful implementation, which has transformed politics and life on the island of Ireland.

Today is not a day for robust opposition or heated debate. Edmund Burke once said magnanimity is not seldom the truest wisdom. I want to pay tribute today to those who are not in this House including, in particular, my colleagues in the Progressive Democrats because we had a very disappointing election. I refer to people such as Liz O'Donnell, who made a great contribution in many respects to this House over 15 years, Fiona O'Malley, Mae Sexton, Tim O'Malley and Tom Parlon, and especially to our leader and former Tánaiste and Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Michael McDowell. He has made a lasting contribution to political history and the quality of life in Ireland. His strong defence of the rule of law in the peace process made a major contribution to the health of our democracy and to peace in our society. I think most fair minded people recognise that.

I also pay tribute to many colleagues from other parties who lost their seats, not least of whom was Joe Higgins, a fine parliamentarian even though we did not always agree. We will miss him in this House. Politics can be very cruel to individuals and their families and supporters. Today is a sad day for the many who would have wished to have been here, just as it is a very happy one for the 49 new Members of this House.

We are entering a new political ecology. There is a new organic biosphere made up of—

(Interruptions).

Deputy Fergus O'Dowd: Made up of what?

Deputy Mary Harney: —new interdependent relationships and, as we know, the whole ecology system only works when all forms of human life are cherished and work together. I certainly look forward to working with the new Green Party Ministers in the Government.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: The Deputy might join them.

Deputy Mary Harney: I strongly believe in collective responsibility and loyalty in Government. That is what I have sought to achieve over the past ten years and that is what I want to achieve with our new colleagues in Government over the next five years. Notwithstanding the programme for Government, which is extremely important, a Government works on the basis of interpersonal relationships, whereby people give and take and support and assist each other. That kind of loyalty helps to deliver successful and cohesive Governments. This time five years ago, I began my speech by welcoming Deputy Kenny to the lonely leaders' club. Today I am welcoming people to the interim leaders' club, which comprises two members at present and may include more in due course.

Deputy Jim O'Keeffe: Does the Deputy know something we do not?

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan: Brian, take it easy.

Deputy Mary Harney: Deputy Grealish and I are happy to support the nomination of Deputy Bertie Ahern for Taoiseach.

Deputy Tony Gregory: Ba maith liom chomhghairdeas a ghabháil leat, a Cheann Chomhairle, as ucht an post tábhachtach sin a bhaint amach. Bhí áthas orm nuair a chuala mé go dtabharfaidh tú cothram na féinne dúinn ar fad. Tá a fhios agam go gcomhlíonfaidh tú an geallúint sin.

I thank those people in Dublin Central who voted to return me to the 30th Dáil. It is a great honour for all of us to be elected to Dáil Éireann but it is particularly difficult for an Independent candidate to succeed in a general election. I owe a great deal to a group of people who on a voluntary basis, campaigned, canvassed and erected posters to help me compete with the big political machines. I thank every one of them for their efforts, which made my re-election possible. However, it is particularly disappointing that in my own constituency of Dublin Central, more than 40% of the electorate did not consider it worth their while to vote. The percentage of those who did not vote was much higher in the more disadvantaged areas of the constituency.

When I spoke here five years ago, I welcomed the many new Independent Deputies elected at

that time but, regrettably, nearly all of that group lost out on this occasion. It is appropriate to pay tribute to each of them for the committed manner in which they played an important and active role through the Technical Group in all the deliberations of the outgoing Dáil. I pay special tribute to the leader of the Independent group during the past five years, Joe Higgins, who after ten years of total commitment in terms of bringing the attention of this House to social injustices, was not re-elected. This House will be a duller and, more important, a less inclusive place without Joe Higgins. I am certain, however, that his day will come again.

On the nomination of Taoiseach, there has been some speculation in recent weeks in the media regarding why I was not involved in talks with one of the nominees, Deputy Bertie Ahern. Perhaps that was because we both shared the same constituency and the Deputy was conscious of the priority issues on which I contested the recent election. Those issues include the need to end the two-tier health service and the scandal of the exploitation of public hospitals for private profit; the need to control the price of building land, much of which is held by a cartel of billionaire developers who have driven house prices beyond affordability for most people; the need to radically address the inequality in education, which sees less than 5% of children in some communities in Dublin Central going to third-level education; the need to strive for a fairer and more equal society; the need to safeguard our neutrality and sovereignty by ending the shameful use of Shannon Airport by United States military forces on their way to their murderous and illegal war in Iraq; the need to develop our natural resources to benefit our people and not at the behest of multinational oil companies; and the need to ensure that when a person dies in Garda custody or dies of injuries sustained while in custody, an immediate and independent investigation is conducted. These were some of the political issues on which I stood for election in Dublin Central and it is they and no other consideration whatever which will dictate the manner in which I will vote on the nomination for Taoiseach.

Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae: I congratulate the Ceann Comhairle in a very special way.

(Interruptions).

Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae: I congratulate him because I go back to when I directed elections for him in the early years. God knows, I played a leading role in sending him to this House in the first instance. I wish him many long and happy years in the seat in which he is now sitting.

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan: Straight from the heart.

Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae: I clearly state my support for Deputy Bertie Ahern as Taoiseach. I have had a wonderful relationship with him since I was elected to this House in 1997. I look forward to backing this brand new Government comprising Fianna Fáil, the Green Party, the Progressive Democrats Party and my fellow Independent Deputies. I thank in a very special way the massive team of supporters and people who put me into this position in South Kerry, against the might and the massive strength of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Labour.

An Ceann Comhairle: I thank the Deputy even more specially.

Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae: Standing here this evening, I guarantee the Ceann Comhairle that if there is a bad pothole around Waterville, on Dursy Island in west County Cork or anywhere in Cahirciveen, I will do my very best—

(Interruptions).

Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae: In the Ceann Comhairle's absence, I will do my best to sort them out and I will keep him well informed all the time.

An Ceann Comhairle: I assure the Deputy that I will never be far away.

Tá orm an cheist a chur de bhun rún na Dála inniú. I am required to put the question in accordance with the resolution of the Dáil today.

Cuireadh an cheist: “Go n-ainmneoidh Dáil Éireann an Teachta Bertie Ahern chun a cheaptha ag an Uachtarán mar Taoiseach.”

Question put: “That Dáil Éireann nominates Deputy Bertie Ahern for appointment by the President to be Taoiseach.”

The Dáil divided: Tá, 89; Níl, 76.

Tá

Ahern, Bertie.
 Ahern, Dermot.
 Ahern, Michael.
 Ahern, Noel.
 Andrews, Barry.
 Andrews, Chris.
 Ardagh, Seán.
 Aylward, Bobby.
 Behan, Joe.
 Blaney, Niall.
 Brady, Áine.
 Brady, Cyprian.
 Brady, Johnny.
 Brennan, Séamus.
 Browne, John.
 Byrne, Thomas.
 Calleary, Dara.
 Carey, Pat.
 Collins, Niall.
 Conlon, Margaret.
 Connick, Seán.
 Coughlan, Mary.
 Cowen, Brian.
 Cregan, John.
 Cuffe, Ciarán.
 Cullen, Martin.
 Curran, John.
 Dempsey, Noel.
 Devins, Jimmy.
 Dooley, Timmy.
 Fahey, Frank.
 Finneran, Michael.
 Fitzpatrick, Michael.
 Fleming, Seán.
 Flynn, Beverley.
 Gallagher, Pat The Cope.
 Gogarty, Paul.
 Gormley, John.
 Grealish, Noel.
 Hanafin, Mary.
 Harney, Mary.
 Haughey, Seán.
 Healy-Rae, Jackie.
 Hoctor, Máire.

Kelleher, Billy.
 Kelly, Peter.
 Kenneally, Brendan.
 Kennedy, Michael.
 Killeen, Tony.
 Kirk, Seamus.
 Kitt, Michael P.
 Kitt, Tom.
 Lenihan, Brian.
 Lenihan, Conor.
 Lowry, Michael.
 Mansergh, Martin.
 Martin, Micheál.
 McDaid, James.
 McEllistrim, Thomas.
 McGrath, Finian.
 McGrath, Mattie.
 McGrath, Michael.
 McGuinness, John.
 Moloney, John.
 Moynihan, Michael.
 Mulcahy, Michael.
 Nolan, M. J.
 Ó Cuív, Éamon.
 Ó Fearghaíl, Seán.
 O'Brien, Darragh.
 O'Connor, Charlie.
 O'Dea, Willie.
 O'Flynn, Noel.
 O'Hanlon, Rory.
 O'Keeffe, Batt.
 O'Keeffe, Edward.
 O'Rourke, Mary.
 O'Sullivan, Christy.
 Power, Peter.
 Power, Seán.
 Roche, Dick.
 Ryan, Éamon.
 Sargent, Trevor.
 Scanlon, Éamon.
 Smith, Brendan.
 Treacy, Noel.
 Wallace, Mary.
 White, Mary Alexandra.
 Woods, Michael.

Níl

Allen, Bernard.
 Bannon, James.
 Barrett, Seán.
 Breen, Pat.
 Broughan, Thomas P.
 Bruton, Richard.
 Burke, Ulick.
 Burton, Joan.
 Byrne, Catherine.
 Carey, Joe.
 Clune, Deirdre.
 Connaughton, Paul.
 Coonan, Noel J.
 Costello, Joe.
 Coveney, Simon.
 Crawford, Seymour.
 Creed, Michael.
 Creighton, Lucinda.
 D'Arcy, Michael.
 Deasy, John.
 Deenihan, Jimmy.
 Doyle, Andrew.
 Durkan, Bernard J.
 English, Damien.
 Enright, Olwyn.
 Feighan, Frank.
 Ferris, Martin.
 Flanagan, Charles.
 Flanagan, Terence.
 Gilmore, Eamon.
 Gregory, Tony.
 Hayes, Brian.
 Hayes, Tom.
 Higgins, Michael D.
 Hogan, Phil.
 Howlin, Brendan.
 Kehoe, Paul.
 Kenny, Enda.

Lynch, Ciarán.
 Lynch, Kathleen.
 McCormack, Pádraic.
 McEntee, Shane.
 McGinley, Dinny.
 McHugh, Joe.
 McManus, Liz.
 Mitchell, Olivia.
 Morgan, Arthur.
 Naughten, Denis.
 Neville, Dan.
 Noonan, Michael.
 Ó Caoláin, Caoimhghín.
 Ó Snodaigh, Aengus.
 O'Donnell, Kieran.
 O'Dowd, Fergus.
 O'Keeffe, Jim.
 O'Mahony, John.
 O'Shea, Brian.
 O'Sullivan, Jan.
 Penrose, Willie.
 Perry, John.
 Quinn, Ruairí.
 Rabbitte, Pat.
 Reilly, James.
 Ring, Michael.
 Shatter, Alan.
 Sheahan, Tom.
 Sheehan, P. J.
 Sherlock, Seán.
 Shortall, Róisín.
 Stagg, Emmet.
 Stanton, David.
 Timmins, Billy.
 Tuffy, Joanna.
 Upton, Mary.
 Varadkar, Leo.
 Wall, Jack.

Tellers: Tá, Deputies Kelleher and Tom Kitt; Níl, Deputies Kehoe and Stagg.

Question declared carried.

An Ceann Comhairle: The other motions before the House fall.

The Taoiseach: Is cúis mhór áthais domsa seasamh anseo inniu os chomhair na Dála mar Thaoiseach. Is mór an onóir, an phribhléid agus an dualgas atá orm an cheart a dhéanamh ar son muintir na hÉireann agus cuirfidh an Rialtas nua seo chun oibre le fuinneamh.

I express my deep gratitude and appreciation to the Dáil for the great honour it has conferred on me by electing me Taoiseach. I am deeply conscious of the important responsibility this honour places on me. It is my first duty and great pleasure upon being nominated by Dáil Éireann for the office of Taoiseach to congratulate you, a Cheann Comhairle, on your election by the House. Your long service and experience as a Deputy, together with your experience as a Minister, will equip you well for the important office to which you have been elected. Deputies from every side of the House can have full confidence that, in you, we will have a fair and an impartial champion. For my part, I pledge you the respect and co-operation upon which the effective dis-

charge of our parliamentary business depends. I wish you well in your new and important position.

On 24 May democracy took its course and the Irish people went to the polls and elected the 30th Dáil. The exercise of democracy, as prescribed by the Constitution, is fundamental to the stability of our country and legitimacy of our Government. Though our free, transparent and peaceful exercise of the democratic franchise is happily the norm, it should never be taken for granted. It is worth remembering today, as we meet for the first time, that Ireland enjoys a longer period of continuity under a single written constitution than any other European country.

From a perspective of peace and prosperity, the abiding memory today of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s may be of economic hardship and emigration but we should recall too that in a world at war and a European Continent oppressed by fascism and communism, Ireland's proudest achievement then was the establishment of stable democracy. It remains one of Ireland's proudest achievements now. Ireland's democracy, established with such firm political purpose by those who fought for and established the Republic, is the foundation for all we enjoy. Today, for myself and on behalf of all those who share the privilege

[The Taoiseach.]

of being elected to the 30th Dáil, I acknowledge those who have gone before us and left so much of lasting value behind.

Every generation has made its contribution to the unfolding story of Irish history. It is fitting to recall and salute those who served in the 29th Dáil and are not here today. Many former Deputies stepped down after long years of service. Others suffered the bruising and very public pain of political defeat. All made their own contribution to public life. I salute them, their families and their political supporters and I wish them well in the future.

Today is an occasion of great honour for every Deputy who has been elected as a representative of the people. This is especially so for those taking their seat in the Dáil for the first time today. They have come to Leinster House with their families and supporters who are looking down on them from the Visitors Gallery with a justified sense of pride in their election. They carry not only their high hopes but also the high hopes of the community who elected them. They are the Ministers and Taoisigh of the future and in years to come the turn of events will hinge on their decisions.

For myself, I am greatly honoured to have been elected ten times in 30 years by the people of Dublin Central. I promise I will continue to do my utmost to repay the trust that has been placed in me and continue to serve my own community to the very best of my ability. I also pay tribute to my political opponents on the benches opposite. Political battles are hard fought and a general election is especially so. Deputy Enda Kenny and Deputy Pat Rabbitte made their case to the people and did so with all the strength and passion of people who were genuinely persuaded of their cause. For my part, I respect their convictions and I respect them. I wish them and their families well in the future.

I welcome the opportunity to serve the people in the years ahead with colleagues from the Green Party and the Progressive Democrats, with the support of others who see the merits of our programme.

We live in an Ireland of unprecedented peace and prosperity. This has not happened by chance. Through every single day of the past decade, the quest for peace has been the single dominating purpose of my public life and the work of Government. Today, I pledge again, as I have before, that the cause of peace will be the cause that is always closest to my heart. During these past weeks, attention has understandably been focused on the course of the general election. In the future, I believe a far greater regard will be given by history to the new and glad departure in the relations between Unionists and Nationalists and between North and South on this island. There now exists between British and Irish, Nationalist and Unionist, an agreed consensus on our shared future. It is not an end of history but

it is a new beginning. The work of this Dáil and the Government I will shortly nominate is to shape and strengthen that shared and better future. In doing so, we can begin to put the divisions of the past permanently behind us. All of the island of Ireland, including Northern Ireland, can be a place of peace and of promise.

Today, Ireland stands as a strong economy in a global market place. We enjoy the full employment, good wages and promising opportunities of which the generations that secured our independence and built our democracy could only dream. Now our opportunity and duty is to secure our prosperity and use it to build a better Ireland. By promoting a strong economy, enabling individual enterprise and increasing investment in public services, we can continue to build not only a strong economy but we can build upon the foundations already laid for a stronger and fairer Ireland.

Wealth creation is not an end in itself. Rather, it is the engine that drives improvements in our social services, giving us the money to increase child benefit, build more playgrounds and sports facilities, deliver pension increases, improve services for children and adults with disabilities and ensure that our strong economy is grounded on a sustainable environment so that together we can all enjoy a sustainable future. A sound economy is the essential bedrock of social progress. It is the foundation for all our ambitions — in health, enterprise, welfare or education. In a world with higher interest rates, higher energy costs and increasing competition from emerging economies success cannot be assumed and prosperity cannot be taken for granted.

I pledge that the Government I will lead will work to protect prosperity and strive to ensure that Ireland's potential, all our potential, is achieved. In doing so, I look forward to achieving, with the social partners, the challenging goals we agreed in Towards 2016. I also look forward to leading the public service into a new phase of modernisation and change to the benefit of all our people.

On this occasion five years ago, I said that "high office does not confer upon its holder either a monopoly of wisdom or the benefit of hindsight". It has certainly proved to be so. I take courage from all the lessons I have learnt from life, including my life in politics. I especially take heart that I have learned from experience that effort is rewarded and if one stays the course, difficult goals can be reached.

A Cheann Comhairle, today I am honoured and humbled by the democratic mandate which the Irish people have given me. It is an honour I will work with all my might to repay every day I hold this office. It is with great pride and an acute sense of responsibility that I accept the nomination of Dáil Éireann for the office of Taoiseach.

Deputy Enda Kenny: Ba mhaith liom ar dtús mo bhuíochas agus mo chomhghairdeas a ghabháil leat, a Cheann Comhairle, as ucht a bheith tofa mar Cheann Comhairle ar an 30ú Dáil. I congratulate you on your appointment as Ceann Comhairle of the 30th Dáil. Coming as you do from Cahirciveen in the deep south, you bring with you a wonderful tradition from a county with which I have strong associations. In fact, you will now have to develop a little style of your own, as all your predecessors did, either by accent or by action. I recall asking a former Minister for Education, Mr. Richard Burke, who came from close to the location of a former distinguished Ceann Comhairle, Mr. Seán Treacy, where they got the accent. He said: "It's the limestone. It sticks in your throat." I am not sure what will be your quirk after five years.

It is an honour and a privilege to be nominated to contest the position of Taoiseach in this Dáil and House of Parliament. I thank Deputy Richard Bruton for nominating me on behalf of the Fine Gael Party and Deputy Pat Rabbitte for supporting that nomination on behalf of the Labour Party.

I congratulate Deputy Bertie Ahern and give him credit for his persistence and permanence in the political field in Ireland. For him, this is not just an honour; it is one that is almost unprecedented in that only one of his predecessors since the foundation of the State had the opportunity and privilege of serving three times as Taoiseach. I suppose we should all be glad for small mercies in that he has decided to begin the long glide to retirement, as he has already announced.

Standing in this position five years ago I said we would support the Government in the interests of the country where we felt that was necessary, and that we would oppose the Government and hold it to account where we felt that was necessary. We have had jousts in the House during Leaders' Questions and on other occasions but I accept the verdict of the people, the consequences of the proportional representation system and the decision of the Dáil today in nominating Deputy Bertie Ahern and confirming him as Taoiseach. Five years ago I set out to make him history but I did not quite get there on this occasion.

We live in a very different world than we did five years ago. Both nationally and internationally, things have turned on their head. Circumstances for the Taoiseach, as leader of the Government he is to announce, are very different from five years ago in terms of the economic challenge that faces the country and the changed national and international circumstances.

Given the Taoiseach's infernal ability to create or construct a Government of incompatibles, I must wish him well in what he does. He mentioned that he had been elected ten times over 30 years, which is true. At least in one respect, I have a slight edge on him in that I have been in the

House for 32 years and have been elected 11 times. On this occasion, I have had the opportunity to bring back with me 20 new or re-elected Deputies. For me personally, this was the most enjoyable election campaign I have ever fought. To see democracy in one's own constituency gives one an understanding of the movement taking place but to lead a national campaign on behalf of a national party through 43 constituencies really brings home the impact and the importance of every single vote, and how important that is to our democracy.

I congratulate Deputy Bertie Ahern. I wish him well in his endeavours and in the challenge that faces him. I assure him that this party, with the increased mandate which we sought and were given, will support the Government in the interests of the country where we deem that appropriate and responsible, and we will continue to hold the Taoiseach and whatever Ministers he appoints to account on issues on which we feel they should be held to account. It was Einstein who said: "Try not to be a man of success; try also to be a man of value." I hope at the end of the Taoiseach's tenure of office that this is what the people will judge him by.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: I would like to add my voice and the voice of my party to the congratulations to Deputy Bertie Ahern on being re-elected as Taoiseach and to extend our good wishes to him for the lifetime of this Dáil. I do so without cavils or caveats of any kind. To be re-elected for a third consecutive term is a truly remarkable achievement. I acknowledge that achievement and congratulate the Taoiseach on it. It is a tribute to his single-minded focus on politics and public service. Later today, when he announces the members of his new Cabinet, we will have an opportunity to dwell in a little more depth on the substantive issue, the formation of the new Government and the challenges that lie ahead. However, for the purpose of these few remarks, I wish the Taoiseach well and acknowledge that extraordinary achievement, which is a reward for his single-minded focus on politics — I hope he gets the opportunity on the way back from the Áras to do half an hour of canvassing in Drumcondra before he returns to the House. His re-election is a tribute to his extraordinary ability to straddle the ground between the people of property in our society and the people of no property, which is a remarkable achievement when examined in political terms.

In the new configuration of the Dáil the Labour Party is the undisputed party of the left and we intend to provide opposition to the Government on that basis. We intend to represent the vacant space which the lobbyists of the Green Party used to recently occupy and we will do our best to hold this Government to account. However, this afternoon is the Taoiseach's afternoon. I do not think anybody in modern times is likely to repeat the achievement of being thrice

[Deputy Pat Rabbitte.]

elected Taoiseach. It is a tremendous honour. To him and all who care for him, I offer my unstinting congratulations and best wishes.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: On behalf of the Sinn Féin Deputies I join earlier speakers in congratulating Deputy Bertie Ahern on his election as Taoiseach of the 30th Dáil. I echo what has been said, namely, it is a remarkable achievement in the short political life of this State and of Irish politics on the island of Ireland. I wish him well in the period ahead, whatever duration that will be. As I indicated in my earlier remarks during the debate on the selection of Taoiseach and the nomination of Deputy Ahern and Deputy Kenny, it is the responsibility of each and every one of us to play a constructive role.

We are not in Opposition for opposition's sake, but to recognise the merit of proposals from Government on legislation. As is required, we have a record of supporting as we believe appropriate. I hope there will be many occasions in the course of the lifetime of the 30th Dáil when there will be unanimity, or as near as is achievable. That will be indicative of greater care, attention and consideration of proposals and legislation that will come before the House. Let us hope that as a result of the composition of the new Government, with the myriad of parties and representatives now represented there, there will be reflection on many of the ideas people on these benches care about.

I wish Deputy Bertie Ahern well. This is a proud moment for him and his family and I wish him success not alone on a personal or party political basis, but for the people of Ireland who are dependent on his stewardship in office.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: Aithním agus cuirim fáilte roimh thoradh an vóta seo agus guím comhghairdeas agus gach rath ar an dTaoiseach ar bheith tofa arís mar Thaoiseach na tíre. Ní rud nua é dó mar is Taoiseach é le tamall fada agus tá ag éirí go han-mhaith leis sa ról sin. Ach san am céanna, cuireann toradh an vóta seo tús le ré nua mar cuireann sé tús le ról mo pháirtí fhéin, An Comhaontas Glas, dul i gcomhpháirtíocht i Rialtas. Ciallaíonn sin nach amháin gur ócáid stairiúil é domsa go pearsanta agus don Taoiseach mar Thaoiseach i Rialtas nua mar sin, ach chomh maith mar gur páirtí muid atá fíor-bhuíoch d'obair an Thaoisigh le linn an próiséis síochána agus teacht i bhfeidhm Conradh Aoine an Chéasta.

Dá bharr sin is féidir linne sa Chomhaontas Glas a rá go bhfuilimid mar pháirtí uile-Éireann anois toisc go bhfuilimid páirteach insan Tionól i Stormont agus anseo i nDáil Éireann chomh maith. Táim buíoch don Taoiseach as an obair sin ar son na síochána sa tír seo agus as an ról atá ag muintir na tíre uilig i gcur chun cinn na tíre insan Chomhaontas Glas ó thuaidh agus ó dheas. Guím gach rath ar an obair sin. Táim ag súil leis an dul

chun cinn gur féidir linn a dhéanamh chun saol níos fearr a bhaint amach do mhuintir na tíre ar fad agus todhchaí na tíre a láidriú tríd an dúshlán atá romhainn.

Sitting suspended at 5.05 p.m. and resumed at 6.30 p.m.

Allocation of Time: Motion.

The Taoiseach: I move:

That, notwithstanding anything in Standing Orders,

(i) the proceedings on No. 5, nomination of members of the Government, shall be brought to a conclusion at 8.15 p.m. and the following arrangements shall apply:

(a) the speech of the Taoiseach and of every leader of a party recognised as a group shall not exceed 15 minutes in each case;

(b) the speech of each other Member called upon shall not exceed ten minutes in each case; and

(c) Members may share time;

(ii) until the Dáil shall otherwise order, the order in which questions to members of the Government, other than the Taoiseach, shall be asked in accordance with Standing Order 37(2) shall be that in which members of the Government will be listed in a resolution approving their nomination by the Taoiseach for appointment by the President; and

(iii) the Dáil on its rising today shall adjourn until 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 26 June 2007.

A Deputy: Are there any changes?

An Ceann Comhairle: Is the motion agreed to?

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: It is not agreed. The Taoiseach has introduced a proposal to the House the outworking of which will prevent the party I represent from direct participation in the debate to take place. The use of the word "group" to signify those with more than seven Deputies and the fact that there is not now a technical group, the Taoiseach having hoovered up most of those who made it up over the past five years in constructing his new Government, means that the proposal before the House does not accommodate the Sinn Féin Deputies and Deputy Gregory.

I ask the Taoiseach, as I did earlier, to be fair, mindful and respectful of the mandate of each Deputy and to accord the opportunity to the Sinn Féin Deputies and Deputy Tony Gregory to participate in this debate. This is within the gift of the Taoiseach and the Chief Whip, whom I ask to indicate as I wish; otherwise, I will have to

oppose the motion. I ask all fair-minded Deputies on the Government and Opposition benches to oppose the motion unless there is accommodation and respect for our right to have our voices and views heard. I ask the Taoiseach to respond favourably to this request.

The Taoiseach: The Deputy is right to say there has been a change in the groupings. I cannot, however, respond favourably to his request. Deputy Kenny's party has 51 Members, Deputy Rabbitte's party has 20 and my party has 78 so it cannot be done. Debates take place in this House in which Government and Opposition time can be shared but there is now no technical group so things cannot be done as they were in the last Dáil. That is the reality of the election result.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: I wish to respond briefly. We can certainly be accommodated if Government Deputies, of all hues, undertake to change the Standing Order.

An Ceann Comhairle: I remind the Deputy that he may only speak once, which he has done.

Question put: "That the motion be agreed to."

Deputies: *Votáil.*

An Ceann Comhairle: Will the Deputies claiming a division please rise?

Deputies Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Arthur Morgan, Martin Ferris and Tony Gregory rose.

An Ceann Comhairle: As fewer than ten Members have risen, I declare the question carried. The names of the Deputies who claimed the division will be recorded in the Journal of the Proceedings of the Dáil.

Question declared carried.

Appointment of Taoiseach and Nomination of Members of Government: Motion.

The Taoiseach: B'áil liom cead a chur in iúl, mar eolas don Dáil, gur chuir mé m'ainmniú mar Thaoiseach in iúl don Uachtarán agus gur cheap sí mé dá réir.

I wish to announce, for the information of the Dáil, that I have informed the President that the Dáil has nominated me to be the Taoiseach and that she has appointed me accordingly.

It is a great honour for me to present to the House the names of those whom I am proposing

for appointment by the President as members of the Government. In selecting my nominees, I have had regard to the record of achievement of many who have made an outstanding contribution to public life and to policy over recent years. I have also had regard to the talents and energy of others who have much to contribute. I am particularly conscious of the fact that a number of Ministers have held office in their Departments for only two and a half years. I believe there is a strong case to enable Ministers to continue in some Departments for a further period. There will be a particular opportunity at the mid-term review of the Government's programme to consider further the allocation of ministerial responsibilities. These considerations will also be reflected in the names I will propose next week to the Government for appointment as Ministers of State.

I do not propose on this occasion to make significant changes in the configuration of Departments. On the whole, I believe that the current structure of Departments is appropriate. I do, however, propose to make a number of changes in the interests of a better alignment of functions. Specifically, I propose to reallocate responsibility for sea fisheries to the Department of Agriculture and Food, which will become the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. In doing so, I will bring together the principal food production areas in one Department, in line with the norm in our partner member states.

I propose to transfer responsibility for non-national roads and the national vehicle and driver file to the Department of Transport. This will provide an even more comprehensive basis for the transport and road safety agendas. The principal responsibility for marine matters now lies with the Department of Transport, with the exception of the fisheries area. I propose, therefore, that the Department will be named the Department of Transport and the Marine.

There will be some other minor reallocation of functions to produce a better and more effective grouping of more specific activities. This will be announced in the coming days.

With those considerations in mind, I have pleasure in formally moving the motion.

Tairigim: "Go gcomhaontóidh Dáil Éireann leis an Taoiseach d'ainmniú na dTeachtaí seo a leanas chun a gceaptha ag an Uachtarán mar chomhaltaí den Rialtas."

I move: "That Dáil Éireann approve the nomination by the Taoiseach of the following Deputies for appointment by the President to be members of the Government:

Brian Ó Comhain

I also propose to nominate him as Tánaiste.

Máire Ní Áirne

Nollaig Ó Díomasaigh

Brian Cowen

Mary Harney

Noel Dempsey

[The Taoiseach.]

Diarmuid Ó hEachiarn
 Micheál Ó Máirtín
 Séamus Ó Braonáin
 Máirtín Ó Cuilinn
 Éamon Ó Cuív
 Máire Ní Chochláinn
 Máire Ní Ainifín
 Liam Ó Deaghaidh
 Brian Ó Luineacháin
 Seán Ó Gormlaigh
 agus
 Éamon Ó Riain

Dermot Ahern
 Micheál Martin
 Séamus Brennan
 Martin Cullen
 Éamon Ó Cuív
 Mary Coughlan
 Mary Hanafin
 Willie O'Dea
 Brian Lenihan
 John Gormley
 and
 Eamon Ryan.

They will be assigned Departments of State as follows:

An Roinn Airgeadais
 An Roinn Sláinte agus Leanaí
 An Roinn Iompair agus na Mara
 An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
 An Roinn Fiontar, Trádála agus Fostaíochta
 An Roinn Ealaíon, Spóirt agus Turasóireachta
 An Roinn Gnóthaí Sóisialacha agus Teaghlaigh
 An Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta
 An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Iascaigh agus Bia
 An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta
 An Roinn Cosanta
 An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt, Comhionannais agus Athchóirithe Dlí
 An Roinn Comhshaoil, Oidhreacht agus Rialtais Áitiúil
 An Roinn Cumarsáide, Fuinnimh agus Acmhainní Nádúrtha
 Department of Finance
 Department of Health and Children
 Department of Transport and the Marine
 Department of Foreign Affairs
 Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
 Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism
 Department of Social and Family Affairs
 Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
 Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
 Department of Education and Science
 Department of Defence
 Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
 Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
 Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

Brian Ó Comhain
 Máire Ní Áirne
 Nollaig Ó Díomasaigh
 Diarmuid Ó hEachiarn
 Micheál Ó Máirtín
 Séamus Ó Braonáin
 Máirtín Ó Cuilinn
 Éamon Ó Cuív
 Máire Ní Chochláinn
 Máire Ní Ainifín
 Liam Ó Deaghaidh
 Brian Ó Luineacháin
 Seán Ó Gormlaigh
 Éamon Ó Riain
 Brian Cowen
 Mary Harney
 Noel Dempsey
 Dermot Ahern
 Micheál Martin
 Séamus Brennan
 Martin Cullen
 Éamon Ó Cuív
 Mary Coughlan
 Mary Hanafin
 Willie O'Dea
 Brian Lenihan
 John Gormley
 Eamon Ryan.

I intend to propose to the Government, on its appointment, that Deputy Tom Kitt be appointed a Minister of State to become Chief Whip and Minister of State at the Department of Defence.

We are entering a period of significant activity in Europe. Next week, the European Council will consider the mandate for a new Inter-Governmental Conference to address the issue of the

future of the draft constitutional treaty. This will require intensive engagement to ensure that our national interests, as well as the interests of the European Union as a whole, are fully reflected in these negotiations and the subsequent debates in the European Council. I am pleased to announce that it is my intention to propose to the Government the appointment of Deputy Dick Roche as Minister of State for European Affairs. He played an outstanding role in the last IGC and was recognised across Europe as an outstanding Minister for European Affairs.

A Deputy: He was a good Minister for the Environment too.

The Taoiseach: Finally, I am pleased to announce my intention to nominate Paul Gallagher SC as Attorney General. As a distinguished advocate, I am confident he will bring to the Government wisdom, experience and energy. I wish to pay tribute to the immense contribution made by the outgoing Attorney General, Rory Brady SC. I wish him every success in his resumed career at the Bar. I commend my nominations of members of the Government to the House.

Deputy Enda Kenny: It seems to me that significant numbers of this Cabinet are already jaded. I would like to begin by warmly congratulating those appointed to the new Cabinet. Being appointed as a Minister in Government is a privilege reserved for relatively few people and for those chosen today it is a day to celebrate. For their families and friends watching from the Gallery, their appointment or reappointment will be an occasion to remember. Some of the Ministers may be tired already but even after ten years it is still an important occasion. It is a great day for them and for their mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, children and supporters who dropped leaflets, pounded pavements, took calls, shielded calls, put up the posters and picked them up and dusted them down when things might not have been going so well. I hope that at the end of their time in office, whenever that may be, their families and supporters will be as proud of their actions and achievements in office as they are of their appointment to office.

Great privilege brings great responsibility — collective Cabinet responsibility in the case of Ministers. Judging by comments made by members of the Green Party in the media recently, I am not too sure they realise that from now on they will also have responsibility for the actions of their partners in Government, both Fianna Fáil and what is left of the Progressive Democrats or Greens——

A Deputy: Hear, hear.

Deputy Enda Kenny: ——and that from here on they will hang together or hang separately.

I welcome the new Deputies to this Dáil. Many are young with young families. I have noticed far more buggies around the House in the past few days. I want to welcome especially the new Deputies on the Fine Gael benches and wish them very well. By any standards this was a spectacular election by the Fine Gael Party and I am very proud of the honour, honesty and dignity with which this party fought the general election and achieved this unprecedented success. Over 564,000 people gave Fine Gael candidates their first preference votes, which was the highest number in a quarter of a century. This party won 20 additional seats, an unprecedented seat gain in modern Irish political history.

The men and women who won can be proud of their campaign and their election. This is a great day for them also and for their families and supporters, many of whom are around the House this evening. Today, we also remember those who were not successful. They should not be dispirited. It takes courage to contest an election and without their participation, our democratic system could not function to the strength that it does.

It is my privilege to pay particular tribute to my colleague, Deputy Rabbitte, and the Labour Party. It and Fine Gael were able to offer the people a real choice and, we believed, a better Government. We did not succeed this time but it was not for lack of effort by either of the parties involved.

While I congratulate the members of the Cabinet and wish them well personally, it is my duty to state that what we are witnessing today in this Government is not the marriage of true minds, but the ultimate, cynical marriage of convenience. It is broad based but it is certainly not compatible. In fact, to quote the Taoiseach, it is a dolly mixture confection that cannot work. The 78 Fianna Fáil Members, six Green Party Members, three Independents and let us not forget the two Progressive Democrats comprise the ultimate dolly mixture advertised by the sweet company as “little colourful candies... packed with fruity flavour”, appropriately, perhaps, from the leader of the sweet company, Bertie Basset.

In the general election the parties now lined up on the Government benches actively campaigned against each other. The Green Party said that the issue of the Taoiseach’s finances made him “a dead man walking”. Its members said that Fianna Fáil “needs to go into Opposition and radically change itself before the Greens could even consider a coalition with it”. Fianna Fáil, as the Ceann Comhairle will be aware, said “the Greens are a rabid crowd of tree-hugging muesli-eating wackos——

Deputy Richard Bruton: Who could have said that?

Deputy Enda Kenny: ——Ireland needs Green economics like a lettuce needs slugs....”. Others

[Deputy Enda Kenny.]

described the party as “jihadists”. Members of the Green Party said “if the PDs pull the plug, who exactly are they going to go into Government with?” They said “the Greens wouldn’t touch those opportunists with a barge pole”. I suppose that is why they are cycling out to Áras an Uachtaráin as well. They also said that with Fianna Fáil it is a case of “if you don’t like our policies today, we can change them tomorrow”.

I hate to disappoint the Green Party Members, but Fianna Fáil did not change its policies at all. The Green Party has naively wandered into a programme for Government with Fianna Fáil written largely over it. It is a Government with Fianna Fáil at its centre, unbowed, unshaken and as arrogant as ever. There are no new ideas and no new solutions. However, this time the Fianna Fáil bicycle has not one mudguard but two. At the front, well used but badly worn, there are the remains of the Progressive Democrats. At the rear are the eager Green Party Members, all shiny and new. This time the bicycle has three stabilisers, bought off in secret deals with the taxpayers’ money. There are millions for south Kerry, hundreds of millions for Dublin and hundreds more millions for Tipperary.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: They took the shilling.

Deputy Enda Kenny: Nothing illustrates the nature of this coalition more than the programme for Government. It accurately reflects the mandate, or lack of mandate, which the two Progressive Democrats got in the election. It is not exactly surprising when one considers that this time the Progressive Democrats did not attempt to negotiate a programme for Government. Consider what their predecessors did and how much they achieved in Governments with Fianna Fáil in the past. Now, they saw power and went straight for it. The “policy driven” party has finally morphed into the power driven party.

The strongest Green Party input I can discern in the programme for Government is that it has saved a substantial section of some rain forest by managing to cut and paste so much of the Fianna Fáil manifesto, word for word, into this programme after ten days and nights of intensive discussion. It is difficult to see why it took so long to agree it. Any mess had more to do with scissors and glue than anything about policy. The Green Party has bought the Fianna Fáil manifesto, lock, stock and three pork barrels. It has swallowed huge chunks of Fianna Fáil policy, with all its failings in health and other vital public services. The Green Party has sacrificed its unique political identity, swapping principle for power.

What is the result? Are there specific commitments on key Green Party policies? No. Are there assurances of a strategic shift in Fianna Fáil thinking on the green agenda? No. The programme is full of promises to review, examine and

consider policies. All of them are worthy but ultimately useless when it comes to forcing specific decisions in Government. The Green Party will discover, for example, that a promise from Fianna Fáil to publish a Green Paper on local government reform is just that, and no more. Fianna Fáil has, over the years, perfected the art of publishing reports and leaving them sitting on shelves. The Minister, Deputy Martin, produced 102 of them when he was responsible for health and they are still gathering dust and cobwebs.

That is how Fianna Fáil deals with policies it does not wish to implement. Whichever Member of the Green Party becomes leader of that party has wandered into a parlour where the spider knows exactly how to play the web. Fianna Fáil has had ten years of practice; ask cystic fibrosis sufferers, the women waiting for BreastCheck to come to their area and cancer sufferers waiting for radiotherapy. The Green Party has signed up and its Members have their ministerial jobs. They forgot that they should be men of values as distinct from men of success.

I believe the Green Party has made a fundamental political mistake. It has the mistaken view that what little it has achieved in the programme for Government can be dramatically expanded by it in Cabinet. Deputy Cuffe said today that the Green Party would change the way the Government does its business. This demonstrates a naivety about how Government works. History shows that any smaller party entering coalition without specific, tangible commitments will struggle once the day-to-day, hurly burly of governing begins. There is no better man to define that in beautiful terms than the Minister, Deputy Brennan. He has been around this course previously and he knows, as a chief negotiator, where those boys have been put in the last ten days.

Yes, they will have a voice. In the end, however, as with the two Progressive Democrats, it will be their master’s voice. There are no better masters to let the servant take a hiding to save themselves. They might be the golden boys in the new Administration and give it a nice gloss — they deserve their short holiday — but soon they will find out what it is to become the whipping boys of Government when things start to go wrong. One thing is sure, however. Throughout the country Fianna Fáil parents can relax because they can be sure that when their Fianna Fáil sons and daughters are in Dublin, they will certainly be eating their greens.

There has been much talk from the Government side over the past month about the need for stability and, on every occasion, that mantra is related to the numbers supporting the Government. History, however, suggests that it is not numbers that ensures stability but trust between the parties in Government. The Fianna Fáil-Labour Party Government of 1992 to 1994 had over 100 seats. That Government ended because trust broke down. The preceding Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrats Government also broke

down because of a failure of trust. The last Government almost broke up three times — twice last autumn and again during the election campaign on the issue of the Taoiseach's finances.

The two parties now supporting the Taoiseach, the Green Party and the Progressive Democrats, were the most vocal in seeking explanations from him during the election campaign. The explanation eventually put forward by the Taoiseach has since been flatly contradicted by the opening statement of the Mahon tribunal on 28 May, four days after polling day. The failure of the Green Party and the Progressive Democrats to resolve that contradiction sows the seeds of mistrust and instability in this Government. It is a decision they have taken with their eyes wide open, and they will be held accountable for that decision in the months ahead. I wonder if Deputy Gormley knew at the Green Party conference that he would be replacing former Deputy Michael McDowell, the politician he called the Tammy Wynette of Irish politics, so intent was he in standing by his man.

This dolly mixture Government is also costing the taxpayer millions of euro in secret political deals. The Taoiseach warns of economic challenges ahead but at the same he is lashing out "millins", as Deputy Healy-Rae would say, so that he can buy the support of the independent Deputies.

Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae: Deputy Kenny would not give us a bob.

Deputy Enda Kenny: They are like the L'Oreal independents — because they are worth it.

(Interruptions).

Deputy Enda Kenny: Every year I go to Kerry and I cycle through the Black Valley and by Canon Sears' church, which Deputy Healy-Rae knows very well. These agreements will not compromise national security. They will not break the financial coffers of the Government. As they have been bought with taxpayers' money, they should be published.

Deputy Finian McGrath: The Deputy should not worry. They will be.

Deputy Enda Kenny: I know now why the Ceann Comhairle is in the Chair. After strangling the Freedom of Information Act, he could not find out himself what was in the Healy-Rae deal. Now he cannot even answer back.

Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae: I have no intention in the world of telling Deputy Kenny.

Deputy Enda Kenny: The people did not vote for the Green Party to keep Fianna Fáil in power. They did not vote for Fianna Fáil to put in the Green Party. A few of them voted for the Progressive Democrats to keep the Green Party out.

That is some ringing mandate for a new Government. While Fianna Fáil's organisation on the ground can claim credit for getting its own vote out, the fact is that during the campaign the party offered no plans, no solutions and nothing new, focusing entirely on a negative campaign about the Fine Gael and Labour Party plan.

Deputy Dermot Ahern: Fine Gael's advertising campaign was the most negative of all.

Deputy Enda Kenny: On health, broadband, greening the tax code, upskilling workers, supporting single income families and preschool, Fianna Fáil offered nothing other than what they are doing now. The Taoiseach even asserted that the people should congratulate him on the state of the health services.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Kenny's time has expired.

Deputy Enda Kenny: There was one policy for which this Government has no mandate, namely, the construction of private hospitals on public land. The last Government did not have a mandate for it and the Green Party voted against it, but it has now been sucked into it. The Government has no mandate for what it is doing. More people in this House voted against that policy than voted for it.

Deputy Willie O'Dea: Deputy Kenny's party supported it, depending on to whom one talked.

Deputy Enda Kenny: That has been rejected by the people, but the Government is now privatising the public health service by stealth and running it down when we should all be involved in making sure it becomes world class.

An Ceann Comhairle: I call Deputy Rabbitte.

(Interruptions).

Deputy Enda Kenny: I regret very much that this is the case.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Kenny is eating into the time of other Members.

Deputy Enda Kenny: You are the man who said to me in Dingle many years ago that down here time does not matter at all.

An Ceann Comhairle: I do not recall saying that, but time does matter up here and your time has expired. I am calling Deputy Rabbitte.

Deputy Enda Kenny: I want to say to the Taoiseach—

An Ceann Comhairle: I am calling Deputy Rabbitte. Your time has expired.

(Interruptions).

Deputy Johnny Brady: No respect is being shown to the Chair.

Deputy Enda Kenny: I want to wish the Taoiseach the best of luck with his new Cabinet. He can rest assured that he will be held to account in this House on the issues that really matter.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: The election of a new Government is one of the great parliamentary occasions, and one of the great set pieces in Dáil Éireann. It is the first opportunity for the newly elected Members to present themselves in Parliament and it allows us to make some initial remarks on the formation of the new Government. Best wishes to those who have the privilege of being selected to serve in the Cabinet. It is in that spirit that I want to wish this Government a fair wind and to extend my congratulations to those fortunate enough to serve in that Government. In particular, I offer my sincere congratulations to the new Ministers. It is a tremendous day for them and for their families and a great privilege has been conferred on Deputy Brian Lenihan and Deputies Gormley and Eamon Ryan. It is a day they will not forget and I wish them well. I also take the opportunity today to acknowledge the remarkable achievement of Deputy Bertie Ahern in being elected Taoiseach for a third time. Without any ifs or buts, caveats or cavilling, I acknowledge that achievement and wish him well.

Napoleon would have approved of the Taoiseach, Deputy Ahern. He certainly has been a very lucky general. He became leader of his party in unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstances and, in 1997, he inherited an economy that was the most successful since independence. Building on that economy since then has not been the only factor, but it was the main factor that contributed to his most recent electoral success. However, it is my conviction that the Taoiseach is running out of both luck and road. I do not know how long this rickety coalition will last, but I suspect that it is designed to survive its main architect. The growing assertiveness of the Minister for Finance and the fact that he is being treated by the Taoiseach as if he were the head of a neighbouring state confirms my view that the Taoiseach may be taking his leave of us sooner than we might have thought.

This *entente cordiale* between the Taoiseach and the Minister for Finance is another pressing reason that all documents relating to the formation of this Government ought to have been laid before the House and should now be laid before it. The Members of this House are entitled to see the content of all deals and side deals. Independent Members are running around with confidential deals. They include deals worth tens of millions or even hundreds of millions and there is no

way in the wide earthly world that we are entitled to see them. I believe that we are entitled to know if there is an agreement or side agreement with the Progressive Democrats. We would also like to know if there is an agreement providing for an orderly transition between the Taoiseach and the Minister for Finance.

The Taoiseach has never been known for his sense of humour, but perhaps it is because of his planned early leave-taking that he has inflicted us with such a dolly mixture of a government, to use Deputy Dermot Ahern's description of a far saner alliance. However, we should look at the dolly mixture we have now, composed of Fianna Fáil, the Green Party, the remnants of the Progressive Democrats and Deputy Finian McGrath and his unique backing group.

Deputy Finian McGrath: We will deliver.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: It is an extraordinary dolly mixture. Like Deputy Mary Harney earlier today, my heart goes out to former Deputy McDowell, wherever he is resting. When he sees this Government, I hope somebody will hold a wet towel to the noble forehead because heading into difficult economic times with this combination is a dispiriting prospect for many people.

When Deputy Finian McGrath was running around the place with that piece of paper, I had hoped that all he had got was a painting contract for Paddy the Plaster under some kind of CE scheme chaired by former Deputy Callely for houses in Dublin North-Central, but he states now that it will have not just national implications but international repercussions. I felt that it must have some kind of global impact if it was to separate him so easily from his comrade, Deputy Gregory, who has been left in splendid isolation as the Taoiseach tried to do to him what he did to Councillor Mary Fitzpatrick in the constituency.

Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae: No doubt it has gone to their heads.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: We should leave heads out of this.

The Taoiseach stated recently that we are heading into more difficult economic times and he has left us with a Government that, it seems, has nothing in common but a determination to be in power, a Government with two diametrically opposed parties with acting leaders and the third with a leader on the way out. That is not the way to head into difficult economic times.

Most informed citizens will be incredulous that Deputies Harney and Sargent have been prepared to enter Government with Deputy Bertie Ahern without challenging him to provide reassurance about questions at the planning tribunal that seem incapable of satisfactory answers. Both Deputies, in so far as we know, have been prepared to walk into Government with their

eyes open and if they have raised this important issue, the House is entitled to know about it.

For example, it has been little commented on that the programme for Government contains a commitment to reinstate the Bill to permit the Government to shut down the tribunals. One might state that has or does not have merit, but it did not have merit when, in the 29th Dáil, the Greens fought that attempted shutdown tooth and nail. However, it is enshrined in the programme for Government.

Having said that, I offer my congratulations to the two new Green Party Ministers and I wish them every success. They will need every week to chalk up successes, given the bad start they have made. They approached the negotiations for Government with only one clear objective—

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: That is correct.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: —that is, whatever happens we must get into power.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: Get in.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: Political power is taken by those in a position of political strength and the Greens are not in that position. They are, as they admit, not needed by this Government and therefore they were not in a position to demand policy goals and did not in the event succeed in achieving any policy goals. Of course, there are reviews, commissions, analyses and some minor worthy achievements, but this remains a Fianna Fáil Government where the Greens are merely guests in power. If the two new Ministers are to prove otherwise, they will need to be a great deal more canny in the conduct of their Departments than they were in the conduct of the negotiations with Fianna Fáil.

It is difficult to argue with former Deputy Dan Boyle's own summary in the *Irish Examiner* this morning, when he stated:

It is not a great document, it may not even be a good document, but it does contain good elements and those elements come from us.

I do not dispute that frank and honest assessment, given the checklist of big ticket items that were so close to the hearts of the Green Party, that is, that they would re-route the M3 to save the Tara heritage landscape, scrap the private hospital building plan, withdraw tax reliefs from private hospitals and reallocate them to public health care provision, stop the use of Shannon by American military in time of war, stop Mountjoy being moved to Thornton Hall and end corporate funding of political parties — I would have loved to have been present when that latter matter was raised with the Minister, Deputy Cowen, and company. The list goes on. Deputy Sargent, for example, told the Portmarnock Residents Group, UPROAR, that he would stop the second runway at Dublin Airport and Deputy Gormley told his

constituents in Ringsend that he would stop the incinerator. I know that as a party to coalition one cannot get everything, but by any standards this is a remarkable policy surrender.

I do not want to rain on the Greens' parade because this is an important night for them, but I have great difficulty understanding the party's approach to installing themselves in Government. It is almost as if the Green Party has evolved a new ideology that policy does not count with the people anymore; what counts is being around the Cabinet table. I have great regard for the personal qualities of Deputies Gormley and Ryan, and I am on the record as announcing as much. The proposition advanced by Deputy Gormley, which I heard him again say this morning, that the Greens were negotiating with Fianna Fáil and that it is really of no consequence who else was involved or who else — any other parties or individuals — wants to join it, is a mind-boggling concept. If the Progressive Democrats, for example, are still the Progressive Democrats — although I think that Deputy Harney has retreated mentally to the spiritual home — it is remarkable that a party which in its previous existence on this side of the House opposed the Progressive Democrats so strongly does not think it is of any consequence whether the Progressive Democrats are in or out.

If there is any truth in the rumour that they were foolish enough to try to move Deputy Harney, they most emphatically did not succeed. Deputy Harney thinks she won the election and she thinks she won the people over to her view of the private hospital building programme which, the Minister for Finance told me on a television programme, will cost the taxpayer €70 million per annum for seven years—

Deputy Brian Cowen: Gross.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: A further income stream from the private insurance companies to cover private patients in public hospitals amounting to €143 million will now be deprived from the public health service. The next day none of the three Ministers, not even the Minister, Deputy Brennan — whom, by the way, I congratulate as undoubtedly the great survivor and who I am delighted to see reappointed—

Deputy Ruairí Quinn: He is making it an art form.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: —not even Deputy Hanafin, had any idea of what was involved in funding the private hospital building programme. Deputy Gormley is now on the record as stating this is not a Progressive Democrat frolic, this is Fianna Fáil policy. If that is the case, it shows the distance that Fianna Fáil has moved in recent times. Deputy Gormley promised in black and white:

[Deputy Pat Rabbitte.]

The Green Party is making it clear today [in the publication of its health plan] that we will scrap these plans.

There is nothing in the programme for Government about scrapping co-location. In fact, the Minister, Deputy Harney, has already slapped down the Greens, even before the first Cabinet meeting, stating that the extensive co-location plan which she has programmed will continue in full.

If one looks at any other area of the programme for Government, pieced together with the assistance, I presume, of our expert Civil Service, one will find that it is, from the Greens' point of view, a policy-free zone. In the short document the word "review" appears 56 times, the word "examine" appears 23 times and the term "consider" makes 14 appearances. That is the content of this document.

If Deputy Sargent is getting restless on his first day, the last thing I want to do is weary him.

Deputy Finian McGrath: Do not mind him, Deputy Sargent, hang in there.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: Deputy Sargent stated that, like 91% of his supporters, he did not want to see Fianna Fail back in power. He has now taken a very selfless decision to resign the leadership of his party. I respect that but there was another way to honour his commitment to the people of Ireland, by not putting Fianna Fáil back in Government. He has put Fianna Fáil back in Government and the Greens are merely guests in that Government.

Deputy Noel Dempsey: I propose to share time with Deputy Sargent. I thank the people of Meath, who re-elected me as their representative for a sixth term. I thank the Taoiseach for the honour he bestowed on me by nominating me to Cabinet, giving me the opportunity to serve in a Government led by him. It is the 20th anniversary of my first election to the Dáil. I stand proudly to serve my constituents and the people of Ireland for another term.

All of us who start out in politics have one ambition, to make a difference. Those of us in Cabinet have a greater opportunity than others. It is our privilege to make this country as good as it can be. The first time I was elected, in 1987, the country was very different from what it is now. When I was nominated to Cabinet in 1997, the country had changed but had a long way to go. In the past ten years remarkable improvement and change have been made. This is due to the Governments, the Taoiseach who led them and all who participated in them. All sides of the House have worked to build economic success and secure a sustainable future for generations to come.

My colleagues in this Chamber across the political divide have worked hard to be here. We

have dreams and ambitions for the future. To all the new Deputies making their first visit to the Chamber with their families, congratulations and well done. They are the lucky ones because it is a great privilege to be a public representative in this Chamber. With it comes great responsibility and being nominated to Government increases the responsibility. The mandate of a sovereign people is a great honour and opportunity, bringing great responsibility for public service.

In the general election for the 30th Dáil the people renewed and strengthened the mandate of this Government. Our policies were endorsed as a blueprint for our future. I was one of the negotiating team tasked with agreeing a new programme for Government with our new coalition partners. I pay tribute to my Fianna Fáil colleagues Deputies Cowen and Brennan, who worked with me to secure an ambitious programme for Government with our new partners. Those of us involved in Government pledge to keep the faith with the people and honour the mandate given to us by this House. An unprecedented opportunity has been given to us to continue to build a fair society of equal opportunity and sustained prosperity for an island at peace with itself. That is our ambition for the country, our mandate from the people and our pledge to the people.

It seems Deputies Rabbitte and Kenny are unable to accept the election is over and the electorate has spoken. Deputy Kenny offered the people his contract and the people rejected it.

Deputy Enda Kenny: I do not think they did.

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan: Deputy Dempsey should not be like that.

Deputy Noel Dempsey: Deputy Rabbitte cannot accept the result of his decision, taken some years ago, to become cheerleaders on the sideline for Fine Gael, which cost his party so dearly.

I am honoured and privileged to be nominated as a member of the Government.

Deputy P. J. Sheehan: Will Fianna Fáil be the stem or the stern of the boat? That is what we want to know.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: Lá mór stairiúil don Chomhaontas Ghlas é seo agus don gluiseacht glas ar fud na cruinne. Ba mhaith liom comhghairdeas a ghabháil le gach duine atá mar bhall den Rialtas. Is lá stairiúil de gach aon duine agus do chlann gach aon duine atá roghnaithe.

Apart from being a proud day for all those appointed, it is a particularly proud day for me and all Green Party members throughout the country. The Ceann Comhairle will understand if I focus on two of the new Ministers whom I am fortunate to have known as friends and colleagues for many years. Deputy Gormley has

served for a long time in preparation for the job ahead. I have campaigned with our new Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government since the early 1980s before other parties started to play catch up on key environmental issues that face this country and the world. As a former Lord Mayor of Dublin, he knows about all sides of local government and will drive reform. I am confident we will see great improvements in that area.

Deputy Eamon Ryan is an excellent choice as Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. He worked hard at committee level when in Opposition and worked at national level to set up a cross-party partnership to address the long-term planning needs of this country as it prepares for the inevitable reality of a post-oil economy. That job must be done and we hope for movement on it with the co-operation of all sides of the House. This goes beyond party politics, beyond the lifetime of any Government and should be a focus that we should support.

Some have attempted to downplay my party's achievements in the programme for Government. From a political point of view, one does not like to give too much credit to the Government. There are significant changes that would not have happened if the Green Party did not lock horns in negotiations to focus on bringing about the change that cannot wait for another five years and cannot wait for the perfect arrangement that anyone in the Opposition may imagine. All they are doing is imagining. For example, the Kenny report has been neglected by every party in Government. Enough is enough, it must be implemented and included in the programme for Government. We will see that it is done. It is not an examination or a review but implementation of the recommendations of the all-party committee in which Deputy Cuffe and I had a role to play, along with Members of all parties.

There is a long list of measures in the programme for Government. Regarding Shannon, improvements will be made in respect of renditions. We did not achieve an end to US troops passing through Shannon but was that ever possible? I ask people to consider that realistically. Certain members of the Opposition were even more gung-ho about that issue but I do not know what they will do about it.

Organic farming is an issue of passion for me and the Green Party and there is an achievement of a minimum target of 5% acreage in the programme for Government. To have such a target is a new measure.

Deputy Seán Sherlock: How much will that benefit farmers?

Deputy Trevor Sargent: A GMO-free zone will enhance the livelihoods of farmers if Deputy Sherlock knows anything about them.

Deputy Seán Sherlock: I know a lot about farmers.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: We have to review waste policy to remove the problems being caused to many of our communities by the threat of incinerators and super dumps. Net metering, for which we called in Opposition, is now in the programme for government. We can now review and reform the EPA in government. That will help in many of those issues that have caused huge problems for communities around the country.

The big issue about which everybody talks but very few do anything is climate change. We now have 3% annual emission reductions as a target — on which the Tánaiste and Minister for Finance will report on budget day. This is a significant step forward in the realisation that every Department and sector of society has to pull its weight in that challenge.

It is very strange and difficult to listen to both Deputy Kenny and Deputy Rabbitte when they talk about questioning the Taoiseach. During the election I certainly questioned the Taoiseach, and in fairness to them, so did the Progressive Democrats, but the silence from Fine Gael and Labour was startling, on the basis that questioning the Taoiseach might lose them votes.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: We were not going into government with them.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: If it was not appropriate to question the Taoiseach then in the teeth of a general election campaign it is most cynical to decide now is the time.

Deputy Enda Kenny: It is after the election.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: The votes have been cast; the result is in the box——

Deputy Conor Lenihan: Hear, hear.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: ——and we now have to work with what we have.

An Ceann Comhairle: I call Deputy Bruton.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: The tribunals will do their work and I have faith in them. The reality for Fine Gael is a very difficult one——

Deputy Richard Bruton: A Cheann Comhairle——

Deputy Trevor Sargent: I did not interrupt Deputy Bruton. If he does not mind I will just finish.

An Ceann Comhairle: I call Deputy Bruton.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: If Fine Gael really wanted to be in Government, its members should

[Deputy Trevor Sargent.]

have looked back at John A. Costello. He wanted to be in Government and he asked a man who was chief of staff of the IRA to serve as Minister for Foreign Affairs

An Ceann Comhairle: I call Deputy Bruton.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: If Fine Gael wanted to be in Government it would have gone to Sinn Féin and asked it to do business. Fine Gael does not want to be in Government.

An Ceann Comhairle: I call Deputy Bruton.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: Fine Gael cannot take being in government and that is why the party is in Opposition.

An Ceann Comhairle: The Deputy's time has expired. I call Deputy Bruton. I understand he wishes to share time.

Deputy Richard Bruton: I wish to share time with Deputies Ring and Crawford.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Bruton has five minutes and the other two Deputies have two and a half minutes each.

Deputy Richard Bruton: It would be churlish not to congratulate Deputies Brian Lenihan, Gormley and Eamon Ryan on their elevation to the Cabinet. These are decent and fair-minded people and I wish them well in their jobs.

I take issue with Deputy Sargent on the Taoiseach's finances. He questioned this before the election but after the election we heard reports from the Mahon tribunal that disputed the explanation provided by the Taoiseach during the election. I refer to the explanation the then Tánaiste and leader of the Progressive Democrats said had resolved everything; that there were no dollar dealings. That evidence has proved since to be threadbare. It appears that Deputy Sargent has done nothing to challenge that. He asked his questions when it did not matter.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: How does Deputy Bruton know?

Deputy Richard Bruton: Deputy Sargent had his opportunity.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: Tell us, so.

Deputy Richard Bruton: Deputy Sargent lectured us on what we should have done but he is not willing to explain what he has done. I will cede time to allow Deputy Sargent explain if he wishes what he has done about the Taoiseach's finances.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: Fair enough. Is this in order a Cheann Comhairle?

An Ceann Comhairle: I do not believe it is. It is Deputy Bruton's time. I call on him to please——

Deputy Enda Kenny: According to the rules of the House, he is able to give time.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Sargent did not ask Deputy Bruton to give way. Deputy Bruton should proceed with his contribution.

Deputy Michael Ring: Stand up.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Bruton should proceed with his contribution. Deputy Sargent did not ask him to give way.

Deputy Richard Bruton: He did.

An Ceann Comhairle: No, he did not.

Deputy Richard Bruton: He asked, and what is more, we are being asked to endorse a Taoiseach and a Government today in the vote that will be taken later. The issue under discussion is fundamental to the stability of that Government. We have a Minister of State in that putative Government willing to offer the Dáil an explanation as to how the issue of the Taoiseach's finances has been resolved to the satisfaction of the Progressive Democrats and the Green Party. The Ceann Comhairle is denying the opportunity for the Dáil to have that knowledge. It is clearly germane——

An Ceann Comhairle: I insist Deputy Bruton withdraws that comment. I cannot force any Deputy to make a statement.

Deputy Richard Bruton: He is willing to do it. He has asked that it would be done and I am quite happy to cede time.

An Ceann Comhairle: At no point was the Deputy asked to give way. Deputy Bruton should proceed with his contribution. If he does not do so, I will call on Deputy Ring.

Deputy Richard Bruton: I am ceding.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Sargent has not offered.

Deputy David Stanton: Deputy Sargent has offered.

Deputy Enda Kenny: He should stand up and explain it now.

Deputy Richard Bruton: Deputy Sargent has offered.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Sargent has not offered. Does he wish to speak?

Deputy Trevor Sargent: I have no problem.

Deputy Michael Ring: Tell us.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: The issues I have discussed with the Taoiseach are most relevant to the tribunal and I believe they will be dealt with satisfactorily.

Deputy Noel Treacy: Hear, hear.

Deputy Richard Bruton: That is rich.

Deputy John Gormley: That was exactly Deputy Bruton's position.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Bruton should be allowed to speak without interruption.

Deputy Richard Bruton: The tribunal suggested that an explanation offered during the election — one which influenced many voters and led to the Progressive Democrats saying this was the most marvellous Taoiseach ever and he should be allowed to continue, having just previously said the explanations were partial and did not stand up to scrutiny — does not tally with the explanation offered by the Taoiseach. We have never seen an explanation as to why the evidence recorded by the Mahon tribunal is inconsistent with the explanation offered by the Taoiseach.

Deputy John Gormley: Deputy Bruton has changed his tune.

Deputy Richard Bruton: I have not changed my tune. It is you and your party who are saying to us that we have failed in our duty by not asking questions and leaving it to the tribunal.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Bruton must address his comments through the Chair.

Deputy Richard Bruton: You entered into Government without resolving this issue and you are now saying we looked into our heart and we are happy——

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Bruton must address his comments through the Chair.

Deputy Richard Bruton: The Ceann Comhairle should bear in mind that it was the Green Party that initiated this attack on Fine Gael after its time for speaking had elapsed.

An Ceann Comhairle: The Deputy has one minute remaining.

Deputy Richard Bruton: I am pleased the Minister, Deputy Dempsey, has not been given mathematics in addition to his marine and transport responsibilities because he suggested there was an increase in the mandate for the Government. I remind him the Government lost nine seats. Independents and the Green Party have been brought in to prop up the Government.

Deputy Noel Dempsey: We have 89 seats.

Deputy Richard Bruton: The previous Government did not increase its mandate.

Deputy Noel Dempsey: The Fianna Fáil Party on its own has 350,000 more votes than the Fine Gael Party.

Deputy Richard Bruton: I looked at the programme for Government. I was surprised to see that once again we have a commitment on the establishment of a Dublin Transport Authority and the introduction of integrated ticketing. Members may recall we heard about these previously in the Fianna Fáil election manifesto of 2002. They were also suggested by the then Minister for Public Enterprise, Deputy O'Rourke.

Deputy Noel Dempsey: The election is over. You lost.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Bruton's time has expired and he is now eating into his colleagues' time.

Deputy Richard Bruton: The truth is that seven years later nothing has been done by the Government. Deputy Sargent finds solace in the fact that promises have been made and that measurements will be taken. Members referred to measurements in the past. We were to have class sizes of 20 and no hospital waiting lists. These were all in previous programmes for government but nothing happened.

An Ceann Comhairle: I must call Deputy Ring.

Deputy Richard Bruton: This Government will be judged on how it changes the lives of people not the words written in programmes for government.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: Deputy Bruton should sit down and let us get on with it then.

Deputy Michael Ring: I congratulate the Ceann Comhairle and the Government. I would have liked if the Green Party members were colleagues of Fine Gael but that did not happen.

Deputy Paul Gogarty: We would have liked it as well.

Deputy Michael Ring: Will the Deputy keep quiet and have a bit of manners, something he has not had for a long time.

Deputy Paul Gogarty: I was paying Deputy Ring a compliment.

Deputy Michael Ring: I address my remarks to the Green Party and particularly to Fianna Fáil.

Deputy Paul Gogarty: If Deputy Ring does not want a compliment he will get plenty of insults from this side over the next five years.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: Get that Deputy some crayons.

Deputy Michael Ring: I see my good friend, the Minister from Galway, who with Deputy Brady and all the Fianna Fáil Ministers and back-benchers, told the people that if Fine Gael, the Green Party and the Labour Party went into government, rural Ireland would be destroyed; there would be no farming, no planning, no rural Ireland.

Deputy Noel Treacy: We never said that.

Deputy Michael Ring: I did not say that, it was said by Fianna Fáil members. Deputy Brady made a big statement which was reported in the Irish Independent and on INN. He is a big farmer and when he brings his pedigree bulls to the mart he will have to put shoes on the cattle because they will not want them to dirty the grass. People will have to bring the thing they use to pick up the dog poo because the Green Party will not allow that in rural Ireland either. What will he do about that?

Deputy Brian Cowen: We could use it on humans as well.

Deputy Michael Ring: You should be quiet. We had decentralisation in your constituency. We decentralised him and he is staying down there. You destroyed him with 19,000 votes.

I like Deputy Harney very much as a person.

However, I cannot understand her leading the Progressive Democrats into Government again when they were destroyed by the people, who rejected them. Although they did not want them in Government and wiped them out as a party, she is back as Minister for Health and Children. That speaks for the Taoiseach. He is a mighty man who can do this.

Deputy Noel Dempsey: We know that.

Deputy Michael Ring: Some of his colleagues believe they won the election.

An Ceann Comhairle: The Deputy's time is up.

Deputy Michael Ring: It could not be up yet. Deputy Finian McGrath, the Independent——

A Deputy: He is gone.

Deputy Michael Ring: He will be gone soon. Deputy Finian McGrath appeared on RTE with a big envelope on which he had his name and signature——

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Ring, it is Deputy Crawford's turn.

Deputy Michael Ring: He said there would be no Shannon stopover. Next he came out of the

Taoiseach's office with his signature on the deal he got.

An Ceann Comhairle: I call Deputy Crawford.

Deputy Michael Ring: Which of them was the forgery? Both of them could not be right.

An Ceann Comhairle: I call Deputy Crawford.

Deputy Seymour Crawford: I thank the almost 11,000 people who voted No. 1 for me and those who gave me their second preference in this election. I appreciate this vote of confidence and thank all those who helped. I also congratulate the Ceann Comhairle on his appointment to what is an extremely important job. I hope he will be, as he stated, unbiased. I congratulate the Taoiseach, Deputy Bertie Ahern, on his third term in office. I also congratulate him on the peace in Northern Ireland. While all Members worked towards that goal, he was its spearhead and all Members welcome it. I also welcome the incoming Tánaiste to his post.

However, this is a different Government. As some Members have already noted, given what has been said in recent weeks and months, it is hard to reconcile how this Government can come together. I clearly remember the Minister for Finance's comments about the Greens and the damage they would do. When matters became tough in my constituency, the issue raised was that Fine Gael would need the support of the Greens to enter Government, which it was said would not work as farmers would be destroyed. As five of the six Green Party Deputies are from Dublin, I hope the Minister for Finance, Deputy Cowen, the Taoiseach and all others——

Deputy Paul Gogarty: We have relatives who live in the country.

Deputy Brian Hayes: They do not talk about it.

Deputy Seymour Crawford: ——will ensure that rural Ireland is preserved and that we are not wiped out.

However, my main reason for speaking is——

Deputy Trevor Sargent: There are still farmers in Dublin.

Deputy Seymour Crawford: We will know that after a while. We will know that after the Deputy's party gets its things done.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Crawford's time has expired.

Deputy Seymour Crawford: The re-appointment of Deputy Harney as Minister for Health and Children obviously raises frightening anxieties for those who live in Cavan-Monaghan. I ask her to visit the people there and to examine its hospitals and their capabilities. She should not

depend on people from London to decide our futures. She is a reasonable person and as Deputy Ring noted, I have always liked her as an individual. However, as Minister for Health and Children, she must take some responsibility, as must the Taoiseach, to ensure the excellent people and services that obtain in these counties are maintained and improved. We cannot allow them to be taken away—

An Ceann Comhairle: The Deputy has greatly exceeded his time.

Deputy Seymour Crawford: —when there is no other service available to us.

An Ceann Comhairle: I am sorry. I must call—

Deputy Seymour Crawford: There is no other service. This is vital and I ask the Minister to be responsible in this regard.

Deputy Mary Harney: I will share time with Deputy Brennan. I am happy and privileged to be invited to serve for a third time in a Government within a decade. As all Members who have spoken have acknowledged, it is a great privilege to be elected to this House and to have the opportunity to serve in Government. I have been in this House since 1981 and in the Oireachtas for 30 years and the political landscape in Ireland has changed dramatically during that period. In my early years in this House, it was Fianna Fáil versus the rest. These were the years when Fianna Fáil did not form coalition Governments with other parties. This changed in 1989 and has changed quite fundamentally subsequently. We pride ourselves in Ireland in saying that our economic future is centred on innovation and our political future must also be centred on innovation. We would be foolish to rule out the possibility of parties with different perspectives being able to come to an agreement in respect of a programme for Government and working together as loyal colleagues with shared Cabinet responsibility.

Given some of the comments made by Members opposite, I find it hard to understand that I was the subject of so much political seduction over the past few weeks. I had a very good meeting with Deputy Enda Kenny, who is someone for whom I have enormous personal regard. During the five years since he became leader of his party he has been enormously successful, which I acknowledge. His party won a further 20 seats in the most recent election, much of which was due to the considerable effort he put into the reorganisation of his party. I acknowledge this. However, Deputy Kenny and I met for more than an hour in a Dublin hotel only ten or 12 days ago because my party has been open to forming a Government that was led by either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael. There are no other possibilities in this House either now or for

the foreseeable future. In those discussions, as well as in discussions I had with other members of his party, I was told that co-location could be sorted out.

Deputy Paul Gogarty: Really.

Deputy Mary Harney: I find it hard to understand that when an effort was being put together to create what was called a dolly mixture, suddenly, we are reverting to form.

While I have had differences with the Green Party, I very much welcome it into Government.

Deputy Paul Gogarty: Not in Dublin Mid-West.

Deputy Mary Harney: No. I welcome it into the Government, where it will be a breath of fresh air. Between 1989 and 1992, I had the privilege of serving as a Minister of State at the Department of the Environment when the environment was not considered to be important by many people. It was in the early days of recycling, of establishing the EPA and of banning smog in Dublin and we have come a long way since then.

Deputy Enda Kenny: Deputy Harney was sent in the side entrance.

Deputy Mary Harney: It is now an issue for every party and the Green Party has genuinely placed this issue on the centre stage of Irish politics, which I welcome.

Every small party that aligns with a much bigger party faces the issue of losing its identity. Moreover, there is also the responsibility of being able to give effect to some of one's policies by going into Government, reaching agreement on a programme for Government and being focussed on implementing that programme, which I hope we will be able to do in the next five years.

I have already paid tribute to the Ceann Comhairle. I also wish to pay tribute to Deputy Dick Roche, who will no longer be a member of the Government. However, I am delighted that he will become Minister of State with responsibility for European affairs. I also warmly welcome the new members of Government and Deputy Brian Lenihan in particular, who served as a Minister of State with me at the Department of Health and Children during the past two and a half years. He has been a terrific colleague and I welcome him into the Cabinet as Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. I also welcome Deputies Ryan and Gormley and look forward to working with them. I also pay tribute to the outgoing Attorney General, Rory Brady, for his ongoing professionalism and assistance in that regard and welcome his successor, Paul Gallagher SC.

Obviously today is special both for new members of the Government and for all its members. As I noted earlier, it is also a special day for new Members of the House and I am

[Deputy Mary Harney.]

delighted to acknowledge the presence of some new female Members. Unfortunately neither the Progressive Democrats nor female representation in this House did well in the election. Such representation is more or less where it was in the outgoing Dáil, which is a great pity. When Members discuss innovation in politics, they must examine how they can encourage more women to be elected to this House. Notwithstanding my party's disaster in the general election, we still remain gender balanced at 50%, which is unique, as it was the same in the outgoing Dáil.

Deputy Brendan Howlin: With a few less votes it could have been 100%.

Deputy Séamus Brennan: I congratulate the Ceann Comhairle on his election and pay tribute to the negotiating team from the Green Party with whom my ministerial colleagues, Deputies Cowen and Dempsey, and I worked so closely in the past ten days or so. I refer to Deputy Gormley, Dan Boyle and Dónall Geogheghan. Despite whatever comments have been made, they constituted a formidable team. They had strong opinions and put them forward. At the outset of our talks they stated they wished to enter into discussions in good faith. I firmly believe that at their conclusion we ended up with good faith on both sides and deep respect for both participants in the talks, namely, Fianna Fáil and the Green Party. From those discussions, we got a programme for Government that is ambitious, will be good for the country and will transform it during the next five years. The new arrangement with the Green Party and the Progressive Democrats gives us what the Taoiseach set out to put together, namely, a broadly based Government.

In the next couple of years, the country will face strong challenges. There are major issues to deal with in terms of immigration, environmentally sustainable economic growth, investing more in services, continuing to eradicate the remaining levels of poverty and dealing with an Ireland that is getting into its stride. This governmental configuration is strong and dedicated to written policies that will allow us to tackle the issues in the years ahead.

I thank my colleagues who took part in the discussions. A special thanks is due to every Member of the House, particularly those who find themselves on the Opposition benches. Politics is a difficult business, an honourable profession where public service is important. All of us, including those opposite, fought strong campaigns for the same cause, namely, to advance our country and to make it more successful and a better place for us and those who follow us. The parties opposite provided a valuable service in the recent campaign by showing up policy differences and options for the nation and then

accepting the decision of the people in terms of the options put to us.

There is a great deal of cynicism regarding politics, but if one asks those in the Chamber who fought successfully to get elected, the leaders who needed to fight tooth and nail in every corner of the land or those in the front lines of the recent campaign, they will say the profession of politics is about public service. It is not easy and everyone plays his or her part. Every Deputy should feel enormous pride in being sent here by their people and communities to help this nation take more steps forward, for which reason we are in attendance. Whatever policy differences, rows and acrimony are on the floor of the House, we must remember our duty to remove some of the cynicism and to realise that those present are honourable, have the confidence and faith of the people who sent them here and deserve respect because of their mandates.

I wish to pay a special word of congratulations to my constituency colleague, Minister to be, Deputy Ryan. With Deputy Tom Kitt as Chief Whip, Dublin South will be well served.

An Ceann Comhairle: The Minister's time has expired.

Deputy Séamus Brennan: If my colleagues are too busy, I am sure I will find a chance to serve the constituency for them. I wish Deputy Ryan luck with his assignment and I congratulate Deputy Tom Kitt.

An Ceann Comhairle: I understand Deputy Timmins will share time with Deputy Brian Hayes.

Deputy Billy Timmins: And Deputy Durkan.

An Ceann Comhairle: The Deputies have ten minutes.

Deputy Billy Timmins: I congratulate my constituency colleagues, Deputies Feighan and Doyle, on their election to the Dáil. I also wish the Ceann Comhairle well. I congratulate the Cabinet members, particularly the new appointees, Deputies Brian Lenihan, Ryan and Gormley. However, when I saw the new Cabinet members entering the Chamber, it struck me that little had changed. The most disappointed people in the House are the many Fianna Fáil Deputies who believed there might be a new-look Cabinet.

Deputy Noel Dempsey: No. Fine Gael was the most disappointed.

Deputy Billy Timmins: In his speech the Taoiseach stated:

There will be a particular opportunity at the mid-term review of the Government's programme to consider further the allocation of ministerial responsibilities. These consider-

ations will also be reflected in the names I will propose next week to the Government for appointment as Ministers of State.

I do not know whether this is a warning to the Cabinet or a carrot to those aspiring to be in the next Cabinet, but the Taoiseach has done it again. He has held out a little olive branch to keep those like Deputy O'Flynn on side in the months ahead.

It is ironic that Ministers spent the past year using terms such as “slump coalition” and “dolly mixture government”, but the current term is “broadly based government”, as used by the Ministers, Deputies Cowen and Brennan.

Deputy Séamus Brennan: It is the green gene.

Deputy Billy Timmins: It must be what the focus groups are telling the Ministers. Fianna Fáil did not need the green gene. The Minister for Health and Children, Deputy Harney, deluded herself when she spoke about smaller parties playing a role in Government with Fianna Fáil. It will digest the green gene like it did the Progressive Democrats. It was clever of the Taoiseach to be all-embracing. In a number of years, the Green Party will have faded into oblivion.

Deputy Noel Dempsey: Fine Gael managed to do the same to the Labour Party despite not being in government together.

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan: Fianna Fáil did not do the Labour Party any favours.

Deputy Billy Timmins: I will miss the Green Party wailing over my ear and shouting obscenities at the Government, saying it was so out of touch that I sometimes felt like going over there to attack it myself.

Deputy Trevor Sargent: There is hardly much difference.

Deputy Billy Timmins: Once the Green Party saw the black and white tiles of Government Buildings — I do not know what colour the carpet is, but it is plush — and stood on them, there was no going back. The party's Deputies might not have liked the coffee, but they liked what they saw. I do not necessarily blame them, but I accuse them of collective hypocrisy. They masqueraded as something different on this side, but they are no different from the rest of us.

Deputies: Hear, hear.

Deputy Billy Timmins: They should not purport to lecture us from that side of the House. It was bad enough lecturing the Government and others when they were on this side. They should take responsibility—

Deputy Trevor Sargent: Freedom of speech.

Deputy Ciarán Cuffe: I take it that the Deputy does not like us.

Deputy Billy Timmins: —for what they sign up to. I do not read blogs, but I will start. However, I will not read those of the Deputies, as they do not mean much.

I wanted the Taoiseach to make changes to the Cabinet and I am glad to see Deputy O'Dea remain as Minister for Defence, although he might not be happy about it.

Deputy Willie O'Dea: I am ecstatic.

Deputy Brian Hayes: The Minister looks it.

Deputy Billy Timmins: He is definitely up for a mid-term review.

An Ceann Comhairle: So is Deputy Timmins, as his time has expired.

Deputy Billy Timmins: I wish to mention outgoing Minister Deputy Roche briefly. Fianna Fáil's focus groups stated that he needed to be off the air during the election campaign, but the Deputy went out and batted for the Government when it was at its most unpopular. He took the hit for the Government's unpopularity in the months leading up to the election. It is a sad day for County Wicklow, as Deputy Roche had done a half day's work before the rest of the Government got out of bed. The Taoiseach should reconsider his position during the mid-term review.

Deputy Noel Dempsey: He is the only chance of a Wicklow Minister.

Deputy Brian Hayes: I congratulate the Ceann Comhairle on his appointment and the new members of the Government, specifically Deputies Ryan, Gormley and Brian Lenihan. I thank my constituents in Dublin South-West for returning me to the 30th Dáil.

This Dáil has a significant advantage over previous Dáils in that we do not need to face the continuing threats of paramilitarism and subversion or threats to the security of the State. Given the amount of time previous Parliaments needed to invest in dealing with the threat to security, we have an advantage in terms of the opportunities ahead.

I have a great personal regard for the Minister for Health and Children, Deputy Harney. She is a formidable politician. She stated in her contribution that it would have been foolish to rule any individual or party out in terms of talks, but that is what her party's former leader, Mr. Michael McDowell, did when he stated categorically that he would not have done a deal with the Green Party. It is not in the long-term interests of the Progressive Democrats to be in government with the Green Party, as we will eventually see.

[Deputy Brian Hayes.]

In the course of the Taoiseach's remarks, he stated he and his colleagues will be entering into the Intergovernmental Conference to determine whether it is possible to establish a new constitutional treaty for Europe. I hope his efforts have the support of the Government. In the past 25 years, the Green Party has been the most cynical and dishonest party when discussing European matters in Ireland. It has distorted every referendum on this issue, as the Minister for Finance well knows, and has used those opportunities as a blatant and cynical political ploy for the purposes of public relations. I only hope the Government speaks with one voice on this crucial issue. In trying to work towards a new constitutional treaty that will ultimately be put to the people, I hope the Taoiseach will have the support of the entire Government. We must wait to see whether that is so in the weeks and months ahead.

Health was the issue that dominated the discussions and debates of the election campaign. The cynical about-turn by the Green Party on the issue of co-location will be recognised as such by its supporters. That party took a deliberate policy position in this House and in the public domain of opposition to the Government's plan. That plan will hand out massive benefits to the private health care sector and will ultimately widen the difference in our society between the haves and the have nots in terms of public and private health care. The people will see through the Green Party's sell-out on this issue.

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan: I too congratulate you, a Cheann Comhairle, on your elevation to that important role. I am sure you will sleep easy at night knowing that your colleague, Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae, is looking after matters in your constituency. Deputy Healy-Rae will certainly sleep easy, from what we hear.

Elections are part of the process of democracy. There was a general view during this most recent election that, for whatever reason, the public wanted a change. It did not secure that change, however, but rather the same again. I recall the Minister for Finance, Deputy Cowen, said at the count centre in his constituency that he did not need to be cleaned up by the Green Party or anybody else. Does the formation of the new Government mean he has had second thoughts about that and that the Sunlight soap has come on board?

As a long-serving Member of this House, I am of the view that there should be an avenue for change after a democratic election, particularly when the people have registered their vote in such a way as to ensure that change is possible. What we have had in recent years, however, is more of the same. Fianna Fáil has achieved this by drawing to its side various groups from the Opposition, one after the other. The late Sean

Doherty, with whom I shared many hours, used to say that Fianna Fáil would be in government forever because, on every occasion, it draws somebody from the Opposition to suit that occasion. The Green Party may say that idealism has brought it into the formation of this Government and that it is a question of what it can give to Government. Green Party Members should not cod themselves. The reality is that the only reason they are included in this Administration is that the party that is currently in a majority in this House would take anybody. The Green Party was merely convenient, no matter what it says about idealism.

I wish all Cabinet members success in their Ministries. We on this side of the House will provide a trenchant Opposition where that is necessary. There will be no time for sleeping on the job. Democracy is not about jobs for the boys and girls but about delivering to the people on the issues that cause them concern. I will not go over the points that were raised in the course of the general election but it was clear there are many issues that are causing people serious concern. These are issues that have not been addressed for several years. While Deputy Ryan and I were members of the same Oireachtas committee in recent years, he was also making goo-goo eyes at the Minister. I knew then where we were headed.

We in Opposition have a major role to play and we will play that role fairly and honestly, but we will also play hard. We will leave no room for whinging. We will be watching the Minister for Defence, Deputy O'Dea, at every possible moment.

Deputy Willie O'Dea: Deputy Durkan should keep playing his role in opposition; that is where he belongs.

Deputy Brian Cowen: I join with others in congratulating you on your elevation to the Office of Ceann Comhairle and I wish you well for the future. I have been allocated one minute to close this debate and that is all that is required. The situation as we find it is that we have formed a Government with the Green Party and the Progressive Democrats Party with the support of Independents. This coalition has won the majority support in this House and we will now have the honour of going to Áras an Uachtaráin to receive our seals of office from the President.

It is true there are huge challenges facing this country. The one fact of which we can be certain after this election is that when the people were asked who they wished to lead an Administration, there is no doubt that the Taoiseach, Deputy Bertie Ahern, was their choice. Arising out of the result of the election, where the people made their choice and sent 166 Deputies of different political parties and none to this House, it is

the job of politicians to put together a coherent, stable and credible Government. In the past two weeks, we have seen that exercise and effort being successfully concluded by parties who, whatever their policy differences in the past, have come forward with a policy programme today that will serve the people for the next five years. That is the basis of our co-operation and it is what will generate the cohesion required for an effective Administration.

I thank the Taoiseach for the great honour he has bestowed on me and my family by appointing me Tánaiste. I will continue to work with him and other colleagues day in and day out to ensure this is a successful Administration. I welcome new Government Members and I commiserate with those who will not continue with us in Cabinet. That is in no way a reflection on the tremendous work they have done but on the political realities of needing to accommodate the new configuration of Government that is in place. Deputy

Roche, for example, will continue to work with us in Government on an area of policy in which he excelled and where he served under me. I offer my congratulations to all concerned. It is a great honour and privilege for us to be appointed by the Dáil to be the Government of this country. I look forward to working with everybody to ensure the policy programme we have hammered out will provide us with the necessary Government stability to bring about the continued peace and prosperity that is now the inheritance of the Irish people.

An Ceann Comhairle: As it is now 8.15 p.m. I am required to put the following question in accordance with the resolution of the Dáil of this day: "That Dáil Éireann approves the nominations by the Taoiseach for the appointment by the President to be members of the Government."

Question put.

The Dáil divided: Tá, 87; Níl, 73.

Tá

Ahern, Bertie.
 Ahern, Dermot.
 Ahern, Michael.
 Ahern, Noel.
 Andrews, Barry.
 Andrews, Chris.
 Ardagh, Seán.
 Aylward, Bobby.
 Behan, Joe.
 Blaney, Niall.
 Brady, Áine.
 Brady, Cyprian.
 Brady, Johnny.
 Brennan, Séamus.
 Browne, John.
 Byrne, Thomas.
 Calleary, Dara.
 Carey, Pat.
 Collins, Niall.
 Conlon, Margaret.
 Connick, Seán.
 Coughlan, Mary.
 Cowen, Brian.
 Cregan, John.
 Cuffe, Ciarán.
 Cullen, Martin.
 Curran, John.
 Dempsey, Noel.
 Devins, Jimmy.
 Dooley, Timmy.
 Fahey, Frank.
 Finneran, Michael.
 Fitzpatrick, Michael.
 Fleming, Seán.
 Flynn, Beverley.
 Gallagher, Pat The Cope.
 Gogarty, Paul.
 Gormley, John.
 Grealish, Noel.
 Hanafin, Mary.
 Harney, Mary.
 Haughey, Seán.
 Healy-Rae, Jackie.

Hector, Máire.
 Kelleher, Billy.
 Kelly, Peter.
 Kenneally, Brendan.
 Kennedy, Michael.
 Killeen, Tony.
 Kirk, Seamus.
 Kitt, Michael P.
 Kitt, Tom.
 Lenihan, Brian.
 Lenihan, Conor.
 Lowry, Michael.
 Mansergh, Martin.
 Martin, Micheál.
 McDaid, James.
 McEllistrim, Thomas.
 McGrath, Finian.
 McGrath, Mattie.
 McGrath, Michael.
 McGuinness, John.
 Moloney, John.
 Moynihan, Michael.
 Mulcahy, Michael.
 Nolan, M. J.
 Ó Cuív, Éamon.
 Ó Feargháil, Seán.
 O'Brien, Darragh.
 O'Connor, Charlie.
 O'Dea, Willie.
 O'Flynn, Noel.
 O'Hanlon, Rory.
 O'Keeffe, Batt.
 O'Keeffe, Edward.
 O'Rourke, Mary.
 Power, Seán.
 Roche, Dick.
 Ryan, Eamon.
 Sargent, Trevor.
 Scanlon, Eamon.
 Smith, Brendan.
 Treacy, Noel.
 Wallace, Mary.
 White, Mary Alexandra.
 Woods, Michael.

Níl

Allen, Bernard.
 Bannon, James.
 Barrett, Seán.
 Breen, Pat.
 Broughan, Thomas P.
 Bruton, Richard.
 Burke, Ulick.
 Burton, Joan.
 Byrne, Catherine.
 Carey, Joe.
 Clune, Deirdre.
 Connaughton, Paul.
 Coonan, Noel J.
 Costello, Joe.
 Coveney, Simon.
 Crawford, Seymour.
 Creed, Michael.
 Creighton, Lucinda.
 D'Arcy, Michael.
 Deasy, John.
 Deenihan, Jimmy.
 Doyle, Andrew.
 Durkan, Bernard J.
 English, Damien.
 Enright, Olwyn.
 Feighan, Frank.
 Ferris, Martin.
 Flanagan, Charles.
 Flanagan, Terence.
 Gilmore, Eamon.
 Hayes, Brian.
 Hayes, Tom.
 Higgins, Michael D.
 Hogan, Phil.
 Howlin, Brendan.
 Kehoe, Paul.

Kenny, Enda.
 Lynch, Ciarán.
 Lynch, Kathleen.
 McCormack, Pádraic.
 McEntee, Shane.
 McGinley, Dinny.
 McHugh, Joe.
 McManus, Liz.
 Mitchell, Olivia.
 Morgan, Arthur.
 Naughten, Denis.
 Noonan, Michael.
 Ó Caoláin, Caoimhghín.
 Ó Snodaigh, Aengus.
 O'Donnell, Kieran.
 O'Dowd, Fergus.
 O'Keeffe, Jim.
 O'Mahony, John.
 O'Shea, Brian.
 O'Sullivan, Jan.
 Penrose, Willie.
 Perry, John.
 Quinn, Ruairí.
 Rabbitte, Pat.
 Reilly, James.
 Ring, Michael.
 Shatter, Alan.
 Sheehan, P. J.
 Sherlock, Seán.
 Shortall, Róisín.
 Stagg, Emmet.
 Stanton, David.
 Timmins, Billy.
 Tuffy, Joanna.
 Upton, Mary.
 Varadkar, Leo.
 Wall, Jack.

Tellers: Tá, Deputies Kelleher and Tom Kitt; Níl, Deputies Kehoe and Stagg.

Question declared carried.

The Dáil adjourned at 8.35 p.m. until 2.30 p.m.
 on Tuesday, 26 June 2007.