



DÍOSPÓIREACHTAÍ PARLAIMINTE  
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

**DÁIL ÉIREANN**

TUAIRISC OIFIGIÚIL  
OFFICIAL REPORT

*Dé Céadaoin, 9 Márta 2011.*

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# DÁIL ÉIREANN

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## DÍOSPÓIREACHTAÍ PARLAIMINTE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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### TUAIRISC OIFIGIÚIL OFFICIAL REPORT

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IMLEABHAR 728

VOLUME 728

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*Dé Céadaoin, 9 Márta 2011.*  
*Wednesday, 9 March 2011.*

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Tháinig an Dáil le chéile ar 12 meán lae — bhí an Cléireach, Ciarán Ó Cochláin, agus an Fó-Chléireach, Rístéard Mac Cafraidh, i láthair.

The Dáil assembled at 12 noon — 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 ar an aonú lá d'Fheabhra, dhá mhíle is a haon déag, 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 naoú lá de Mhárta, dhá mhíle is a haon déag, ar uair an mheán lae 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 1st day of February, 2011, 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 9th day of March, 2011, at the hour of 12 noon for the despatch of such business as shall be submitted to it.

ARNA THABHAIRT FAOI MO LÁIMH  
AGUS FAOI MO SHÉALA AN AONÚ LÁ  
SEO D'FHEABHRA, DHÁ MHÍLE IS A  
HAON DÉAG.

Brian Ó Comhain

Taoiseach

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL THIS  
1ST DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2011.

Máire Mhic Ghiolla Íosa

Uachtarán na hÉireann  
(President of Ireland)

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

#### **Report as to issue of Writs and Announcement as to Returns**

I gcomhlíonadh Bhuan-Ordú Uimhir a Trí de Bhuan-Orduithe Dháil Éireann i dtaobh Gnó Phoiblí, tá orm a thuairisciú go ndearna mise, Cléireach na Dála, díreach tar éis don Uachtarán Forógra an aonú lá d'Fheabhra, dhá mhíle is a haon déag, a chur amach ag lánscoir Dháil Éireann an lá sin, na 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:—

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 1st day of February, 2011, dissolving Dáil Éireann on that day, I issued the writs, pursuant to section 39 of the Electoral Act 1992, for the following Constituencies to the Returning Officers named hereunder:—

#### **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

#### **Cinn Chomhairimh Returning Officers**

Ms Mary N. Enright

Mr. Joseph Smith

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

Baile Átha Cliath Thuaidh-Lár..... Dublin North-Central	Mr. Brendan Walsh
Baile Átha Cliath Thoir Thuaidh..... Dublin North-East	Mr. Brendan Walsh
Baile Átha Cliath Thiar Thuaidh..... Dublin North-West	Mr. Brendan Walsh
Baile Átha Cliath Theas-Lár..... Dublin South-Central	Mr. Brendan Walsh
Baile Átha Cliath Thoir Theas..... Dublin South-East	Mr. Brendan Walsh
Baile Átha Cliath Thiar-Meán..... Dublin Mid-West	Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick
Baile Átha Cliath Thuaidh..... Dublin North	Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick
Baile Átha Cliath Theas..... Dublin South	Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick
Baile Átha Cliath Thiar Theas..... Dublin South-West	Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick
Baile Átha Cliath Thiar..... Dublin West	Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick
Dún Laoghaire..... Dún Laoghaire	Mr. John M. Fitzpatrick
Gaillimh Thoir..... Galway East	Ms Marian Chambers Higgins
Gaillimh Thiar..... Galway West	Ms Marian Chambers Higgins
Ciarraí Thuaidh-Luimneach Thiar..... Kerry North-West Limerick	Mr. Padraig Burke
Ciarraí Theas..... Kerry South	Mr. Padraig Burke
Cill Dara Thuaidh..... Kildare North	Ms Eithne Coughlan
Cill Dara Theas..... Kildare South	Ms Eithne Coughlan
Laois-Uíbh Fhailí..... Laois-Offaly	Ms Verona Lambe
Luimneach..... Limerick	Mr. Patrick J. Meghen
Cathair Luimnigh..... Limerick City	Mr. Patrick J. Meghen
An Longfort-An Iarmhí..... Longford-Westmeath	Ms Imelda Branigan
Lú..... Louth	Ms Mairead Ahern
Maigh Eo..... Mayo	Mr. Fintan J. Murphy
An Mhí Thoir..... Meath East	Ms Mary O'Malley
An Mhí Thiar..... Meath West	Ms Mary O'Malley
Ros Comán-Liatroim Theas..... Roscommon-South Leitrim	Mr. William Lyster

Sligeach-Liatroim Thuaidh .....	Mr. Kevin Doherty
Sligo-North Leitrim	
Tiobraid Árann Thuaidh.....	Ms Mary Delehanty
Tipperary North	
Tiobraid Árann Theas.....	Ms Mary Delehanty
Tipperary South	
Port Láirge .....	Mr. Niall Rooney
Waterford	
Loch Garman.....	Ms Marie Garahy
Wexford	
Cill Mhantáin.....	Ms Patricia Casey
Wicklow	

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 Chainnigh**



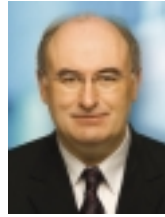
Ann Phelan  
(Lab)



John McGuinness  
(FF)



John Paul Phelan  
(FG)



Phil Hogan  
(FG)



Pat Deering  
(FG)

*Comhaltáí*  
*Members*

**Carlow-Kilkenny**

**An Cabhán-Muineachán**



Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin  
(SF)



Brendan Smith  
(FF)



Joe O'Reilly  
(FG)



Seán Conlan  
(FG)



Heather Humphreys  
(FG)

**Cavan-Monaghan**

**An Clár**



Pat Breen  
(FG)



Michael McNamara  
(Lab)



Joe Carey  
(FG)



Timmy Dooley  
(FF)

**Clare**

**Corcaigh Thoir**



Seán Sherlock  
(Lab)



David Stanton  
(FG)



Tom Barry  
(FG)

**Cork East**



Sandra McLellan  
(SF)

**Corcaigh Thuaidh-Lár**



Jonathan O'Brien  
(SF)



Kathleen Lynch  
(Lab)



Billy Kelleher  
(FF)



Dara Murphy  
(FG)

**Cork North-Central**

**Corcaigh Thiar-Thuaidh**



Michael Creed  
(FG)



Michael Moynihan  
(FF)



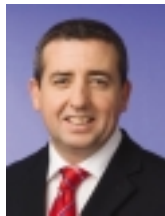
Áine Collins  
(FG)

**Cork North-West**

**Corcaigh Theas-Lár**



Micheál Martin  
(FF)



Ciarán Lynch  
(Lab)



Simon Coveney  
(FG)



Jerry Buttimer  
(FG)



Michael McGrath  
(FF)

**Cork South-Central**

**Corcaigh Thiar-Theas**



Jim Daly  
(FG)



Noel Harrington  
(FG)



Michael McCarthy  
(Lab)

**Cork South-West**

**Dún na nGall Thoir-Thuaidh**



Pádraig Mac Lochlainn  
(SF)



Joe McHugh  
(FG)



Charlie McConalogue  
(FF)

**Dún na nGall Thiar-Theas**



Pearse Doherty  
(SF)



Dinny McGinley  
(FG)



Thomas Pringle  
(Ind)

**Donegal South-West**

**Baile Átha Cliath Láir**



Paschal Donohoe  
(FG)



Joe Costello  
(Lab)



Maureen O'Sullivan  
(Ind)

**Dublin Central**

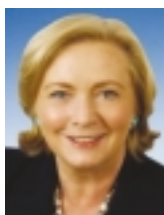


Mary Lou McDonald  
(SF)

**Baile Átha Cliath Thiar-Meán**



Joanna Tuffey  
(Lab)



Frances Fitzgerald  
(FG)



Robert Dowds  
(Lab)

**Dublin Mid-West**



Derek Keating  
(FG)



**Baile Átha Cliath Thuaidh**



James Reilly  
(FG)



Brendan Ryan  
(Lab)



Clare Daly  
(SP)



Alan Farrell  
(FG)

**Dublin North**

**Baile Átha Cliath Thuaidh-Lár**



Richard Bruton  
(FG)



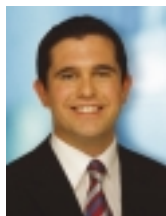
Aodhán Ó Ríordáin  
(Lab)

**Dublin North-Central**



Finian McGrath  
(Ind)

**Baile Átha Cliath Thoir-Thuaidh**



Terence Flanagan  
(FG)



Tommy Broughan  
(Lab)

**Dublin North-East**



Seán Kenny  
(Lab)

**Baile Átha Cliath Thiar-Thuaidh**



Róisín Shortall  
(Lab)



Dessie Ellis  
(SF)

**Dublin North-West**



John Lyons  
(Lab)

**Baile Átha Cliath Theas**

**Dublin South**



Shane Ross  
(Ind)



Alex White  
(Lab)



Olivia Mitchell  
(FG)



Peter Mathews  
(FG)



Alan Shatter  
(FG)

**Baile Átha Cliath Theas-Lár**

**Dublin South-Central**



Eric Byrne  
(Lab)



Catherine Byrne  
(FG)



Michael Conaghan  
(Lab)



Joan Collins  
(PBP)



Aengus Ó Snodaigh  
(SF)

**Baile Átha Cliath Thoir-Theas**

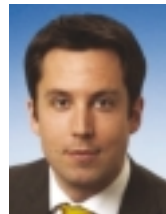
**Dublin South-East**



Ruairí Quinn  
(Lab)



Lucinda Creighton  
(FG)



Eoghan Murphy  
(FG)



Kevin Humphreys  
(Lab)

**Baile Átha Cliath Thiar-Theas**

**Dublin South-West**



Pat Rabbitte  
(Lab)



Brian Hayes  
(FG)



Seán Crowe  
(SF)



Eamonn Maloney  
(Lab)

**Baile Átha Cliath Thiar**



Joan Burton  
(Lab)



Leo Varadkar  
(FG)



Joe Higgins  
(SP)



Brian Lenihan  
(FF)

**Dublin West**

**Dún Laoghaire**



Eamon Gilmore  
(Lab)



Seán Barrett  
(FG)



Mary Mitchell O'Connor  
(FG)



Richard Boyd Barrett  
(PBP)

**Dún Laoghaire**

**Gaillimh Thoir**



Michael P. Kitt  
(FF)



Paul Connaughton  
(FG)



Ciarán Cannon  
(FG)



Colm Keaveney  
(Lab)

**Galway East**

**Gaillimh Thiar**



Éamon Ó Cuív  
(FF)



Derek Nolan  
(Lab)



Brian Walsh  
(FG)



Noel Grealish  
(Ind)



Seán Kyne  
(FG)

**Galway West**

**Ciarraí Thuaidh-Luimneach Thiar**



Jimmy Deenihan  
(FG)



Arthur Spring  
(Lab)



Martin Ferris  
(SF)

**Ciarraí Theas**



Brendan Griffin  
(FG)



Tom Fleming  
(Ind)



Michael Healy-Rae  
(Ind)

**Kerry South**

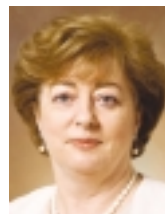
**Cill Dara Thuaidh**



Bernard J. Durkan  
(FG)



Emmet Stagg  
(Lab)



Catherine Murphy  
(Ind)

**Kildare North**

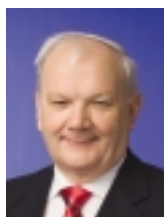


Anthony Lawlor  
(FG)

**Cill Dara Theas**



Martin Heydon  
(FG)



Jack Wall  
(Lab)

**Kildare South**



Seán Ó Fearghaíl  
(FF)

**Laois-Uíbh Fhailí**

**Laois-Offaly**



Charles Flanagan  
(FG)



Marcella Corcoran  
Kennedy  
(FG)



Barry Cowen  
(FF)



Brian Stanley  
(SF)



Seán Fleming  
(FF)

**Luimneach**

**Limerick**



Dan Neville  
(FG)



Patrick O'Donovan  
(FG)



Niall Collins  
(FF)

**Cathair Luimnigh**

**Limerick City**



Michael Noonan  
(FG)



Kieran O'Donnell  
(FG)



Willie O'Dea  
(FF)



Jan O'Sullivan  
(Lab)

**An Longfort-An Iarmhí**

**Longford-Westmeath**



Willie Penrose  
(Lab)



James Bannon  
(FG)



Nicky McFadden  
(FG)

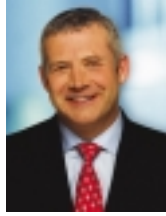


Robert Troy  
(FF)

**Lú**



Gerry Adams  
(SF)



Fergus O'Dowd  
(FG)



Gerald Nash  
(Lab)



Peter Fitzpatrick  
(FG)



Seamus Kirk  
(FF)\*

*\*By virtue of section 36 of the Electoral Act 1992, Seamus Kirk has been deemed to have been elected as one of the members for the Constituency of Louth.*

**Louth**

**Maigh Eo**



Enda Kenny  
(FG)



Michael Ring  
(FG)



Michelle Mulherin  
(FG)



Dara Calleary  
(FF)



John O'Mahony  
(FG)

**Mayo**

**An Mhí Thoir**



Dominic Hannigan  
(Lab)



Regina Doherty  
(FG)



Shane McEntee  
(FG)

**Meath East**

**An Mhí Thiar**



Damien English  
(FG)



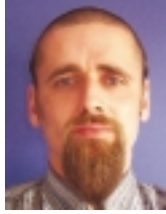
Peadar Tóibín  
(SF)



Ray Butler  
(FG)

**Meath West**

**Ros Comáin-Liatroim Theas**



Luke 'Ming' Flanagan  
(Ind)



Frank Feighan  
(FG)



Denis Naughten  
(FG)

**Roscommon-South Leitrim**

**Sligeach-Liatroim Thuaidh**



John Perry  
(FG)



Tony McLoughlin  
(FG)

**Sligo-North Leitrim**



Michael Colreavy  
(SF)

**Tiobraid Árann Thuaidh**



Michael Lowry  
(Ind)



Noel J. Coonan  
(FG)

**Tipperary North**



Alan Kelly  
(Lab)

**Tiobraid Árann Theas**



Séamus Healy  
(Ind)



Tom Hayes  
(FG)

**Tipperary South**



Mattie McGrath  
(Ind)

**Port Láirge**



John Deasy  
(FG)



Paudie Coffey  
(FG)



Ciara Conway  
(Lab)



John Halligan  
(Ind)

**Waterford**

**Loch Garman**



Mick Wallace  
(Ind)



Brendan Howlin  
(Lab)



John Browne  
(FF)



Liam Twomey  
(FG)



Paul Kehoe  
(FG)

**Wexford**

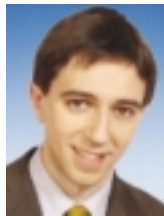
**Cill Mhantáin**



Andrew Doyle  
(FG)



Billy Timmins  
(FG)



Simon Harris  
(FG)



Anne Ferris  
(Lab)



Stephen Donnelly  
(Ind)

**Wicklow**



De bhua alt tríocha a sé den Acht Toghcháin, míle naoi gcéad nócha a dó, measadh SEAMUS Ó CUIRC a bheith tofa mar dhuine de na comhaltaí do Dháilcheantar an Lú.

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. Glacfaidh mé le tairiscint anois.

By virtue of section 36 of the Electoral Act 1992, SEAMUS KIRK has been deemed to have been elected as one of the members for the Constituency of Louth.

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 a Ceann Comhairle, and I shall now receive motions.

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### Election of Ceann Comhairle

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Ba mhaith liom an Teachta Seán Ó Bairéad a ainmniú chun a bheith ina Cheann Comhairle ar an 31ú Dáil.

I wish to propose Deputy Seán Barrett for the position of Ceann Comhairle of the 31st Dáil. Deputy Barrett has long experience in national politics. He is a deeply respected individual who has worked untiringly towards keeping the status of and respectability relating to politics at a high level. Of all the Members of the Dáil he has an intimate and deep understanding of the mechanics of how the House works. More importantly, he has a deep and abiding commitment to changing the relevant regulations in order to make the Dáil more effective, transparent and accountable.

As a public representative of many years service — who has been Chief Whip in Government and in Opposition, who has been a Minister and who has been our party's spokesperson in a number of areas — Deputy Barrett will, as Chair of the 31st Dáil, uphold the reputation established by many of his illustrious predecessors. I can testify to the fact that he will be fair, objective and accountable and will see to it that the House does its business efficiently and effectively on behalf of the people who elected its Members. I commend the nomination of the Deputy for the position of Ceann Comhairle to the House.

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** Ba mhaith liom, ar son Fhianna Fáil, tacú le ceapachán Seán Ó Bairéid mar Cheann Comhairle. Cinneadh an-mhaith atá ann.

On behalf of the Fianna Fáil Party, I wish to support the nomination of Deputy Seán Barrett for the position of Ceann Comhairle. During his years in the House, the Deputy has been viewed by those on all sides as a committed and fair parliamentarian. In the often unruly exchanges which have taken place in the House from time to time, his has been a rather restrained voice.

In view of the fact that the incoming Government will have the largest majority in the history of the State, Deputy Barrett will have a central role to play in protecting the ability of those in opposition to have their voices heard and in ensuring that said Government will be held to account. Even though the Deputy is a senior member of what will be the major party in Government, we on this side of the House have no doubt that he will be an impartial Chair.

I also believe Deputy Barrett will be a good person to preside over what should be a fundamental reform of how the House does its business. Given that almost all parties made promises in their election manifestos regarding the way in which the Ceann Comhairle is elected, this should be the final occasion on which the current model relating to his or her election will be employed. While a constitutional change may be required, the move to a system of election of the Ceann Comhairle by secret ballot is something which my party would advocate because it would assist in further strengthening the independence of the Parliament.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** Ba mhaith liom, thar ceann Pháirtí an Lucht Oibre, cuidiú leis an rún go dtoghfar Seán Ó Bairéad mar Cheann Comhairle ar an Dáil seo.

I wish to support the proposal that Deputy Seán Barrett be elected as Ceann Comhairle. I have had the privilege of sharing a constituency with the Deputy for approximately 22 years. He is an outstanding colleague who is committed to the service of the people of Dún Laoghaire and is someone with whom I have had the pleasure to work very closely. I am of the view that he will be a very fair chairperson of this assembly. I support the proposal on behalf of the Labour Party.

**Deputy Gerry Adams:** Tosóidh mé le cúpla focal pearsanta. Tá mé an-bhródúil a bheith anseo mar Theacht Dála don Lú agus mar cheannaire ar Shinn Féin. Nuair a bhí mé mar ionadaí ar Iarthar Bhéal Feirste, ní raibh seans againn agus níl fós, a bheith tofa chuig Dáil Éireann. Mar sin, tá mé an-sásta a bheith anseo le foireann mhór láidir Shinn Féin.

I wish the incoming Ceann Comhairle well. Fine Gael stated that the Ceann Comhairle would be elected by secret ballot, a proposition which Sinn Féin supports but which appears to have disappeared. The incoming Government has a huge majority but it is proposing one from among its own number for the post of Ceann Comhairle. I am sure Deputy Seán Barrett will do a good job. However, it would be fair and appropriate if the Ceann Comhairle came from among the ranks of the Opposition. It is hoped this will be rolled out in the time ahead. Tá mé an-sásta agus tá fhios agam go bhfuil onóir mór ar Seán Barrett agus a chlann. Tá mé sásta leis sin agus comhghairdeas dó. Go raibh maith agat.

**Deputy Finian McGrath:** I wish Deputy Seán Barrett well. I worked with him on the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Climate Change and Energy Security and found him to be a fair and impartial chairperson. I have known Deputy Barrett as a colleague in the Dáil for the past 11 years. While my preferred choice would have been the election of an Independent as Ceann Comhairle, I wish Deputy Barrett and his family well.

**Cléireach na Dála:** Ós rud é nach bhfuil ach ainmniúchán amháin ann tá mé ag cur na ceiste: “Go dtoghfar an Teachta Seán Ó Bairéad agus go rachaidh sé i gceannas na Dála anois mar Cheann Comhairle.”

As there is only one nomination, I am putting the question: “That Deputy Seán Barrett be elected and do now take the Chair of the Dáil as Ceann Comhairle.”

Question put and agreed to.

**Cléireach na Dála:** Iarraim anois ar an Teachta Seán Ó Bairéad, Comhalta do Dháilcheantar Dhún Laoghaire, dul i gceannas an aonú Dáil is tríocha.

I now call on Deputy Seán Barrett, member of the constituency of Dún Laoghaire, to take the Chair of this 31st 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 ghabháil libh as mé a thoghadh mar Cheann Comhairle Dháil Éireann inniu. Is mór an onóir domsa é.

Fellow Members, I thank you most sincerely for the great honour you have conferred on me today in electing me as Ceann Comhairle. I congratulate all Members on their election, in particular those elected for the first time. It is 30 years since I first took my seat here and I can fully appreciate what a great day it is.

Many have said that the recent election was the most important since the foundation of the State. If that is so, then the 31st Dáil should be one of the most important since this State gained its independence. Public trust and confidence in this Parliament has also been questioned. The striking mandate of the election, with more than 50 new Members, in its own way renews that trust. Our task is to ensure we live up to the confidence placed by the people in us and this Parliament. This will be achieved by this Dáil if we can conduct our affairs with purpose, professionalism, passion, civility and in a manner that reinforces the relevance of this Chamber to the people who elected us.

We need a modern Parliament for a modern age. We need a modern Dáil in which there is open and constructive debate. Debate can be constructive and passionate, but most of all responsive. This must be so if the wide diversity of views held by those Members elected to the House by the people are to be heard and, more important, understood inside and outside this great Chamber.

“Reform” was one of the catchphrases of the recent general election campaign. While as Ceann Comhairle, I am required to lead political and procedural reform, I will be proactive in areas where the Ceann Comhairle can contribute.

The criticism of the rules of the Dáil as appearing to be archaic and irrelevant owes much to how we have applied them ourselves in the Dáil, where, for example, the ordinary back-bencher has effectively been cut out of parliamentary questions due to the predominance of spokespersons. I am convinced that some simple changes to our procedures can make the workings of the Dáil far more dynamic by encouraging the participation of the ordinary back-benchers who are the backbone of the Dáil.

With regard to my role, it is my task and duty to administer and apply the rules of the Dáil with utter impartiality, fairness and equality between parties and Deputies. This I intend to do. All Members can be assured of my full support to enable them to fulfil their duties as Deputies in accordance with Standing Orders as laid down by the House. I encourage Members, as my predecessors did on many occasions, to change the rules which they collectively believe are outmoded. I will faithfully apply any such changes.

Members can also be assured that I will not only be fair but firm and will, with your co-operation, maintain order in the House to ensure the right balance is struck between the reconciliation of the rights of Members to participate in debate with the need for the efficient and expeditious discharge of parliamentary business. Indeed, it would be difficult for me to fulfil my obligations as Ceann Comhairle without your support and co-operation. In doing so, I will defend your rights to be heard and to contribute in accordance with Standing Orders. However, I will also hold you to the responsibility that comes with those rights. They are inter-dependent.

For the Dáil to be as effective as possible in serving the people, the House and its administration must also continue to be modernised. Significant improvements have already been made in parliamentary services that were delivered in the previous Dáil in a cost-effective manner, in keeping with the stringent times, but there is still some way to go to improve matters. I look forward to playing my part in building on those improvements and in meeting the challenge of providing a Parliament that is more relevant, fit for purpose, efficient and effective to deal with the challenges we face as a nation. This is not only a question of cost but also a matter of creativity, innovation and openness to change. In seeking to uphold the best traditions of the House, it is important for me to remember my illustrious predecessors. There have been many, and I am acutely aware of this as I take this office today. I wish to mention in particular my immediate predecessors, Deputy Seamus Kirk and former Deputy John O'Donoghue, in that regard.

I must now perform my 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.

Finally, when I consider the momentous challenges facing this country and thus the 31st Dáil, I think of a few simple words of hope spoken by a distinguished person who addressed this Chamber in the past. When faced with his daunting task of rebuilding a nation, Mr. Nelson Mandela said: "It always seems impossible until it is done." Go raibh maith agaibh.

*The Ceann Comhairle took the Chair.*

### **Nomination of Taoiseach**

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The next business is No. 4, nomination of Taoiseach. I will now receive motions.

**Deputy Simon Harris:** A Cheann Comhairle, it is a great honour, as the youngest Member of the 31st Dáil, to rise formally today to nominate Deputy Enda Kenny as the next Taoiseach of this country. Deputy Kenny will bring to the office of the Taoiseach integrity, honesty and a work rate which simply cannot be surpassed. He will use his skills as a leader to preside over a government committed to public service, at a time when such commitment is so urgently required. His ability to recognise the talents and skills of others places him in a very strong position to appoint and preside over a government with the capabilities and the determination to work for this nation and its people.

At a time when my generation is faced with the grim prospect of forced emigration and when unemployment blights our society yet again, we need a Taoiseach determined to restore stability, credibility and hope to this country. The people expect, deserve and require a government led by a Taoiseach who will put in place plans that will not just restore our economy, but which will ultimately build a fairer society. I am sure that my predecessors who stood here and nominated a person to be Taoiseach have hoped that at the core of a nominee was an honesty and a decency. I find myself in the enviable position today of not just hoping that about Deputy

[Deputy Simon Harris.]

Enda Kenny, but along with colleagues on these benches and on all sides of the House, knowing that the core of Deputy Kenny is an honesty and a decency.

A Cheann Comhairle, today is a moment in this country's history where we set about realising the hopes, dreams and aspirations of our people. Today, the period of mourning is over for Ireland. Today, we hang out our brightest colours and together, under Deputy Kenny's leadership, we move forward yet again as a nation. It is with pride, honour and delight that I propose to Dáil Éireann the election of Deputy Kenny as the next Taoiseach of this country.

**Deputy Ciara Conway:** It is my privilege, on behalf of the Labour Party, to second the motion that Deputy Enda Kenny be nominated for appointment by the President as Taoiseach. This is an historic moment, the moment when the two largest parties in the State have joined together in the nation's interest to form a strong and stable Government. It is a government that knows the national interest is best served by putting the people's interest at the heart of everything it does and every decision it makes.

The 31st Dáil is one of dramatic change. The Government that will be elected here today will have the strongest mandate in the history of our State; a mandate to strive with every fibre of our being for an Ireland we can be proud to hand on to our children. We face the task with humility, with a sense of privilege and with determination. This will be a partnership government, a national government, where the best of both Labour and Fine Gael unites to serve those who look to us for hope, leadership and unity of purpose. That purpose now, as it was in the democratic programme of the first Dáil, will be to ensure that Ireland's economic strengths are used to benefit all of her people. In the words of that programme, written by Tom Johnson some 92 years ago, our purpose must also be "to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing, or shelter", and to provide the "care of the Nation's aged and infirm, who shall not be regarded as a burden, but rather entitled to the Nation's gratitude and consideration". All of this, then as now, in a free and fair Ireland that we can be proud to call our own.

**Deputy Micháel Martin:** Comhghairdeas leat, a Cheann Comhairle, as ucht bheith tofa mar Cheann Comhairle. I dtús báire, ba mhaith liom aitheantas a thabhairt don obair mhór a rinne na Teachtaí Dála nár éirigh leo san olltoghchán seo. Creidim go bhfuil onóir ag baint leis an bpolaitíocht agus gur bhain siad an-chuid amach nuair a bhí siad anseo. Ba mhaith liom chomh maith fáilte a chur roimh na daoine atá sa Teach seo don chéad uair. Lá an-mhór atá ann dóibh gan dabht.

One of the clearest messages from the people is that they want us to reform the way we do our business in this House. Far too often, contributions here are about seeking attention rather than dealing with the serious issues at hand. The difference between permanent campaigning and daily business is sometimes difficult to discern. That has become the case even on the first day of each new Dáil. There has been a growing tendency for speeches to be delivered which take no real account of the fact that an election is over and the people have just spoken.

Equally, a habit has developed of nominating people for the position of Taoiseach for the sake of doing so rather than in the belief that the person has a right to assume the office. Today, it is my intention to break with that precedent. It is clear that Deputy Enda Kenny has been given a mandate by the people to take up the office of Taoiseach and that he should do so in a coalition government involving the Fine Gael and Labour parties. Fianna Fáil respects Deputy Kenny's mandate and will, therefore, not oppose his nomination today.

In addition, we will not support the nomination of any other person for the office. Unless there is some unforeseen development in the nature of the members and responsibilities of the Government Deputy Kenny will propose to the House later this afternoon, Fianna Fáil will also not oppose the nomination of the new Government. Clearly, this decision will not affect the outcome of the votes but it is an important signal about changing the way politics is conducted in Dáil Éireann.

There is, of course, a distinction to be drawn between the votes which will be held today and support for the programme for Government. Fine Gael and Labour have agreed to share power but have kicked to touch on most of the major issues to be addressed by this Dáil. They stood in the election as separate parties and have at best only agreed a process for bridging the gaps between them. On fiscal policy, the one concrete agreement is to implement the 2011 budget they voted against a few weeks ago. On financial policy they have agreed to change existing policies but have not agreed on what specifically will replace them.

Given the energy with which some Deputies in Fine Gael and Labour have attacked the past use of policy reviews, the inclusion of over 21 such reviews in their programme for Government is more than a bit ironic. In many ways this is one of the least specific programmes for Government ever published. Flexibility is certainly required to make a coalition government work but the danger contained within this programme is that it leaves so many basic points for later negotiation. The scale of budget changes for the majority of the term of office and the balance between taxation and spending measures should be set out clearly in a government's programme, and the failure to do this must inevitably lead to concerns about unresolved issues.

This shows itself relating to the likely Cabinet as well. A new set of challenges requires a new approach to setting ministerial tasks. I welcome Deputy Kenny's intention to restructure Cabinet responsibilities. However, the idea that one Minister will negotiate the detail of budgets while another will have responsibility for implementing these decisions is a recipe for confusion and conflict and is a compromise which appears based mainly on a failure to agree on who should be the Minister for Finance.

I want to reiterate that Fianna Fáil's approach in this Dáil will be to provide constructive Opposition. When we agree with a policy, we will support it. When we do not, we will oppose it and will set out a credible alternative. We will not follow the example seen in recent years of manoeuvring to oppose everything for the sake of popularity. The self-serving and partisan narrative which others have offered about the last decade may have been helpful for campaigning purposes but it will not help in the much tougher business of governing.

It is my intention that Fianna Fáil will provide an Opposition which is both assertive and constructive. Equally, I want it to be absolutely clear that we will defer to no one in our right to represent the nearly 400,000 people who voted for us 12 days ago. I am leader of our political party but I am first and foremost an Irish republican. This means that I want my country to do well no matter who is in charge. I have serious concerns about Deputy Kenny's policies and I sincerely do not believe that we have seen a programme for Government which is capable of addressing the serious issues facing our country. However, I wish him well and I sincerely hope that he will be successful as Taoiseach.

**Deputy Joe Higgins:** I oppose the nomination of Deputy Enda Kenny as Taoiseach of a Fine Gael-Labour Party coalition Government. The very first sentence of the programme for Government states that a democratic revolution took place in Ireland on 25 February. The Oxford dictionary defines "revolution" as the overthrow of a government or social order in favour of a new system. That being the case, the programme presented by Deputy Kenny is a

[Deputy Joe Higgins.]

grotesque betrayal of that revolution because it proposes, almost to the letter, to continue the reactionary programme of the old order of the late and unlamented regime of Fianna Fáil and the Green Party, a regime that was rightly reviled, rejected and sent to oblivion by the Irish people for its economic and political crimes. Given the day that is in it, I am surprised that the remnants of that Government did not return with their brows heavily stained with penitential ash to recognise the role it played.

The outgoing regime indulged the profiteering speculators——

**Deputy Tom Hayes:** Like Deputy Mick Wallace.

**Deputy Joe Higgins:** ——and grasping bankers, imprisoning a generation of young working people in monstrous mortgages and negative equity. When that greedfest inevitably choked on its own excess, it treacherously connived with the EU, IMF and ECB to save the skins of the major European banks that had their snouts deep in the feeding trough that was the Irish property market where they slurped as frenetically as any Fianna Fáil developer or big Irish banker.

For this, and the crash that inevitably resulted, we see the savage attacks on the living standards of our people, which this nominee for Government intends to continue. They attack public services and steal from the disabled and the poor. A revolution would overturn and reverse all that. However, this nominee for Taoiseach proposes to confirm and reinstate the discredited programme of a discredited Government. The poisonous cocktail of austerity, concocted by the witch doctors in Brussels and Frankfurt because of the sickness of the European financial system, is to continue to be force-fed to the Irish people by this new proposed Government. Therefore, a vote for Deputy Kenny for Taoiseach is a vote not for revolution or change, but for counter-revolution and more of the same. It is a vote for monstrous cuts in the living standards of workers and the unemployed, including the hated universal social charge which should be labelled universal anti-social charge, for wholesale privatisation of public assets, notwithstanding the disastrous consequences of previous privatisations such as Team Aer Lingus and Telecom Éireann, for blatant new tax burdens on ordinary people, including a water tax and home tax, and for a health service held to ransom by profit-seeking private insurance companies.

The first paragraph of the first chapter of a proposal for Government that would be honest would try to answer the question: “Why should the Irish people have their economic life-blood drained to salvage the tens of billions of euro gambled and lost by private speculators in private deals for private profit in Irish property? By what moral code does a Government justify placing that millstone on our people?” We will put that question to them again and again until it is answered.

This is not the first time an Irish political establishment responded to an Irish and Europe-wide crisis by sacrificing its people. Nearly 100 years ago, the forebears of today’s speculating European financiers and their political clients plunged into war in a vicious competition for markets, raw materials and profits. The Irish Parliamentary Party of the day will forever be remembered in infamy for its campaign to dragoon a generation of youth to feed the insatiable appetite of the imperial war makers. Today, by sacrificing our people, our services and our youth to feed the equally insatiable appetite of the wolves in the European and world financial markets — faceless, unelected and unaccountable — first Fianna Fáil and the Greens, then Fine Gael and Labour play an equally shameful role as the Irish Parliamentary Party. It was a great Irish socialist, James Connolly, who, in opposition to that conflict, called for a torch to

be lit in Ireland that would, “not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture” was burned. How deeply ashamed James Connolly would be today that the Labour Party he founded marches into Dáil Éireann to become part of a Government that will burn not the bondholders, the speculators or the grasping big bankers but the Irish people, the working class, the unemployed, the poor and the low and middle-income workers.

The Socialist Party and the United Left Alliance rejects the right-wing programme proposed by Deputy Kenny. We reject the rule of the financial markets, which is causing such crisis and suffering among our people. We demand instead that they be brought to heel and brought into public ownership and democratic control in Ireland and Europe to be used instead as vehicles of major public investment to create projects that would quickly see tens of thousands of people returning to work from the tragedy of standing in the dole queue. The incoming Government will have a crushing majority in this Dáil. It should not think from this that its economic programme of savage austerity will go unchallenged. It certainly will be challenged in this Chamber and it should be remembered that we in the united left will facilitate the mobilisation of worker power, people power and community power to defend the living standards of the vast majority of people, who are attacked by this programme, to defend their livelihood and to oppose new and unjust stealth taxes.

Tá mé glan in aghaidh an rúin go dtoghfaí an Teachta Kenny mar Thaoiseach. Is náireach an lá é nuair a thagann iarrthóir d’oifig an Taoisigh os comhair na Dála agus mar chlár oibre aige caighdeán maireachtála lucht oibre na tíre a bhascadh chun fiacha ollmhóra príobháideacha lucht speiciléireachta agus na bainc a íoc. Is feall uafásach é seo ar mhuintir na tíre. Tá sé mímhóralta, mícheart agus míchóir; agus déanfaidh sé an ghéarchéim eacnamaíochta níos measa. Má bristear caighdeán maireachtála oibrítheoirí ar phá íseal agus ar mheán phá, nó má tógtar airgead as liúntais daoine bochta, is amhlaidh go rachaidh an líon daoine dífhostaithe i méid. Ar bhonn eacnamaíochta agus ar bhonn mhóralta, tabharfaidh an Páirtí Sóisialach agus an Comhaontas Chlé síordúshlán don Rialtas seo. Beimid ag táirgeadh mar mhalairt forbairt ar cúrsaí eacnamaíochta ar bhonn infheistíochta phoiblí, seachas bheith ag brath ar lucht an rachmais. Beimid ag glaoch ar ghnáth daoine a gcumhacht fhéin a úsáid.

As Members meet today, they also should remember the magnificent movement of opposition and the sacrifices of ordinary people throughout the Arab world against their horrific dictatorships. Irish working people will wish to support them and Members will return to further discussions in this regard in the days ahead.

**Deputy Tom Hayes:** Deputy Higgins will be going for the European Parliament after that speech.

**Deputy Gerry Adams:** Comhghairdeas arís leat, a Cheann Chomhairle, agus le do chlann. Ní féidir le Sinn Féin tacú leis an moladh, an Teachta Kenny a ainmniú mar Thaoiseach. Níl iontas ar an Teachta faoi sin. Ní rud pearsanta é. Tá meas mór agam ar an mandáid a fuair Fine Gael.

Sinn Féin set out a number of key priorities during the election campaign. These included the need to reverse budget cuts to public services and social welfare, the need to abolish the universal social charge and to put an end to putting public money into the bad banks. It is hardly surprising that Fianna Fáil does not oppose this nomination given its members put together the programme for Government the new Government will administer. Sinn Féin also set out its view of the need to protect those who are most vulnerable in our society, namely, the poor, the unemployed and those on the margins, as well as those who never would have seen themselves as being economically vulnerable but who now are on the edge of deprivation, suffering and real distress. Sinn Féin also set out its clear opposition to plans by Fine Gael to



[Deputy Gerry Adams.]

downgrade the Irish language and has a long-standing view of the need to continue to foster the peace process, to build towards Irish unity and to continue to work with our Unionist neighbours in the North.

Níl clár Rialtais Fhine Gael agus an Lucht Oibre ag cloí leis an obair seo. Ní féidir le Sinn Féin tacaíocht a thabhairt d'ainmniú an Teachta Kenny mar Thaoiseach, os rud é go bhfuil sé ag seasamh le clár Rialtais a chuirfidh géarphlean ceithre bliana Fianna Fáil i gcrích. Tá sé ar intinn aige níos mó d'airgead an phobail a chur isteach sa chóras baincéireachta.

We cannot support a Taoiseach who is prepared to sell important State assets and introduce water charges and property taxes for ordinary households. It is appropriate that we gather here at the beginning of Lent, given what is coming for the citizens of the State. As I said at the outset, this is not a personal issue. I respect the mandate which Fine Gael received and wish the Taoiseach and Government well. It is a huge honour for all of those who will take office and their families. Gabhaim comhghairdeas leo go léir agus guím ádh mór orthu.

The House should be assured that we will not oppose the Government for the sake of it. If, by fluke, positive proposals are brought forward, we will support them. I would also like to address some remarks to the Labour Party and Deputy Gilmore. They had the opportunity to work for a Government without Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael. Is botún agus meancóg mhór é tacaíocht a thabairt do Fhine Gael sa Rialtas agus an Teachta Kenny a ainmniú mar Thaoiseach.

By ruling out all other options for coalition, including with those of us on the left, it undermined its stated aspiration for a Labour Party-led government and limited the choice presented to the public. Tá slí níos fearr ann. Tá bealach níos fearr ann.

In wishing the incoming Taoiseach and Tánaiste well I wish to make clear that Sinn Féin will provide robust and constructive opposition to the Government and hold it to account for the decisions it takes. Ar an lá seo, tús maith leath na hoibre. Guím ádh mór oraibh uilig.

**Deputy Shane Ross:** I congratulate the Ceann Comhairle on his election to the high office which he has achieved. It is a particularly great achievement considering that he retired from this House eight years ago and will be automatically re-elected at the next election. I say that with great sincerity and I know he will be a very fine Ceann Comhairle.

I rise to announce the first split in the Technical Group which was formed yesterday. I agree with many of the directions of Deputy Higgins. One of the great virtues of the group is that there is diversity and difference of opinion and we intend to express those diverse opinions in many ways in the weeks and years to come.

An avalanche of public goodwill is moving in the direction of the Government and I hope and pray that it will capitalise on it and fulfil the faith which has been put in it by the Irish electorate. I fully accept that Deputy Kenny has a mandate which he achieved ten days ago.

Having said that, I am somewhat dispirited after reading the programme for Government. I understand why Fianna Fáil will support Deputy Kenny for Taoiseach, namely, because the new Government, according to its programme, will implement the policies that Fianna Fáil imposed upon the country. That is something which I find difficult to accept, barely ten days after it had opposed it so vehemently. We see exactly the same parameters on the economy and the same austerity measures about to be imposed by the new Government. I agree with Deputy Higgins on that. I was deeply discouraged when I read the programme for Government that there was no vision in it and so little in it that was specific. As Deputy Martin said, there

were so many reviews and fudges that we do not know exactly what is being promised at all, except that the Labour Party and Fine Gael will be the Government over the next few years and will stick together come hell or high water. That is not good enough. We needed a programme for Government which fulfilled the programme of electoral policies which were made on that side of the House, but we did not get that. We did not get a vision. Take, for example, the EU-IMF deal. We were promised renegotiation and an end to what was called, so euphemistically, burden sharing. However, even before the ink was dry on the programme for Government, burden sharing was dropped last Friday in Helsinki and we have to share the burden with those banks which lent so irresponsibly to Anglo Irish Bank and Allied Irish Banks so many years ago over such a long period. Renegotiation means “renegotiation”. It does not mean going into Europe and negotiating a cut in the interest rate, which we already know has been conceded. That is not good enough. We need a Government which is prepared to send people out to Brussels or Strasbourg or anywhere else armed with a referendum given to them by the people saying the deal is not acceptable. We are not getting that, but getting a Government that will go in with the same deal and mandate as the previous Government.

Second, the programme for Government is silent on the promises which were made about putting an end to cronyism. Instead, we have a vague and diluted promise that there will be a substantive reduction in the number of quangos. Where is the promise to reduce or abolish 145 quangos? The suggestion that the Government will make a substantive reduction in quangos is not good enough. Furthermore, we no longer see any pledge to change the appointments to State and semi-State bodies and agencies as promised before the election. Perhaps this is just an omission from the programme. However, I fear that whereas the new Government is an amazing and welcome relief in terms of its honesty and integrity and of being an end to a dark period of political rule here, the promises of change are empty and are already disappearing. I want to be certain that the Fianna Fáil version of cronyism is not replaced by a Fine Gael-Labour version of cronyism. They did pretty well in the 1994-97 period in putting their pals in power. It is important that we see a system established so that ugly aspect of Irish political life is ended.

*(Interruptions).*

**Deputy Shane Ross:** It is against the rules for Deputy Durkan to interrupt a maiden speech.

**Deputy Tom Hayes:** Deputy Ross spent too long in the Seanad.

**Deputy Alan Shatter:** That is the typical claptrap the Deputy comes out with.

**Deputy Shane Ross:** I wish to say a brief word about Ministers’ salaries, something which may not affect Deputy Durkan this evening. However, Deputy Kenny is a forgiving type and one would never know.

I fear that because of the parameters and restrictions of the economy, the Government will almost inevitably yield to the temptation to be a Government so similar to the previous one, perhaps not in its style or methods but in what it does, that it will be indistinguishable from it.

**Deputy Seamus Healy:** I oppose the nomination of Deputy Enda Kenny as Taoiseach. The programme for Government is a deep betrayal of working people, the poor and families on low and middle incomes. We see no serious change in the programme, which is a continuation of the Fianna Fáil-Green Party policies in what is now a more unfavourable environment for the public. The continuation of the universal social charge, the regressive tax changes of the

[Deputy Seamus Healy.]

past budgets and austerity measures are set to continue. This takes place against a background of a 7% rise in the price of staple foods over the past eight months, increases in mortgage rates, with more to come, and rocketing fuel prices which will cause further rises in food prices. This will further depress the economy and lead to a further increase in unemployment and emigration.

The commitment in the programme for Government to eliminate 25,000 jobs in the public service is obscene. Any excess posts that exist in the higher echelons, in Ministers' offices or in the offices of secretaries general, must be transferred to necessary services at the front line, where teachers, nurses, clerical and maintenance staff attempt to maintain public services in the face of significant cuts which the programme for Government plans to continue. The Labour Party should hang its head in shame. The programme for Government does not propose to take a red cent in tax from the assets of the super rich. The 6% who own €250 billion of assets will not pay a halfpenny, while ordinary people are being fleeced to pay for a recession they had no hand, act or part in creating.

James Connolly wrote about the reconquest of Ireland. The current leader of the Labour Party has endorsed the humiliation of Ireland under the EU-IMF deal. The excuse he gave on radio was that there is a necessity to repair relations with our European partners. That is a form of national grovelling. The French, German and British banks practised reckless lending to Irish and other banks, causing problems for the Irish, Greek, Portuguese and Spanish. The Labour Party policy is one of grovelling to these powerful banks in the hope we will get a few crumbs from them. James Connolly said: "The great only appear great because we are on our knees. Let us rise." We must rise up and tell the EU and IMF that we will not pay the debts of the Irish banks. We must tell them that the combination of these debts and the imminent mortgage crisis will cause a disastrous default that will make current problems appear minor and leave Ireland in a much weaker position to remedy the situation.

I wish to refer to the organisation and delivery of acute hospital services here.

That is very important for the public, for the patients and their families and for the community in south Tipperary. The "save our acute hospital services" committee in south Tipperary, of which I am chairman, received election commitments from Fine Gael and the Labour Party confirming that they will retain all existing acute hospital services in South Tipperary General Hospital. I will relentlessly pursue those commitments and I call on the incoming Government and the incoming Minister for Health and Children to immediately instruct the HSE to halt the reconfiguration process.

**Deputy Tom Hayes:** The Deputy does not need to worry about that. I will look after that for him.

**Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett:** On behalf of the People Before Profit Alliance, and along with my colleagues in the ULA, I will not vote in favour of Deputy Kenny's nomination as Taoiseach. The reason for that relates to a comment Deputy Martin made about the need to break from certain bad traditions in Irish politics.

**Deputy Noel Coonan:** Such as opposing everything.

**Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett:** One of the worst traditions in politics, which we seem to have a particular capacity for in this country, is saying one thing during an election campaign when one is looking for votes and then doing something very different as soon as the votes are in the ballot box. That is precisely what has happened with the new programme for Government.

Deputy Kenny said that the EU-IMF deal was a bad deal for Ireland and it was a bad deal for Europe. There was a clear implication that something would be done about that and that we would stand up to those institutions which were trying to unload the cost of a financial crisis created by bankers and speculators on to the backs of ordinary people. This deal will cause immense suffering for them and it will cripple our economy for years to come. The rhetoric about standing up and doing something about the IMF-EU deal has disappeared in the programme for Government, which sets out clearly the intention to continue the programme of austerity and cuts implemented by the previous Government in the interests of paying off the bankers and bondholders at the behest of the EU and the IMF.

Another promise emblazoned on almost every Fine Gael poster was to get Ireland working, yet the plan to get Ireland working is reflected in one of the few specific commitments in the programme for Government, which is to slash 25,000 public sector jobs. One does not have to be an economic expert to realise one will not get Ireland working by axing 25,000 jobs. That will mean an additional 25,000 people unemployed, less money being spent in the economy and more suffering.

It is particularly depressing that the Labour Party will support Deputy Kenny, the incoming Government and the programme for Government. Labour Party members should be ashamed of themselves for signing up to a programme that will axe the jobs of 25,000 of the people who very particularly voted for them in the hope and expectation that their jobs would be safe. They should be ashamed that when asked about the issue of water charges on national television and in the national media, they made solemn promises that they would not introduce such charges and now they have signed up to a programme for Government that sets out to implement such charges. They should be ashamed to sign up to a programme that talks about selling off State assets to pay off the bankers, bondholders and speculators. It is shameful to sell the family silver and to strip the assets of this country in the name of paying off bankers and bondholders.

What about the promise to do something about the universal social charge, which has savaged the incomes of low and middle income families who have lost hundreds of euros, as a result of which many cannot meet their mortgage repayments or pay other bills? What about the promise that the Labour Party would recalibrate the taxation system so that those earning more than €100,000 per year would be subject to increases? That has also been abandoned and all we have been told is that there will be a review.

For all those reasons, it is impossible to support the incoming Government which has abandoned all its promises related to the desperate cry for change which the people expressed during the election campaign for a programme for Government, which is simply a plan to do more of the same and cause suffering to ordinary people and which will cripple our economy for years to come.

Last weekend, Deputy Gilmore said he feared he would see forests of placards as he and Labour Party Deputies——

**Deputy Robert Dowds:** He did not say he feared.

**Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett:** He should fear and so should the incoming Government.

**Deputy Emmet Stagg:** The Deputy has us terrified already. We are quaking in our boots.

**Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett:** The pledge of the United Left Alliance——

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** The disunited left.

**Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett:** —is to support those groups in society which through no fault of their own are being targeted with job losses, brutal pay cuts that will put families under, and savage cuts to the public services on which they depend. We will facilitate, support and encourage people to take up their placards and to democratically resist this counterproductive, unjust and economically unsustainable programme for Government that will do nothing to realise the hopes for change people expressed in the election campaign. That is the pledge of the ULA over the coming period.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I have been a little liberal regarding those who are making their maiden speeches. However, I remind Deputies that Government policy does not arise at this point. The debate is on a motion for the nomination of Taoiseach and I ask Members, particularly those making their maiden speeches, to confine their remarks to the motion.

**Deputy John Halligan:** I welcome Deputy Barrett to his new position. I wish him well. I also wish Deputy Kenny well and I genuinely mean that. The seconder to the motion referred to a national government. My interpretation of a national government is that everybody is included and, therefore, I thought for a moment that the Technical Group had missed a telephone call from Deputy Kenny. However, it is not possible for me to support him as Taoiseach.

The previous Government was put out of office primarily because of the pain, hurt and distress inflicted on hundreds of thousands of people in various constituencies throughout this country. This manifested itself in severe cuts to the living standards of middle class income groups and low paid workers. People voted for change and a reversal of these cuts, not the programme for Government put forward by the incoming Government.

I have good time for Deputy Gilmore but it is regrettable that on this occasion when there was no discernible difference between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael that the Labour Party did not attempt to ensure an alternative left-right divide in this Parliament, as there is in many other parliaments across Europe. Promises were made on placards and posters and in statements issued all over the country to reverse the cuts in child benefit, the dreadful cut in the carer's allowance and, most important, the universal social charge, which I describe as a super tax that has inflicted untold hardship on hundreds of thousands of families.

However, it is my position, as an Independent Member, that I will do what I think is right for my country and for my constituency. If the Government puts forward policies I can support, I will support them. I will try to be as positive as I can. However, I told the people who voted for me — the middle income groups, those less well-off in society and those suffering dreadful hardship — that when I got to the Dáil, if all of the cuts were not reversed, I could not support the Government and I will not do so.

**Deputy Tom Fleming:** Comhghairdeas, a Cheann Comhairle. I wish you well in your term in office. As the outcome of this motion is clear, I wish Deputy Kenny, Deputy Gilmore and their team every success in tackling the enormous social and economic issues facing the country. Although, as an Independent, I will abstain on the motion, on reading the programme for Government I broadly agree with many of the proposals and initiatives contained in the document. Such measures should have been implemented in recent years.

We need ethical and compassionate leadership. In that regard I seek the Government's support in reversing some of the penal cuts in the previous budget. I refer, for example to cuts to the blind, the disabled, widows and carers, the proposed elimination of payments to fourth year student nurses, the imposition of a universal social charge at low levels of income, the increase in annual third level student registration fees to €2,000 and the abolition of tax relief for union subscriptions. In that regard the importance of association, in terms of representing various sections of society, cannot be underestimated. The point was driven home to me as

recently as last night when I received an alarming telephone call from a constituent, an employee of the Aetna company in Castleisland, County Kerry, to let me know that the workforce of 116 had been informed yesterday that the company was entering into a 30-day consultation process——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I am sorry, but we are dealing with the nomination for Taoiseach.

**Deputy Tom Fleming:** ——regarding the existence of the company which has no union representation.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I am sorry, but the Deputy cannot raise those matters now.

**Deputy Tom Fleming:** The demise of the company would be a disaster for the entire area, for County Kerry, for the workforce and the local economy. I seek that the new Minister for enterprise and employment who will be appointed today would intervene——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Please. We cannot deal with the matter now.

**Deputy Tom Fleming:** ——immediately——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I am sorry but I will have to rule the Deputy out of order.

**Deputy Tom Fleming:** ——and enter into negotiation with the American-based company. I will pursue the matter with the Taoiseach before this evening is out. This is a serious matter——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I appreciate that but now is not the time for it.

**Deputy Tom Fleming:** ——for our county and country. We cannot stand idly by.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I ask Members to please speak to the motion before the House.

**Deputy Mick Wallace:** I will keep it short. I will not be voting for Deputy Kenny for Taoiseach but I honestly wish him well. I would prefer to see this country get back on its feet and return to a healthy state rather than the reverse. I will support anything the Government does that I consider to be positive and in the best interests of the people. Likewise, I will not be afraid to criticise anything I consider does not do that.

The Government has a huge majority in the House and it would be very easy for it to ignore the Opposition. However, most would agree that Parliament should function in a much better way than it has for a long time. It would be positive if the Government were to facilitate the healthy working of Parliament. Every Member present is representing the people of Ireland and we should all be facilitated in playing a positive role.

I might not have campaigned for long in Wexford but it would be disingenuous of me not to mention that when I did I was conscious of a huge anger among people. They find it difficult to understand why the taxpayer should carry the burden of mistakes made by the banking system. It would be wonderful if the Government had the courage to hold a referendum and get the decision of the people. That would give the Government much more strength to go to Europe and deal with the issue, which probably constitutes one of the biggest decisions ever made in the history of the State.

I learned many things in speaking to people. One of the reasons I decided to stand for election was that I also felt that people have not been well served by the political process. They do not feel there is a real connect between their representatives and the people who elected them. We can change that. We can all play a part in that regard. We must get to a stage where

[Deputy Mick Wallace.]

decisions made at Dáil level are made in the best interests of the people and not just in the interests of big business. It would be great if the new Government had the courage to work in the best interests of the people at all times. At the end of the Government's term it would be wonderful if it could be proud to be measured by how well it looked after the most vulnerable in society rather than the strength of our GDP. Surely, how a state looks after those who most need its help is the true test of democracy.

**Deputy Luke 'Ming' Flanagan:** I wish you, a Cheann Comhairle, the best of luck in your new position. It is an amazing honour to be even standing here today representing the people of Roscommon-South Leitrim and the people of the Republic of Ireland. What is good for the people of Roscommon-South Leitrim will be good for the people of the Republic of Ireland and *vice versa*. One will not be able to work without the other.

It is unfortunate that as a west of Ireland man I will be opposing the nomination of Deputy Enda Kenny as Taoiseach not because I have anything against him personally, but because I do not believe he is the best person for the job. Before the election it was clear that everyone who was running for the Labour Party thought that Deputy Gilmore would be the best person for the job. A short time before the election it was clear that a majority of people within Fine Gael did not think Deputy Kenny was the best person for the job, but there is nothing I, Deputy Gilmore or those people in Fine Gael can do about that now. The situation is a *fait accompli* as Deputy Enda Kenny will become Taoiseach.

I wish him the best of luck on behalf of my two children because if he has good luck and he does well, they will not have to take the boat or the aeroplane to London like 19 out of 20 members of my family and my wife's family. I am terrified of the prospect that they will have to take the same road. I am conscious of the fact that parents in Germany, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and other countries do not have to tell their sons or daughters when they turn 18 that the best thing they can do is leave their country.

I dream and hope that after five years the Government will have solved the problem of emigration once and for all. I hope the Government will stem that tide as quickly as possible. Not only that, I also hope that those people who have had to emigrate in recent years, many of my friends and neighbours among them, will be able to come back to a country that can sustain them, just as other modern European countries can.

I hope Deputy Enda Kenny will be brave when dealing with our European partners. I have nothing against Europe. I have lived in Holland, Spain, Germany and Great Britain. All I know is that if I fall on hard times——

*(Interruptions).*

**Deputy Luke 'Ming' Flanagan:** The people of Roscommon-South Leitrim would like to be shown a bit of respect and that Members would keep quiet while I am talking. I will do exactly the same thing. I am conscious that we need to do many things immediately and as quickly as possible to get ourselves out of the hole we are in. We need to do them right because otherwise we are sentencing the people in this country to a life of hell. I am confident that if it is done right, then things can go very well for people. When it comes to the agrifood sector and the tourism sector there is massive potential for jobs. If Deputy Kenny, his colleagues in Fine Gael and the Labour Party do it right then we will live in a wonderful country.

The first thing that needs to be done — it is what I do when, for example, I am buying a car — is to talk to the experts. When I buy a car, I talk to my friend, the mechanic. When I was buying my house, I spoke to an engineer and I listened to his expertise. I am begging Deputy

Kenny to listen to the experts, people like Constantin Gurdgiev, David McWilliams and that man across the Chamber, Deputy Ross. He must listen to their view that we have no choice but to default on this bank debt. However, to those who use what is now being described as the “D word”, the question is immediately thrown back as to what we will do for money if that is done. The reality is — the experts cannot all be wrong on this — that we will have to default anyway down the line. It is better to do it of our own accord than to wait for that tonne of bricks to fall on our heads. If we do that we have some chance of getting out of the hole we are in.

There are many things in the programme for Government with which I agree. I agree with reforming our health system, although I would like to see more detail on that. I agree with reform to deal with the fact that government does not work in this country. There are several other issues with which I agree. I hope, above all, that the Government that will be elected today also agrees with these aims, that its members mean it when they say they will go for political reform. Unless they do we will not get out of this hole.

I especially hope they want to reform the health system. I am not any sort of expert in health care from the point of view of being a doctor, but I am an expert from the point of view of being a patient. My children, my wife, my late mother, my father and I have all had to use the health system. It is totally and utterly inadequate. It was embarrassing and nothing short of a disgrace to watch what my mother went through. If the Government does one thing, I hope it gets this right. If it cannot do so, it will have failed.

I wish Deputies Kenny and Gilmore the best of luck in the next five years. If I agree with what they are doing, I will vote with them. If I disagree, I will oppose them hammer and tongs on the floor of Dáil Éireann, and if I do not get my spake in here I will do it through the media. I hope the new Government will see sense. We all have one thing in common, namely, our wish to make Ireland great again. That great Irish man, Seán Lemass, once said that Irish people are capable of doing things just as well as anywhere else in the world — if not better, then equally well. I believe that and I hope the new Government believes it. If we follow through on it Ireland will become great again.

**Deputy Michael Healy-Rae:** The Ceann Comhairle will be glad to know that I intend to be brief. I begin by congratulating Deputy Barrett on his election.

I offer my support to Deputy Kenny on his proposed election as Taoiseach. I am in no doubt as to the difficulties facing him on the economic front. I shall offer constructive views and support all reasonable measures that may be necessary to get this country on the right track. This must be the new Government’s priority if it is to have the possibility of securing existing employment, maintaining the living standards of workers and retaining the freedom to promote the expansion of the economy and the creation of jobs. We must work cohesively to maintain an environment where the creation of employment is a priority. We must eliminate all obstacles that hinder the creation of employment.

I am glad and profoundly grateful to have the opportunity to serve the people of south Kerry to the best of my ability. I remind the other 165 Deputies in this House that, regardless of whatever position they may hold, we are all servants of the people. We are in difficult times and harsh and severe decisions will have to be made by this House. I remind the incoming Taoiseach, Deputy Kenny, of the document published by the late Declan Costello in the 1960s, *Towards a Just Society*. Now more than ever there is a need to adhere to the principles of social justice and equality set out therein. We must legislate in a fair and transparent way with the common goal of fairness and equality for all.



[Deputy Michael Healy-Rae.]

It is of paramount importance to restore the trust of the Irish people in the way this House conducts its affairs and how legislation is passed through the Oireachtas. We must work together to achieve this aim. Bills will have to be teased out and discussed in detail. One way of achieving this is to enhance the powers of all-party committees. Let them be the first stop for Bills and let there be open and frank discussion on all aspects of legislation. Committees should have powers to propose amendments before legislation is brought to the House for further debate. There should be provision for all Oireachtas committees to include non-elected persons by invitation where a particular expertise is required. The closer to the people that decisions are made the more effective they will be. I do not label myself as an Opposition Deputy nor do I presume to be a Government Deputy. I am a servant of the people. With that in mind I shall facilitate the passage of all measures that are required in the national interest.

Both Deputy Kenny and I are rural-based Deputies. We have both faced our begrudgers in the past. Today Deputy Kenny will be elected Taoiseach of the country and I stand elected as a Deputy for my constituency. They said Deputy Kenny would never make it and they called me and others gombeen politicians. However, the people have spoken and here we are. Now is our chance to work together to get this country back on its feet.

With regard to the serious situation in Castleisland, where jobs are under threat, I am glad to say I have already raised it with the incoming Government.

**Deputy Pearse Doherty:** Mar atá ráite ag ceannaire mo pháirtí, ní bheidh Sinn Féin ag tabhairt tacaíochta do Enda Kenny mar Thaoiseach inniu. Ní rud pearsanta é seo. Tá an tír ag cros-bhealach agus tá an treo a ghlacfaimid san am atá amach romhainn íontach tábhachtach, ní dúinne atá inár suí anseo ach do na daoine sa bhaile atá ag brath ar thús úr le todhchaí na tíre. Tá eagla ormsa go bhfuil siad ag dul a bheith ligthe síos go mór ag an chláir oibre atá curtha le chéile ag an Rialtas úr.

We are at an important point in our history. People marched to the ballot stations in their hundreds of thousands, in numbers never seen before, and gave a resounding vote of confidence to Fine Gael and to other political parties in their different measures. More so than who they voted for, it is clear that what people voted for is change. Each of the political parties argued on a platform of change. One of the most disappointing things we will see in the coming period is that this hope will be snatched away from people. As bad as the dark period under the Fianna Fáil-Green Party Government was, where we had a programme of austerity measures that impacted on the lives of everybody, what is to come may be even worse. When the vision of hope is dangled in front of our eyes, when people see there is a way out only to have it snatched away in a couple of hours in the formation of a programme for Government, that is worse than what has gone on in the past.

We have not heard much of the famous catchphrase that was used throughout the election campaign, namely, the five-point plan. The first point was the provision of 100,000 jobs and a stimulus package of €7 billion. This does not appear in the programme for Government.

*(Interruptions).*

**Deputy Tom Hayes:** Did Deputy Doherty read the programme for Government? There is more to it than that.

**Deputy Pearse Doherty:** It is clear that in the week that was spent discussing the programme for Government — this is why the incoming Taoiseach does not deserve the support of the House — there was greater concern about how to give a finance portfolio to the Labour Party than about how the promised 100,000 jobs would be created. There are no details in terms of

the greatest issue facing the country, that is, how to get people back to work. However, there is no lack of detail and timeframes for how many people this Government will sack. There is no lack of detail on where it will spend taxpayers' money putting water meters into every house so it can fleece the people more. There is no lack of detail about how the bondholders, the gamblers who are not guaranteed by this State, will get paid back. For these reasons I believe the nominee for Taoiseach does not deserve the support of the House.

**A Deputy:** Who would Deputy Doherty put forward?

Question put: "That Dáil Éireann nominates Deputy Enda Kenny for appointment by the President to be Taoiseach."

The Dáil divided: Tá, 117; Níl, 27.

Tá

Bannon, James.	Healy-Rae, Michael.
Barry, Tom.	Heydon, Martin.
Breen, Pat.	Hogan, Phil.
Broughan, Thomas P.	Howlin, Brendan.
Bruton, Richard.	Humphreys, Heather.
Burton, Joan.	Humphreys, Kevin.
Butler, Ray.	Keating, Derek.
Buttimer, Jerry.	Keaveney, Colm.
Byrne, Catherine.	Kehoe, Paul.
Byrne, Eric.	Kelly, Alan.
Cannon, Ciarán.	Kenny, Enda.
Carey, Joe.	Kenny, Seán.
Coffey, Paudie.	Kyne, Seán.
Collins, Áine.	Lawlor, Anthony.
Conaghan, Michael.	Lowry, Michael.
Conlan, Seán.	Lynch, Ciarán.
Connaughton, Paul J.	Lynch, Kathleen.
Conway, Ciara.	Lyons, John.
Coonan, Noel.	McCarthy, Michael.
Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.	McEntee, Shane.
Costello, Joe.	McFadden, Nicky.
Coveney, Simon.	McGinley, Dinny.
Creed, Michael.	McGrath, Mattie.
Creighton, Lucinda.	McHugh, Joe.
Daly, Jim.	McLoughlin, Tony.
Deasy, John.	McNamara, Michael.
Deenihan, Jimmy.	Maloney, Eamonn.
Deering, Pat.	Mathews, Peter.
Doherty, Regina.	Mitchell O'Connor, Mary.
Donnelly, Stephen.	Mitchell, Olivia.
Donohoe, Paschal.	Mulherin, Michelle.
Dowds, Robert.	Murphy, Dara.
Doyle, Andrew.	Murphy, Eoghan.
Durkan, Bernard J.	Nash, Gerald.
English, Damien.	Naughten, Denis.
Farrell, Alan.	Neville, Dan.
Feighan, Frank.	Nolan, Derek.
Ferris, Anne.	Noonan, Michael.
Fitzgerald, Frances.	Ó Ríordáin, Aodhán.
Fitzpatrick, Peter.	O'Donnell, Kieran.
Flanagan, Charles.	O'Donovan, Patrick.
Flanagan, Terence.	O'Dowd, Fergus.
Gilmore, Eamon.	O'Mahony, John.
Grealish, Noel.	O'Reilly, Joe.
Griffin, Brendan.	O'Sullivan, Jan.
Hannigan, Dominic.	Penrose, Willie.
Harrington, Noel.	Perry, John.
Harris, Simon.	Phelan, Ann.
Hayes, Brian.	Phelan, John Paul.
Hayes, Tom.	Quinn, Ruairí.

Tá—*continued*

Rabbitte, Pat.  
 Reilly, James.  
 Ring, Michael.  
 Ryan, Brendan.  
 Shatter, Alan.  
 Sherlock, Sean.  
 Shortall, Róisín.  
 Spring, Arthur.  
 Stagg, Emmet.

Stanton, David.  
 Timmins, Billy.  
 Tuffy, Joanna.  
 Twomey, Liam.  
 Varadkar, Leo.  
 Wall, Jack.  
 Walsh, Brian.  
 White, Alex.

## Níl

Adams, Gerry.  
 Boyd Barrett, Richard.  
 Collins, Joan.  
 Colreavy, Michael.  
 Crowe, Seán.  
 Daly, Clare.  
 Doherty, Pearse.  
 Ellis, Dessie.  
 Ferris, Martin.  
 Flanagan, Luke ‘Ming’.  
 Halligan, John.  
 Healy, Seamus.  
 Higgins, Joe.  
 Mac Lochlainn, Pádraig.

McDonald, Mary Lou.  
 McGrath, Finian.  
 McLellan, Sandra.  
 Murphy, Catherine.  
 Ó Caoláin, Caoimhghín.  
 Ó Snodaigh, Aengus.  
 O’Brien, Jonathan.  
 O’Sullivan, Maureen.  
 Pringle, Thomas.  
 Ross, Shane.  
 Stanley, Brian.  
 Tóibín, Peadar.  
 Wallace, Mick.

Tellers: Tá, Deputies Paul Kehoe and Emmet Stagg; Níl, Deputies Aengus Ó Snodaigh and Catherine Murphy.

Question declared carried.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Before I ask the Taoiseach to move the suspension of the sitting, I wish to inform the House that, in accordance with precedent, when the Dáil resumes Members on my left shall take their seats on my right and those on my right shall take their seats on my left.

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** Ba mhaith liom comhghairdeas a dhéanamh leis an Teachta Enda Kenny ar bheith tofa mar Thaoiseach. Guím agus tá súil agam go mbeidh rath Dé ar a chuid oibre as seo amach.

I wish Deputy Kenny every success in his role as Taoiseach. During the long period he has spent as a Member of the House he has witnessed many changes and considerable progress. He has always been motivated by the highest public spirit and commitment in office and I am sure that will continue to be the case. I wish health and happiness to the Taoiseach’s family, particularly his wife, Fionnuala, who has been at his side and who has given him tremendous strength. Those of us on this side of the House who are members of Fianna Fáil remember her fondly because some years ago she was our party’s press officer. We wish both the Taoiseach and his wife well.

On a personal level, the Taoiseach and I have always enjoyed a good relationship. I aim to continue that strong personal relationship, particularly as all of us involved in politics share a common desire to show a better and good face to the people.

**Deputy Gerry Adams:** Déanaim comhghairdeas leis an Taoiseach agus guím ádh mór air, ar a pháirtí agus ar a bhean chéile, Fionnuala, agus a chlann. Is mór an onóir dóibh seo. Mar a dúirt mé cheana, ní aontaím le gach aon rud, ach ní rud pearsanta sin. Is ár dtír é an t-oileán seo. Go n-éirí an t-ádh leis an Taoiseach agus comhghairdeas leis arís.

**Deputy Finian McGrath:** I congratulate Deputy Kenny on being elected Taoiseach and I wish him well. It is a great honour for him, his family and his party. In the context of the general election, he obtained a mandate through the combination of the two parties. When it comes down to the nitty-gritty, I will challenge many of the policies that will be put forward. However, this is the Taoiseach's day and I wish him well.

**The Taoiseach:** Ba mhaith liom comhgairdeas a dhéanamh leis an Cheann Comhairle as a bheith tofa mar Cheann Comhairle. Mar duine atá ag freastal anseo le blianta anuas agus mar dhuine a bhfuil eolas aige faoi chúrsaí polaitíochta, tá a fhios agam go ndéanfaidh sé sár obair ar son cúrsaí polaitíochta sa Teach seo agus thar ceann na Baill anseo.

I thank Deputies Harris and Conway for proposing and seconding my nomination for election to the position of Taoiseach.

I thank Deputy Martin, as leader of the Fianna Fáil Party, for his words, in particular those in regard to Fionnuala. Were she still with Fianna Fáil, it might be in a much stronger position today. Bhí mé ag éisteacht leis an Teachta Joe Higgins. Ní aontaím leis ar chor ar bith gur feall é seo ar mhuintir na hÉireann. Beidh mé i dteagmháil leis an Teachta as seo amach. Tá a fhios agam nach rud pearsanta a bhí i gceist ag an Teachta Gerry Adams agus é ag caint ar son Shinn Féin. Beimid ag díospóireacht faoi chúrsaí polaitíochta anseo as seo amach. Tá mé buíoch dóibh siúd uilig a labhair ar son na dTeachtaí Neamhspleácha as ucht a bhfuil ráite acu. Lá mór é seo do na daoine atá tofa don chéad uair, dá gclanna agus dá lucht leanúna. Guím rath Dé ar a gcuid oibre. Tá súil agam go mbeidh neart acu ag freastal ar an dTeach seo leis na blianta romhainn.

The Ceann Comhairle's experience, coupled with his exemplary commitment to politics and what it stands for, is an outstanding example of what is required of the person who holds the honourable position he now holds in terms of the upkeep of the good reputation of politics and the proper conduct and effectiveness of what we say in this House.

I thank all Members, including those who spoke either for or against my nomination, for the honour bestowed on me today. I stand here with a deep sense of gratitude and humility. I am mindful of the task we begin, that of rescuing our economy, resuscitating our reputation and restoring our society. Also, because we stand on the threshold of fundamental change, there is equally another task, namely, that of renewal of what political leadership in Ireland should be about, leadership that cherishes responsibility over privilege, public duty over personal entitlement and conscience over convenience. I must begin all of this in what are some of the most economically difficult days since Ireland's independence. I do not say this to be negative or excusing but to be real and true, to tell the truth of the Ireland of today.

From this seat and that which Deputy Martin now occupies people like W. T. Cosgrave, John A. Costello, Liam Cosgrave, Eamon de Valera, Seán Lemass, Jack Lynch, Garret FitzGerald, John Bruton and others bore good and honourable witness to the state of our country and people. I include in their proud company my late father, Henry Kenny, and my mother who is watching these proceedings today. They walk with me every step of this heart stopping journey. For me, and for Fionnuala and the children, they represent the nobility, decency and very soul of the Irish people and because they do, their spirit is with us on this important day, signifying that we are one people, ancient and new, on a journey, a single journey of continuous transformation. Philosophers say our horizons are not fixed but travel with us as we go, distance in time being filled with the continuity of custom and tradition in whose light all that is handed down presents itself to us. It is said that the tomorrow imprinted on our ancestral retina is our today. So, when our children look into our eyes, I want them to see a future where kindness, goodness, dreams and imaginings, strength and belief passed silently and unobtrusively from mother to daughter and father to son over the millennia, merge

[The Taoiseach.]

to create a life of authenticity, honesty, dignity, compassion, brilliance, creativity, purpose, confidence, generosity, affection, laughter and heart, a life where they can plan, hope, dream and live their dreams in their own country.

That our lives and futures are predicated on one thing is true. That is why today I enter into a covenant with the Irish people. In these times of crisis, full of many unknowns, honesty is not alone our best policy but our only policy. The new Government will tell the people the truth regardless of how unwelcome or difficult that might be. We will tell it constantly and unreservedly. It is the only way because the people always have a right to know. I use the word “covenant” over “pledge” and “promise” because I believe the old ways of politics damaged us not alone financially, but emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. The word “covenant” restores a sense of heart, soul and spirit to leadership and our shared national life.

The new Government, a partnership between Fine Gael and the Labour Party, will have at its heart all of those qualities as it begins the task of getting our country working. Our programme for Government is ambitious, fair and truly radical. The Government and the people, working hard and side by side in each other’s interests, will achieve their objectives and because no party has a monopoly on good ideas, we will, in the spirit of inclusiveness and generosity which we want to bring to this Dáil and our Republic, collaborate and work wherever and whenever possible with Members of the Opposition in the interests of our country and people.

This is our country. This is our journey. Yes, we are in times without precedent but I believe that for Ireland this current crisis is the darkest hour before the dawn, that we have a generational lightness of soul, that in the long Hibernian nights on the western edge of Europe we remembered the light that went before, imagined the light to come. We are a people looking always and ever to the possibilities of a new day. That new day is here, a bright new day where there is no gap, where the people and its Government are one again, a day when our people are united in cause. Seamus Heaney said: “You have to try to make sense of what comes, remember everything and keep your head.” We will. Together and for our country let us believe in our future. For Ireland and each other, let us lift up our heads, turn our faces to the sun and, as has been already said, hang out our brightest colours. This is the first day of a journey to a better future. That future will be achievable when Ireland can again take charge of its own destiny, when by the centenary of the 1916 Rising we can prove to be the best small country in the world in which to do business, to raise a family and to grow old with dignity and respect.

**Deputies:** Hear, hear.

**The Taoiseach:** Our people deserve no less. That challenge is truly Ireland’s call. The Government and I intend to answer that call and to make our nation proud, prosperous and respected again. That works starts today.

A Cheann Comhairle, it is now necessary to inform the President of my nomination so that she may appoint me as Taoiseach. I thank Members for their contributions and for the honour bestowed upon me as a citizen and public representative. It is my honour to lead a Government that will rise to the challenge of changing the direction of our country and into the better future of which I have spoken. I thank Members for their contributions in that regard.

Accordingly, I suggest that the Dáil suspend for two and a half hours.

*Sitting suspended at 2.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.40 p.m.*

**Business of Dáil**

**Deputy Paul Kehoe:** I propose, with the approval of the House, that the sitting be suspended for a further 30 minutes.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Is that agreed?

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** I realise people have been busy and that it has been a difficult and hectic 48 hours for everybody but there is only approximately two hours and five minutes allocated for the debate, which is a little short. A number of Members might wish to contribute to the debate on the Cabinet and I would appreciate it if a further 30 to 40 minutes, at least, could be allocated to give them that opportunity. The time allocated is very tight and there have been widespread commitments that there would not be guillotines left, right and centre in terms of debate.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That matter can be raised when we resume.

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** We have endeavoured to have discussions between the Whips. Our party Whip has been trying for 48 hours to have discussions. He had some, but they were very late in the day. It is a serious issue.

**Deputy Paul Kehoe:** A new Government Whip has not yet been appointed——

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** We are very confident for your prospects.

**Deputy Paul Kehoe:** ——but I can assure the Deputy that when he is appointed, he will take the Deputy's views on board.

**Deputy Gerry Adams:** Can we be given an explanation for the request for a suspension?

**Deputy Paul Kehoe:** When Deputy Adams is on this side of the House, he will understand the pressures on a new Taoiseach.

**Deputy Joe Higgins:** There is no problem with a suspension but we must be guaranteed that the two hours and five minutes allocated for the debate on the nomination of the Government will be adhered to because many Deputies wish to speak. Is that clear?

**Deputy Paul Kehoe:** That is agreed.

*Sitting suspended at 4.48 p.m. and resumed at 5.18 p.m.*

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Before we commence, I wish to announce that I have granted recognition to the Technical Group pursuant to Standing Order 120. The group's designated leader, deputy leader and substitute in their absence are Deputies Joe Higgins, Finian McGrath and Shane Ross, respectively.

**Allocation of Time: Motion**

**The Taoiseach:** I move:

That, notwithstanding anything in Standing Orders, the Dáil, shall, if necessary, sit later than 8.30 p.m. tonight and business shall be interrupted on the conclusion of No. 5(a), motion re Standing Order 103 Select Committee and the Dáil shall adjourn forthwith; proceedings on No. 5, nomination of members of the Government, shall be brought to a conclusion after

[The Taoiseach.]

two hours and five minutes and the following arrangements shall apply: the speech of the Taoiseach and the leaders of the Labour Party, Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and the Technical Group, who shall be called upon in that order, shall not exceed 15 minutes in each case, the speech of each other Member, who shall be called upon in the following sequence, shall not exceed ten minutes in each case: Fine Gael, the Labour Party, Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and the Technical Group, and Members may share time; No. 5(a), motion re Standing Order 103 Select Committee, shall be taken on the conclusion of No. 5 and shall be decided without debate; all divisions demanded in the House today shall be taken manually; 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 the Dáil on its rising tonight shall adjourn until 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 15 March 2011.

The following arrangements shall apply in respect of the sitting of the Dáil on Tuesday, 15 March: oral and written questions shall not be taken; matters may not be raised under the provisions of Standing Orders 21(3) and 32; Private Members' business shall not be taken; and all divisions demanded in the House shall be taken manually.

**Deputy Gerry Adams:** I take it from what the Taoiseach said that oral questions will not be taken on Tuesday next. If this is the case, why not?

**The Taoiseach:** Normally, on occasions like this the Dáil breaks for approximately two weeks. In this case, I see no reason the Dáil should not be back here on Tuesday next but there is a practical problem regarding oral questions. Obviously this constitutes a major break with tradition and consequently the Government does not propose to take oral questions on Tuesday next.

**Deputy Gerry Adams:** With respect, this is not a big break from tradition. Although citizens wish to see the reformation of this institution, the Taoiseach proposes not to allow oral questions in its first full sitting.

**The Taoiseach:** Not so, Deputy Adams. Were the Deputy to look back at the record of the last 50 years, it would show that on each occasion when a new Government has been appointed, the break was for at least two weeks. In this case, we will return on the first available opportunity, that is, next Tuesday, to deal with certain matters and to make changes to enable Deputies on all sides to get on with their business.

**Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin:** What matters?

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** What is important is that people are interested in meaningful reform. If Members are talking about changing the way they do things, there must be substance but it seems that we are getting optics and gesture politics. In other words, the fear on the Government side is that it should come back, lest something is said about it otherwise. Members need to know that something of substance will be on the agenda next Tuesday and that this is not simply about image and playing gesture and optic politics. I suspect this to be the case and I seek the agenda for next Tuesday. Will legislation appear before the House next Tuesday or is there a specific topic to be discussed? I am for meaningful political reform and changing how Members actually do things. I made the point during the campaign and in previous weeks that

there is no point in having additional sittings if Members continue to do the same Punch and Judy show. Some substance is required in this regard.

**Deputy Jerry Buttimer:** That is what the Deputy is doing now.

**Deputy Liam Twomey:** The Deputy is well practised.

**The Taoiseach:** I thank Deputy Martin for his earlier comments. The first thing to happen next Tuesday will be Leaders' Questions, at which the Deputy can ask a question more meaningful than the one he has just asked.

**Deputies:** Hear, hear.

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** A Cheann Comhairle, I simply ask what is the agenda for next Tuesday. While the Taoiseach has stated that oral questions would not be taken, he now has stated there will be oral questions.

**The Taoiseach:** No, Leaders' Questions.

*(Interruptions).*

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** At the outset, the Taoiseach stated no questions would be taken. I genuinely seek to ascertain who will be present next Tuesday and what will be the agenda. That is a reasonable thing to ask.

**Deputy Pat Rabbitte:** The state of the country is at stake.

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** As I noted earlier, despite our efforts we have had no engagement with Whips or anything like that.

**Deputy Alan Shatter:** It is a great pity the Deputy did not have an interest in reform for 14 years.

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** It is reasonable to ask this.

**The Taoiseach:** It is entirely reasonable and the reason the Deputy has not had any engagement with Whips is that until we do our business this evening, a Whip has not yet been appointed.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** Hear, hear.

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** We all could meet. That is not a——

**The Taoiseach:** The Deputy will be given a formal agenda. I can tell him that unlike some occasions in the past, Leaders' Questions will be taken next Tuesday, when Deputy Martin can ask anything that comes into his head.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Sorry, I cannot allow debate on this. This is a technical motion.

**The Taoiseach:** Allow me to say that I am not interested either in the Punch and Judy show, which is irrelevant. I am talking about really effective change and Deputy Martin will find that he will have an opportunity to contribute to that and to make this House more meaningful for everyone.



**Deputy Gerry Adams:** A Cheann Comhairle——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Sorry, Deputy I already have allowed you in. This is a technical motion and is not about what business will be taken next week. It is a technical motion to allow the sitting next Tuesday. On that day, Members may raise matters in respect of these items.

**Deputy Gerry Adams:** This is a technical point.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** In between——

**Deputy Sean Fleming:** No Order of Business is proposed.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Sorry, would the Deputy mind sitting down? In between, it is a matter between the Whips to decide on what business is or is not taken. We cannot discuss next Tuesday's business on a technical motion, the purpose of which is purely to put in train the procedures for the sitting next Tuesday.

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** That would be fine, except Members have been asked to accept uncertainty in this motion.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I have tried to be fair and to allow Members a chance to make a comment. However, we cannot have a long debate.

**A Deputy:** They have five years to learn the rules.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Deputy Higgins, on a technical point.

**Deputy Joe Higgins:** I will make a brief comment on the Standing Order. Will the Taoiseach be present to answer questions next Tuesday? Will he tell Members what will be the business of the Dáil? It is not good enough to leave it until next Tuesday. The Taoiseach is making a big fist of meeting next week. It must be meaningful and Members must know what is the agenda in order that they can prepare for it. This is reasonable.

**The Taoiseach:** I thank Deputy Higgins for that concise remark. The answer to the first question is "Yes", as I will be here. The answer to the second question is that the Whips will meet tomorrow to define that agenda. We are waiting to go through these technicalities to appoint formally a Whip and a government with the President's seals of office. Deputy Higgins will be notified of the agenda as soon as that has been fixed tomorrow.

Question put and agreed to.

### **Appointment of Taoiseach and Nomination of Members of Government**

**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 beg leave 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.

This day marks our new beginning. On Friday, 25 February 2011 the people spoke. The outcome of that election is the selection of the 31st Dáil and the mandate received by Fine Gael and the Labour Party to form a government. It is now my duty to place before the House for its approval a new Fine Gael and Labour Party Government to lead our people into a new era for our country

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:

Éamon Mac Giollamoir

Eamon Gilmore.

I also propose to nominate him as Tánaiste.

Mícheal Ó Núnáin

Michael Noonan.

Ruairí Ó Cuinn

Ruairí Quinn

Breandán Ó Húilín

Brendan Howlin

Risteard de Briotún

Richard Bruton

Siobhán de Bhurtúin

Joan Burton

Séamus Ó Duibhneacháin

Jimmy Deenihan

Pádraic Ó Coinín

Pat Rabbitte

Pilib Ó hÓgáin

Phil Hogan

Síomón Ó Caoibheanaigh

Simon Coveney

Proinséas Nic Gearailt

Frances Fitzgerald.

Seamus Ó Raghallaigh

James Reilly

agus

and

Leo Varadkar.

I am reconfiguring the functions of a number of Departments. They will be assigned as follows:

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála

Éamon Mac Giollamoir

An Roinn Airgeadais

Mícheal Ó Núnáin

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Ruairí Ó Cuinn

An Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe

Breandán Ó Húilín

An Roinn Fiontar, Post agus Nuálaíochta

Risteard de Briotún

An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí

Siobhán de Bhurtúin

An Roinn Gnóthaí Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta

Séamus Ó Duibhneacháin

An Roinn Cumarsáide, Fuinnimh agus Acmhainní Nádurtha

Pádraic Ó Coinín

An Roinn Comhshaoil, Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil

Pilib Ó hÓgáin

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt agus Comhionannais agus an Roinn Cosanta

Alan Shatter

An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Mara agus Bia

Síomón Ó Caoibheanaigh

An Roinn Leanaí

Proinséas Mhic Gearailt

An Roinn Sláinte

Seamus Ó Raghallaigh

An Roinn Iompair, Turasóireacht agus Spóirt

Leo Varadkar

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to

Eamon Gilmore.

Department of Finance to

Michael Noonan.

Department of Education and Skills to

Ruairí Quinn.

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to

Brendan Howlin.

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Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation to	Richard Bruton.
Department of Social Protection to	Joan Burton.
Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs to	Jimmy Deenihan.
Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to	Pat Rabbitte.
Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government to	Phil Hogan.
Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Defence to	Alan Shatter.
Department of Agriculture, Marine and Food to	Simon Coveney.
Department of Children to	Frances Fitzgerald.
Department of Health to	James O'Reilly.
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to	Leo Varadkar.

I propose to nominate Maire Whelan SC for appointment by the President to be the Attorney General.

I propose to nominate Deputy Paul Kehoe as Minister of State at Department of the Taoiseach and Chief Whip and Deputy Willie Penrose as Minister of State attending the Government and Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government with special responsibility for housing and planning. Deputy Penrose will attend Cabinet meetings.

Pending completion of the necessary processes for the establishment of the new Departments and for transfers of functions, the existing Departments will be assigned to members of the Government. In putting forward these names for the approval of the House for their appointment by the President, I should like to indicate my thinking about the priorities which my Government will observe.

Today we recreate our proud Republic. Today we think of all the good men and women who have gone before us in this place. We remember especially former taoisigh like John A. Costello, Liam Cosgrave, Eamon de Valera, Seán Lemass, Jack Lynch, Garret FitzGerald, John Bruton and others. Now, a new Government begins the next stage of our Republic's journey, a Government that will work as hard as the people, applying all the talent and vision and heart we have to the betterment of our people and our country.

No nation in the world has such a history of courage in the face of adversity or resilience in the face of challenge. Our task, however, is more than the rebuilding of an economy or the rescue of a reputation. Our task is to create a new context of confidence and drive, to free up our entrepreneurs to create the next wave of great Irish businesses, to persuade and allow our best and brightest to stay with us through the reconstruction of our country and to empower fresh thinking rooted deep in our old traditions.

We have proven ourselves before, at home and abroad, as warriors and peacemakers, educators and artists, workers and thinkers. Now we are again on the threshold of a new era of achievement, prosperity and potential. It will take time and the road ahead is not easy but out of adversity we can and will create a new Ireland filled with ambition, excitement, energy and drive, where we can hope and dream again and where our people are working again.

The Wright report exposed the ritual, cultural application of ruthless, fly-by economics on us all and of successive Governments ignoring advice and warnings and abdicating responsibility in a move so abject that the IMF arrived at our door, and because it did our Republic is betrayed. People are frightened of losing their homes. Parents are rendered speechless at the sight of their children boarding planes to countries where spring is autumn and our today is their tomorrow. Employers are traumatised by laying off staff and shutting down businesses. Workers pray for invisibility as they queue for the dole. Families worry that the neighbours

might see the St. Vincent de Paul calling to their door and dread the postman dropping bills like stealth bombs into the hall.

This truth of the Ireland of 2011 has to be acknowledged and changed and that is the essential challenge facing the new Government and Dáil. Starting today, with an ambitious programme for Government, we will make sure that what was done will most certainly not be done again. We approach the crisis as an opportunity and a chance to reinvent our country and to create a new Ireland that works and is fair and honest.

I said earlier that as Taoiseach I am entering into a covenant with the Irish people to tell them the truth of our situation, however unwelcome. Starting today, I want to close the gap between politics and the people, between Government and the governed. The cynicism, depth of difference, gulf and remoteness of many people in our country from their Government and what it actually means became glaringly obvious during the recent election campaign. I want to renew government in people's hearts and imaginations as a true reflection of their own standards, conscience and values, such as self-awareness, compassion, integrity, respect, dignity, kindness, courage, generosity, affection, authenticity, hope and, especially, truth and trust.

As a new Government we have to deliver on that and get to work on the people's behalf quickly. Within the first 100 days of Government, we will introduce a jobs budget that will help keep families together and our young people at home building their future in their own country. We will cut the lower rate of VAT, halve the lower rate of employers' PRSI and create 15,000 new places in training, work experience and education for people who are currently out of work.

Through NewERA we will revitalise our national infrastructure networks of water, energy and broadband to create thousands of new jobs and increase our competitiveness. We will stop any further transfer of assets to NAMA. We will set up a strategic investment bank and new mechanisms to deliver credit to small businesses. We will start to reduce the deficit by having no increases in income tax and by renegotiating the IMF-EU deal, a deal that is bad for Ireland and Europe.

Critical to all of this is reform of how our country works. That is why we will introduce the most ambitious ever programme for reform since the foundation of the State. We will start at the top with the political system. With the people's approval, we will abolish Seanad Éireann. We will reduce ministerial salaries and abolish severance pay. We will open up Government, ban corporate donations and establish a constitutional convention to give Ireland a Constitution fit for the 21st century.

Under this programme for Government, there will be a new Department of public sector reform. We will make the system smaller and more efficient by cutting employee numbers without compulsory redundancies. We will give front line staff more power to make decisions and bring in new personnel to strengthen the senior Civil Service. In the vital area of health we will introduce universal health insurance, starting with the gradual introduction of free general practitioner care. When universal health insurance is fully completed Ireland will have, for the first time in its history, a single-tier health system where everyone is equal. The treatment will depend on medical need and not ability to pay.

Yes, this is an ambitious, complex plan but we share a disposition to radically change the way the country works. The next chapter of our history requires a leap of faith, one we have to take together. It requires faith that we can better ourselves, faith that we can renew Government and faith in a confident, shared future for ourselves, our children and our children's children. Today, as we take the first steps on the next stage of our country's journey, let us be vigilant, compassionate, courageous, truthful and enterprising and where we can let us find and celebrate reasons to be joyful. I believe we can and must. I commend this motion to the House.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** I congratulate the Ceann Comhairle on his election as Ceann Comhairle. I have had the privilege of serving with him and representing along with him the constituency of Dún Laoghaire over a long period. I warmly congratulate him on achieving the office of Ceann Comhairle. I also congratulate every Member who has been returned to serve in the Dáil, in particular the new Members who have been elected for the first time. It is a great privilege and a happy occasion for all of them, their families and their supporters.

It seems a long time ago, but is only 12 days since the people chose to break with the past and fundamentally change Irish politics. The composition of this Dáil is unlike any since the 1920s and the Labour Party's strength in the 31st Dáil is greater than at any time in our history. I am deeply proud of the many gains made by the Labour Party and of its newly elected Deputies, but with these gains come responsibilities. In normal times, the natural role for the second largest party in the State, as the Labour Party now is, is that of constructive opposition. However, these are not normal times. More than any other consideration, what our country needs is a strong, stable and balanced Government to confront the crisis facing our country. For the past ten days, as I have worked with the Taoiseach and colleagues from both parties to form a national government, it is that responsibility that has been foremost in our minds. The Labour Party and Fine Gael are different parties with different values and priorities, but we share a common interest and desire to provide strong, stable and fair government for the people. It is in that spirit that we have come together to form this national Government. As we worked, we have been conscious of the hope and goodwill of the people. Many people have stopped me in the street or called out from a passing car to simply say "Good luck". We are acutely aware that the people want and need us to succeed.

I know how much hope is resting on the shoulders of this Government. In some ways that is daunting, but hope is never a burden. It is only with the goodwill, commitment and hope of the people that we will succeed. We must succeed for the people who are at risk of losing their homes. We must succeed for those who have lost their jobs. We must succeed for the people we met on the doorsteps whose children have left for other shores or who fear that their grandchildren will be strangers. During the past ten days, we have worked to put together a programme for Government that will deliver for those people, that will come up with solutions to make sure that people who make an honest effort to pay their mortgage do not lose their homes, that will ensure we make every possible effort to create jobs and opportunities for those who now have none and that we work to ensure that if people are sick or in fear of being sick, they will have access to affordable and high quality health care.

The programme for Government, on which this national Government is based, is a radical and reforming document. It sets out what will be the hallmarks of this Government, delivering on jobs, on reform and on an agenda for fairness. The national Government is determined to break from the failed economic policies of the past — the blank cheque banking policy that brought our country to the edge of ruin and the failure to take action to create growth and employment. We are determined to ensure that economic policy, while recognising the need for difficult decisions, has growth and job creation at its core. As I have said on countless occasions, neither the fiscal crisis nor the banking crisis can be fixed without growth and jobs.

We can and will work our way out of this crisis. This is a great country, with a great future, but it is up to each of us to make that happen. It is up to us to come together to draw on all of the talent, commitment, hard work and graft we know we are capable of to rebuild Ireland's economy — not in its old image, but to forge a new, sustainable, enterprise economy defined by its readiness for new challenges, new markets and new opportunities. At the heart of that enterprise economy is innovation not just in our universities, laboratories or high-tech companies, but right across our economy — in the agrifood sector, tourism and renewable energy sector — because innovation is the bridge between what is and what can be. Together with

fostering innovation, the Government will put the commercialisation of new research and ideas at the top of its agenda. We are a country with no shortage of ideas. What we need now are the mechanisms to turn those ideas into jobs. As well as developing new goods and services through research and innovation, we must develop new markets in which to sell them. Ireland is open for business. That is the message we will be bringing to the emerging economies in every corner of the world. This will be a core purpose of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, but it will also be the proud duty of every Minister and every representative of the Irish people to repair Ireland's reputation abroad and to ensure that Ireland never again finds herself friendless and without allies when storms gather on the international horizon.

This will be a reforming Government. The programme we have drawn up contains a radical reform agenda, covering our Constitution, the political system and the public service. This crisis marks the third time since the Second World War that our country has been beset by a profound economic crisis. We cannot continue to lurch from one disaster to the next. We must reform our system of politics and administration to provide the Irish people with the stable and forward-looking Government they deserve. We must change our politics and make them more open, less susceptible to special pleading and more accountable. We need a Parliament that works and that holds the Executive to account and we need to break down the huge gap that has opened up between the political system and the people it is supposed to serve. There is no place in this Government for golden circles. This will be a fair Government. We know that there are difficult decisions to make, but in that process we also have an opportunity to build a fairer Ireland. We must restore our economy and in doing so leave a legacy for the future. Nowhere will that be more obvious than in how we treat our children.

I am proud that the programme for Government makes literacy a national cause, just as I believe it is right that the Minister with responsibility for children should have full Cabinet rank. The programme for Government contains within it an historic commitment by both parties to end the apartheid that has bedevilled our health service for decades. It is a commitment that both parties made in Opposition to end the two-tier system. That is reflected in the programme as a core priority for the next five years. Anyone who reads the programme for Government will see that it contains ideas and proposals from both parties, many of which we had in common at the outset of our discussions. It is a pragmatic document that focuses on what will work and is an ambitious document, because it has to be. The scale of the task is so great, the crisis so deep and the urgency so pressing that only an ambitious programme will meet the need of the times. Labour Ministers will approach their task in the same spirit. They are, all of them, men and women who have given distinguished service to the cause of Labour and the cause of Ireland. They are, each of them, people of judgment and integrity. They are infused with Labour's values and will be champions of those values in everything they do, because that is who they are. They are people too who have always put the national interest first and who will work in a spirit of partnership to pursue that interest. I am deeply proud that the Labour Party has today nominated the first woman to hold the position of Attorney General.

No one in the Labour Party is under any illusions about the scale of the task ahead. No one in the Labour Party doubts that there will be dark and difficult days ahead. No one in the Labour Party believes that we have anything ahead of us except hard work and hard choices. However, we believe that we can govern in a new and different way and that if we are open, honest and transparent and that if we stay in touch with and true to the people who elected us, we can channel their goodwill and good wishes in the days ahead.

I want to say a particular word of congratulations to the Taoiseach on what is a great day for him and his family. We have worked to form a new Government based on partnership and

[Deputy Eamon Gilmore.]

trust. We are resolved to work together to confront the crisis in our country but also to restore trust in politics itself.

The Government has the largest parliamentary majority in living memory. It has a huge mandate from the people who voted for Fine Gael or for the Labour Party, but we should also be profoundly conscious that others did not. There is only one Government, which will act in the interests of the people as a whole. That is why this Government will be open to hearing the proposals and the ideas not just of the Members of the Government parties, but of every Member elected to this House. All of us are here as equals and all of us represent a free people who voted as equals. None of us has a monopoly on wisdom or on solutions. The Government, in which my party and I will play our part, has much to do but all of us in this House have a constructive role to play in making sure we make this a better country for everyone.

**Deputy Micheál Martin:** Comhghairdeachas ó chroí do na Teachtaí uile atá roghnaithe mar Airí. Guím gach rath orthu san obair rí-thábhachtach atá le déanamh acu. Seo lá bróduil dóibh siúd agus dá gclann. Táim cinnte de go dtabharfaidh said seirbhís fiúntach don tír seo.

I congratulate the Deputies who have been nominated to become Ministers. It is a great honour to have the opportunity to serve one's country as a member of Government. It is a mark of their achievements to date and a belief in the contributions they can make in the future. They have every reason to be proud, something which will be justifiably shared by their families and the legions of supporters whose work lies behind every successful Deputy. I wish them all well in their work.

Many Deputies opposite will no doubt be disappointed by the tough choices the Taoiseach and Deputy Gilmore had to make in recent days. Given the Taoiseach's previous commitment to limit the number of Ministers of State to 12, only a handful of positions remain. However, the work to be done during this Dáil will be more than enough to provide opportunities for every Member to make a serious contribution, no matter what position he or she holds.

The political journey Deputy Gilmore has taken up to this point has certainly been eventful and has involved a considerable evolution in his thinking. He has led the Labour Party into government and he was correct in stating that the public did not want single party government. I wish him well in his portfolio. In taking office in the Department of Foreign Affairs, he is assuming a challenging role in addition to his party political responsibilities. Our relationships with our European partners are much stronger than outlined in much of the self-serving rhetoric we heard from candidates during the election campaign and again in recent days. He will find many ready allies who are informed on Irish issues and who are supportive of our goals. Clearly, he will have to change his tone and rhetoric from that which he employed during the election campaign. He will quickly discover that it is not "Labour's way or Frankfurt's way" and he will learn that Mr. Trichet is more than a "mere civil servant".

Deputy Gilmore will also find that preparations are well under way for Ireland's chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe next year. This is the largest regional security group in the world and the only place key issues are discussed by many of the states involved. Given the high esteem in which we are held in diplomatic circles, we were asked to assume the chairmanship of this body in 2012. Large and small states alike were anxious that we should do so. This exposes the rhetoric we have heard in the past few days as disingenuous and inaccurate. We will be fully supportive of an ambitious approach to our chairmanship next year.

I welcome the transfer of trade responsibilities to the Department of Foreign Affairs, a move I have advocated for some time and one which was included in our manifesto. After becoming leader of Fianna Fáil, I appointed a spokesperson on foreign affairs and trade to my Front Bench. Deputy Gilmore will, therefore, have in one place all the necessary policy functions as well as an embassy network, which is vital to maximising our trade opportunities. Our diplomatic missions are strong and they are of a high calibre. The Deputy should be mindful of those who will snipe at them from time to time and who will seek to undermine them in terms of costs and so on. We have had an effective diplomatic network over the years and it will continue to be so. We need to protect and enhance it in terms of our global footprint in the months and years ahead. Given the scale of trade issues that will be addressed in the next few years, this part of his responsibilities will take up quite an amount of his time.

The new Tánaiste will also find a Department as active as ever in pushing forward our deep engagement with the cause of reconciliation on this island. Much of this work never appears in the media, but it is vital. The achievements of recent years in securing sustained progress were hard won and could easily be lost. It is the fundamental role of our Minister for Foreign Affairs to make sure that we never take our eye off the ball and that we always fulfil the unique role our Government has of representing the views of the majority of the people of this island in favour of peaceful politics, active reconciliation and, ultimately, unity. I commend to Deputy Gilmore the work under way to reach out to marginalised communities on both sides and to groups who would not in previous times have seen the Dublin Government as worthy of talking to.

The economy and reform of the public sector will rightly be the central focus of both the Government and the Dáil during this term. The sheer number of key decisions that have been parked rather than addressed in the programme for Government is striking. We welcome the agreement by the parties to abandon their election proposals for this and next year and to accept the fiscal aggregates set out in our national plan for recovery. However, what happens beyond next year is not some distant issue. Many of the key decisions required to hit targets in 2013 must be taken this year. Equally, the issue of giving greater certainty about the recovery of the public finances is essential to the recovery of confidence in the wider economy. The active assertion of Labour Party representatives that everything after 2012 remains to be negotiated may comfort their members but it is ominous for a government that has showered itself with praise even before taking office.

Uncertainty about fiscal policy is matched by a financial policy which is getting less clear by the day. A decision of some sort on NAMA and bank recapitalisation will be taken in the months ahead. However, it has not been stated how it will be reached. The programme for Government appears to combine a commitment to implement agreed plans and a commitment not to implement them. The hybrid proposals include the Labour Party's pet idea of a strategic investment bank which would, as proposed, require €20 billion in funding from some unknown source. There are many questions about this proposal. It is completely lacking in detail. The people will wonder at the wisdom of the State acquiring yet another bank, especially since the programme for Government commits to a "smaller banking system".

The proposal to split the Department of Finance's expenditure functions between two Cabinet Ministers is difficult to understand or accept. The notion that one Minister will be responsible for setting public expenditure figures and another for implementing them appears to come primarily from a failure to agree who should get the Department of Finance. The practical issues that could emerge are enormous and the accountability issues need to be addressed by the Taoiseach without delay. It is easy to set an overall budget target but meeting



[Deputy Micheál Martin.]

that target requires hundreds of individual decisions. Basic planning of budgets requires drawing on the expertise of people who oversee spending in the different areas. These officials work on both the formulation of budgets and their oversight. There is no proposal in the programme for Government to completely remove the requirement for a “Finance sanction” before specific spending programmes can proceed and, therefore, this work will go on.

To whom will the officials dealing with both formulating budgets and sanctioning spending report? Given the major staffing reductions being proposed, there will be no room for duplication. Which Minister will be responsible to this House for the Estimates — the one who announces the figures or the one who oversees them? How can it be a step towards greater accountability if a Minister is to cease to be responsible for the administering of his or her own policy? How will the clear statutory obligation for Cabinet Ministers to be independent in their responsibilities be met? The need for a greater political focus on the planning and implementation of public spending would have been better dealt with by the adoption of a model similar to Britain’s where the Chief Secretary to the Treasury fulfils this role but is clearly under the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Making this person a “super-junior” Minister would have given it the appropriate Cabinet presence.

The decision to have a full Cabinet Minister in charge of public sector reform is more understandable and more easily achieved.

Many serious proposals will fall to Deputy Howlin as we move forward. He will no doubt understand the potential limitations on the role which were evident in the period up to the abolition of the previous Department of the Public Service in 1987.

I welcome many of the public sector reform proposals contained in the programme for Government. In particular, I welcome the support of Fine Gael and Labour for the Croke Park process which we put in place. The proposed figure for reducing public sector numbers appears to be based purely on the fact that it falls half way between Fine Gael’s election promise and a figure which is based in reality. I do not believe that the extra thousands of jobs to be cut will not impact on front line services. If these figures are to be realised they will impact on such services.

The election rhetoric referred to 145 quangos being quashed. The programme for Government does not tell us in specific detail which ones will be abolished. People were promised a bonfire of the quangos and now we are being presented with 16 new bodies in the programme for Government. I know the Government will bring these plans before the House for proper scrutiny before proceeding with them.

I wish Deputy Bruton well in taking on the role of Minister for Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation. The Deputy will be taking over a Department which has been responsible for that part of the economy which has been the most robust during the recession. The nature of enterprise is that it is dynamic — many of the enterprises which will create the most jobs in five years time may not even exist today. I welcome the new Government’s decision to accept the innovation strategy which we prepared and also the individual initiatives which have been proposed.

One of the biggest changes in the Department since Deputy Bruton held the post in 1997 is that it has become a driving force in science and technology. A majority of inward investment projects are now research-based, and the potential for many thousands of new direct and indirect jobs to flow from the science and technology area is clear.

I add a note of caution. I am concerned by the fact that the new programme for Government makes no clear statement of support for the basic research work which makes every other part of the system possible. Any attempt to redirect to other areas the basic research funding which has been earmarked for the next four years would be reckless — akin to removing the found-

ations of a building but expecting it to remain standing. It is clear that people are fearful given the text of the programme in that regard. It is fair to say that in the previous decade there has been a complete transformation of the research landscape in this country. The Government should continue not just to protect but enhance the area as a fundamental pillar of economic growth and job creation in the future.

Deputy Reilly will today become the first former head of the Irish Medical Organisation to become Minister for Health. While the Dutch model appears to have been quietly dropped, the proposal which has been agreed between Labour and Fine Gael represents the hybrid he railed against recently. In describing the model, Deputy Reilly said, “I can’t think of a worse nightmare”. I have said all along to the Deputies opposite about this proposal that they have been talking about it for ten years but it is still uncosted, lacking in detail and, if pursued, will undo much of the significant progress that has been made in recent years in cardiovascular and cancer care treatment and the development of tertiary services. I look forward to us having an early opportunity to debate the health plans in this House.

Given the amount of specific proposals for reform of Dáil proceedings which were put forward by all parties during the election, as well as the many that are in the programme for Government, the incoming Chief Whip will have an even more busy time than normal. He will be the chief daily link between Government and the Dáil. I wish him well and look forward to a constructive relationship.

It would be a good start to implementing Dáil reform if we could quickly agree a process by which proposals can be finalised. We will not accept any proposals which would limit the opportunities of Opposition spokespersons to table and ask multiple questions or to marginalise Private Members’ business by having it on Fridays. Given the explicit commitment of the incoming Government to respecting the role of the Opposition, we assume that Fine Gael and Labour remain open to discussions about alternative proposals for reform.

We personally wish the newly appointed members of the Cabinet every success. As I said this morning, we will be both assertive and constructive in Opposition. When we agree with a policy, we will support it. When we do not, we will oppose it and will set out a credible alternative. We will put the economic renewal of the country first. We will be vigilant, and will hold the new Government to account to ensure that it continues the process of change and recovery which we began.

**Deputy Gerry Adams:** Comhghairdeas leis na hAirí nua and to the recycled ones as well. Go n-éirí an t-ádh leo. Mar a dúirt mé níos luaithe, is onóir mór é dóibh agus dá gclanna. Tá mé fíor bródúil bheith anseo inniu mar Theachta do Lú agus oirthear na Mí agus mar cheannaire ar Shinn Féin. Is mór an onóir dom guth a thabhairt dóibh siúd nach bhfuil ionadaíocht acu sa Dáil. Ar feadh níos mó ná 30 bliana, bhí mé mar ionadaí ar son pobal iarthar Bhéal Feirste. Go dtí seo, áfach, ní raibh duine as an taobh sin den tír tofa anseo.

I am very proud to stand here as an Ulsterman, as an Irish republican from County Antrim. It is a great honour to represent Sinn Féin in any capacity but it is especially gratifying to receive a mandate from one’s peers.

Ba mhaith liom ár mbuíochas a ghabháil le gach aon duine a thug vóta do Shinn Féin agus a d’oibrigh ar son Shinn Féin. I especially commend our candidates, including the republican Deputies present today, and our families. For almost 30 years I represented the people of West Belfast. I am humbled and appreciative of the heroism, generosity and courage of that community. I am equally honoured to represent the citizens of Louth and east Meath and alongside our councillors there I will continue the pioneering work of my predecessor, Arthur Morgan,

[Deputy Gerry Adams.]

in that dáilcheantar. It is also a great honour to be part of the Sinn Féin team in the Oireachtas. We will build upon the project started in this House by Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin in 1997.

Sinn Féin is an Irish republican party. Our primary political goal is a united Ireland. Our focus in the new Dáil will be to advance that goal and to deliver on our manifesto to the very best of our ability and to hold the Government to account. Ní mise an chéad duine ó Bhéal Feirste a thoghadh mar Theachta Dála. Thirty years ago this June my friend Kieran Doherty, a political prisoner on hunger strike in the H Blocks of Long Kesh, was elected as Deputy for Cavan-Monaghan. Another prisoner, Paddy Agnew, was elected for Louth. Others, including Kevin Lynch, Martin Hurson and Joe McDonnell received sizeable votes in other constituencies. Cara eile liom, Mairead Farrell, whose anniversary is this week, stood in Cork North Central. Bobby Sands was returned as MP for Fermanagh-South Tyrone.

Sinn Féin is part of a proud continuum of struggle for a real republic, for freedom and equality, and against oppression which goes back to 1916 and beyond. That oppression visited upon our people by a foreign government in past times was unacceptable and the economic oppression suffered by citizens under a native Government in these times is just as unacceptable. Caithfear stad a chur leis. Níl mórán de dhifríocht idir pholasaithe Fine Gael agus polasaithe Fianna Fáil. An bhliain seo caite, tugadh cibé cuid de ardcheannas an Stát seo a bhí fágtha don EU agus don IMF.

In the election for the 31st Dáil the people voted against corruption, sell-out and economic oppression. They voted for change. The Fine Gael Party in particular benefited from that desire for change but the reality is that Fine Gael and Labour's programme for Government implements Fianna Fáil's policy. Despite their promise of "new ways, new approaches and new thinking", the Government offers little of that. The Fine Gael and Labour programme is a far cry from the democratic programme of the first Dáil. That document declared that sovereignty extends "not only to all men and women of the Nation, but to all its material possessions, the Nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the Nation". Our natural resources, especially our oil and gas, which are worth billions of euro, have been given away.

It was Luke Kelly who asked:

For what died the sons of Róisín? Was it greed? . . .

Was it greed that drove Wolfe Tone to a pauper's death in a cell of cold wet stone?

Will German, French or Dutch inscribe the epitaph of Emmet,

When we have sold enough of Ireland to be but strangers in it? . . .

[Ceist mhór an lae inniu.]

To whom do we owe our allegiance today? . . .

To those brave men who fought and died that Róisín live again with pride. . .

Or the faceless men who for mark and dollar,

Betray her to the highest bidder. . .

The First Dáil was committed to a programme to improve the "conditions under which the working classes live and labour". There is no whisper of this in the 2011 programme for Government.

The reality today is that more than 100,000 children in this State live in poverty, some 450,000 people are unemployed and 1,000 citizens are forced to emigrate every week. Families who

cannot afford their mortgage repayments fear eviction. Sinn Féin, and I call on every Deputy in this House to join us, will oppose the eviction of any family from their home. Social protections have been slashed to satisfy the diktats of our new international masters. The universal social charge, welfare cuts and stealth taxes mean people cannot pay their weekly bills. The ghost estates that litter our countryside stand as monuments to corruption and greed. The programme for Government does not tackle any of this. It is a right-wing programme driven by a resurgent, right-wing Fine Gael Party. It commits the Government to implementing Fianna Fáil's austerity programme and to the absolute lunacy of pouring public money into toxic banks. Access to vital public services such as health care, child care and education is determined by ability to pay rather than social need.

There is no meaningful jobs stimulus to push the economy out of recession. Instead there are increased charges on low and middle-income families in the form of water and property taxes. There will be a sell-off of strategic State assets to multinational companies whose sole interest will be profit. Irish citizens will pay the price. The Government is determined to cut 25,000 public sector jobs and to undermine further our public services and our small and medium native businesses. In short, this is a Fine Gael programme for Government supported by the Labour Party.

Voters were told during the election campaign that they should vote "Gilmore for Taoiseach". Sinn Féin warned that anybody voting for the Labour Party would get Fine Gael. That is what happened. Mar shampla, feicfidh teaghlaigh atá ar mheán ioncain agus ar ioncain íseal íocaíocht i bhfoirm cánacha ar uisce. Ach tá bealach níos fearr ann. Is é sin, seasamh suas ar son mhuintir na hÉireann agus ar son na hÉireann. Caithfear saoirse eacnamaíochta a bhaint amach don tír. Tá saoránaigh ag lorg polaitíochta nua.

Every Deputy who has spoken agreed that citizens want new politics. There is an alternative. There is the possibility of politics which empower and include citizens, politics which do not pander to the elites and to the greedy but which seek to build a new kind of Ireland. That means making a stand for Ireland, standing up for our country and our people. If politics are reduced to this Chamber then we will have the old politics. Sinn Féin will campaign on all these issues in and out of this Parliament and across this island. I am calling on citizens to make a stand for themselves, for their neighbours, for their communities, for the vulnerable, and for the disadvantaged.

This is a time for active citizenship, for democratically and peacefully asserting our rights as citizens. It cannot be left only to this Parliament. There is no more important time, no more relevant time than this, for republican politics and core republican values. The people of this island are no mean people. We live in a great country. There is a genius, a brilliance, a wisdom and culture, history and tradition in our communities. We need to build on those. Caithfear tógáil ar na buanna iontacha seo. Agus déanfaimid teaghlaigh tuaithe agus cathrach a gcosaint.

Sinn Féin will also oppose Fine Gael's efforts to downgrade the Irish language. We will defend working families, both urban and rural. We will demand that this new Government holds a referendum on the banking bailout. If the Government expects the people to pay then it must give the people their say. We will campaign for the abolition of the universal social charge and will hold the Government to its promise to reverse the cut to the minimum wage. We will oppose, tooth and nail, the introduction of household water charges and property tax on family homes. We will also oppose attempts to sell off or privatise State assets or public services, including the health service. Sinn Féin will continue to put forward constructive costed proposals for the creation of jobs. Getting Ireland back to work is the only way out of this recession. It is vital that politicians lead by example. In this regard, Sinn Féin will introduce legislation within 100 days to cut Ministers' salaries by 40% and Deputies' salaries by 20%.

[Deputy Gerry Adams.]

Ireland is greater than the Twenty-six Counties. As such, we will also raise issues of importance to people in the North and will expose the economic and political damage being done by partition in both states on this island. Partition makes no political or economic sense whatsoever. It is a barrier to prosperity. On the other hand, a united Ireland makes sense. A single-island economy makes sense, economically and politically. Above this Chamber flies the flag of this nation — all Thirty-two Counties — the flag of green, white and orange. The future unity of our people is represented in those colours. Sinn Féin is proud of the leadership work of the Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, and our team in the Northern Ireland Assembly. This Government must actively support the peace process and the historic mission to make friends with our Unionist neighbours on the basis of equality.

Our commitment, as the oldest political party represented in this House, as we seek to repair the damage done by a bad Fianna Fáil-Green Party Government and to confront the poor policies this new Government will seek to implement, is to make progress on all of these fronts. The Taoiseach talks about recreating our proud Republic. That means giving expression to the words of the Proclamation — *Forógra na Cásca* — and the democratic programme of an *Chéad Dáil* which demands freedom, demands sovereignty and demands the empowerment of citizens across all Thirty-two Counties. It means moving beyond rhetoric. Change never comes easily. Politics and life are a matter of choices. Those of us — I am sure there are others outside our party — who stand by the Republic, the real Republic, a new truly national Republic, will have our work cut out in this institution. However, despite the distress, there is a vitality which cannot be extinguished. The Irish people may be bruised but we are not beaten. We are not broken. We are unbowed. There is hope, and because of that everything is possible.

**Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan:** I propose to share time with Deputies Joan Collins, Thomas Pringle and Clare Daly.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is agreed.

**Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan:** Ar dtús, comhghairde leat, a Cheann Comhairle, agus leis an Taoiseach agus leis na hAirí uile. Tá súil agam go n-eireoidh leo sna poist nua atá acu. There are undoubtedly major challenges for the country, for the Government and for this House. Earlier, the Taoiseach made the point about making our nation respected but the first challenge is to regain the respect and trust of the people. In his last speech as Taoiseach, Mr. Brian Cowen made the point about politics being an honourable profession. However, in recent years we have seen the opposite, to the point where politics had become dishonourable. This dishonour came from the cronyism, cartelism and the downright lies told to the people, for example, that the banks only had a liquidity problem, that Anglo Irish Bank was fundamentally sound and the lie from the Merrill Lynch report that Irish banks were profitable and well capitalised. This House, the Government and the political system must regain the respect and trust of ordinary families, the young, the disabled, those on social welfare and those on the margins who have been badly served and are paying heavily.

Action not rhetoric is needed. I call on the new Ministers for action and meaningful political reform to eliminate quangos, an end to appointments based on political friendships and action on ending the culture of expenses, bonuses and excessive salaries. I am keen for us to retain our natural resources for the good of the people. I am keen to see action on implementing A Vision for Change’s proposal for mental health, to maintain our commitment to overseas aid, action on social inclusion and putting the good of the community at the heart of plans and policies and, finally, action on *ár teanga, ár cultúr agus ár n-oidhreacht a chosaint*.

Like the late Tony Gregory, whose seat I took, I stood on the principles of social justice and fairness. Those terms have become so bandied around they are almost like clichés. However, there are many places in the constituency of Dublin Central and throughout the country where there are examples of social injustice, unfairness and significant social inequality. I am conscious of the phrase that the more things change, the more they stay the same. It is a real challenge for the House to bring about real, significant change which is meaningful and not simply rhetoric.

**Deputy Joan Collins:** It is official: the grand coalition of cuts has presented itself to the nation today. The election was a referendum on the cronyism, corruption and economic policies of Fianna Fáil. I support the call for a referendum on the IMF-EU deal. This austerity package has been carried on by Fine Gael and the Labour Party. It has hit the majority of people, especially women. It is important to put this point on the agenda today because women have faced cutbacks in health, public services, education, pay packets and their work. It was not surprising that the first group of workers attacked in respect of the change in the minimum wage were non-national women in the Davenport Hotel. They had to go outside that hotel to demand back the previous minimum wage. They have done so successfully and they won to the degree that the incoming Government gave an indication that it would reverse the decision to cut the minimum wage by €1. I put it to the Labour Party that we must see more of this. This is why the Labour Party should be over here with us calling for such changes, including the reversal of the universal social charge.

People have no wish for a change of faces, a point made time and again. People seek policies to put the needs of the people before the greed of developers and bankers. They seek policies that do not cut into their livelihoods. Instead we have stealth taxes while there are no wealth taxes. People seek policies that can give hope to communities but I do not believe the national recovery plan gives such hope to communities.

The United Left Alliance seeks a radical change in the direction that puts people before profit. Ministers may be assured that as they go about their business in the Dáil they will face real, principled opposition from the United Left Alliance Deputies. I put it to the Minister and leader of the Labour Party, Deputy Gilmore, that he can be assured that he will face placards in the streets because that is what is needed to stop the austerity programme that is coming down on the ordinary people. The Labour Party has betrayed the desire of the people for change and it will pay heavily for so doing. The people are out there, they will not go away and the Labour Party must face them again.

**Deputy Thomas Pringle:** Ba mhaith liom comhghairdeas a dhéanamh leis an Taoiseach agus an Tánaiste ar a bheith tofa agus leis na Members of the Government. I listened with great interest to the Taoiseach's speech earlier today in the House and at the start of this session. I also listened to the Tánaiste's speech. Unfortunately, I do not see the same rhetoric, wishes and desires as represented by their contributions today in the programme for Government, which is remarkably disappointing. The programme for Government, if implemented, will be directly at odds with the words of the Taoiseach and Tánaiste in the House today, to the detriment of the ordinary people of Donegal South-West and the entire country. As other speakers stated, the programme sets out the introduction of new quangos of which we were informed we would see the abolition. There will be 14 new quangos created under the programme for Government and this will entail more political appointments for the Government side of the House. This side of the House will work to ensure the abolition of the universal social charge takes place.

Fine Gael gave a commitment during the election campaign that within the first 100 days of office it would restore full cancer services to Sligo General Hospital. I intend to work to ensure this takes place and to hold the Government to this promise.

[Deputy Thomas Pringle.]

Along the west coast, in particular in Donegal South-West, our fishing communities have suffered greatly at the hands of the European Union. I welcome the statement in the programme for Government that the Government will go to Europe and fight on behalf of our fishing communities. I sincerely hope the new Government will fight a good deal harder than the previous Government with regard to the IMF-EU bailout. If the Government gives in as easily as the previous Government in the renegotiations, it does not auger well and may herald the death-knell for our fishing communities. We can revitalise the west and south coasts of the country and that of Donegal South-West in particular by achieving a fair deal for our fishing communities and ensuring these communities can grow and play their part in the revitalisation of the country.

Unfortunately, the programme for Government lays out the privatisation of our health services and sets up the privatisation of our water services through the creation of a single water utility for the country. This is the first step along the road of handing over control of these vital resources, which are for the good of the entire community, to private interests. This would be to the detriment of everyone in our communities and I call on the Government to ensure this does not take place. Privatisation of health services and water and the sale of State assets would be to the detriment of every man, woman and child working in the country and, ultimately, would lead to greater costs, inequality and inequity in our society.

We must all work to achieve a country that benefits everyone, where everyone has a safety net and where everyone can rely on the State to provide a minimum standard of living. The programme for Government does not set out such aims, which is unfortunate. I will be working with my colleagues on the Opposition benches to ensure we hold the Government to account and to realise a country in which we can be proud to see our children grow and live.

**Deputy Clare Daly:** The Taoiseach is being remarkably understated when he refers to a leap of faith being necessary to convince us that the programme he has outlined somehow heralds a new dawn. The reality is that it would require blind faith and a leap of such epic proportions that Cú Chulainn himself would not be able to manage it. The reason we can state as much with confidence is that the programme the Taoiseach has outlined, woolly as it may be in parts, is virtually identical to that implemented by his predecessors, Fianna Fáil and the Green Party, for which they paid such a heavy and justifiable price at the ballot box.

I put the Government on notice that when it attempts to implement the measures outlined it will face a battle royal in communities and workplaces. It is okay in here today in that there is something of a party atmosphere which is understandable and, perhaps, somewhat deserved. However, we cannot forget the real world. The Chamber must not be divorced from the real world in which so many people are smarting from the harsh economic consequences of the decisions of the previous Government, which put the interests of bankers and speculators ahead of those of ordinary people. I do not see too many people outside Leinster House partying today. Those honest mortgage holders in their modest homes, who felt their solution was in this Government, will find themselves foisted with a home tax and water charges on top of their existing debt burdens. We do not see too many public sector workers celebrating the fact that 25,000 of them will lose their jobs. Neither are there celebrations among the 300,000 workers covered by employment regulation orders, such as those in the catering industry, some of whom greeted us on our way into Leinster House this morning. Their employment terms and conditions are now up for review as a result of the Government's recommitment to the structural reform programme outlined by its predecessor.

As colleagues stated earlier, many in the semi-State sector, from which I came, are not happy and are fearful the only concrete figures for revenue generation proposed in the programme

for Government will come from the sell-off of what the Government parties deem to be non-strategic State assets. The Socialist Party and the United Left Alliance believe all State assets are strategic and important. It is economic lunacy to attempt to dispose of these assets. I assure the Government that its efforts in this regard will be met with vigorous opposition by those of us on this side of the Chamber, by our colleagues in the workplace and the communities which we represent.

When they voted for this Government, people hoped they were voting for change. What they got, however, was more of the same. The Taoiseach should be aware the people will not wait five years to give him the same medicine they gave his predecessor. His programme for Government will be met with active opposition in the real world, the one in which people are not partying today. I give him our pledge that we will be to the forefront in raising these issues in the Chamber and taking the battles in here outside to communities.

I sincerely hope the Taoiseach enjoyed today because his honeymoon will be incredibly short-lived.

**Deputy John Lyons:** I wish to share time with Deputy Arthur Spring.

**Acting Chairman (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** Is that agreed? Agreed.

**Deputy John Lyons:** It is an honour to stand in this Chamber today as a public representative for the people of the Dublin North-West constituency. I feel extremely proud that my family and friends are also here to witness it. I congratulate all Members on their success in being elected to this House to represent the people at this important time, our new Taoiseach, Deputy Enda Kenny, and Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Deputy Eamon Gilmore. I also endorse their selection of new Ministers who have no lack of experience, competency or vision and who, I am sure, will bring a new energy and focus to their respective portfolios.

From knocking on doors during the election, all Members will know of the fear, heartbreak and betrayal that exists across the country. We are here because we listened to those concerns and vowed to do everything we could, if given the endorsement, to chart a new course in politics and rebuild the economy in a fair and just way. In this time of great uncertainty, the public now looks to us for the leadership which was lacking in recent years. That absence of leadership reinforced a feeling that politicians were detached from the lives of ordinary people whose voices were not heard.

I have lived all my life in the Dublin North-West constituency. I sought election because I know of the impact of decisions made in this House on communities such as mine. I come from Ballymun, a community often marginalised and stigmatised. It is one in which young people are more likely to drop out of school, work in low-paid jobs and live in social housing. I understand the real consequences of the decisions made in this House on such communities. As a teacher I worked with young people in Finglas and Ballymun for 11 years. Over that time, I have seen the hopes and expectations of our young people change considerably. During the boom times, the students I taught had high expectations of a secure and prosperous future after leaving school. Today, young people face an uncertain future in a society blighted by unemployment and emigration.

What has not changed, however, is the potential of our young people, a fact which must not be forgotten. I am an example of what belief and investment in our young people can achieve. As a Member of the Government side, I want to ensure a similar belief and investment is shown to all our young people again.



[Deputy John Lyons.]

As has been said many times, we are a society as well as an economy. The focus on our economy in recent years has been to the exclusion of any discussion on the vision for our society. That, in turn, has created an impression in communities in north-west Dublin that their concerns are secondary in importance to the banking and fiscal crisis. The people in these communities know the gravity of this situation and that difficult decisions will have to be taken to ensure our future economic security. They are willing to put their shoulders to the wheel, however, if they see the burden shared fairly. Members of this House must play their role by leading the people they represent and seeking an equitable approach to our fiscal problems.

I am proud the programme for Government prioritises a fair approach to these economic challenges. As the US President, Mr. Obama, stated when calling for consensus, “no party has a monopoly on wisdom”. An approach based on the combined abilities of Labour and Fine Gael reflects a balanced and fair move towards renewing our civic society and economy. The promise this new Government gives is for a collective approach based on fairness and hope.

Our challenges are great. However, we must remember it is not the challenge that defines us but rather the way in which we respond to it. Over the coming years, we must never lose sight of what we were asked to do on the doorsteps during the recent election — to ensure Ireland is a prosperous and secure place in which to grow up, live and grow old. To achieve this, we, who now have the privilege to sit in this House, must serve with humility, compassion and a commitment to seeking the best future for all those we represent.

I am happy to support this motion. I look forward to supporting the Government in its efforts to bring change and recovery to the country.

**Deputy Arthur Spring:** Last Tuesday I entered Leinster House for the first time, feeling energetic and enthusiastic. I also felt very privileged to have been empowered by the people of north Kerry and west Limerick to undertake what is undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges the Dáil and this country has ever seen. Prior to becoming an independent State, we endured the Famine and its effects. Since then, we have put war and terrorism in this country to rest. I have no doubt the new challenges will be faced by politics to the fore.

The Labour Party and Fine Gael speak on behalf of the people. When we called at people’s doors during the recent election, we understood the levels of anger, fear and hardship experienced across the country. All that, however, is energy which must be harnessed. By doing so and using our core competencies, we will be able to achieve a great deal more in this country.

Passion is needed as well as pride of place with an understanding of what we can do and have achieved in the past. Collective action is required within this House and outside of it. Every citizen has a role to play in correcting what has gone wrong. Historically, the International Monetary Fund has only entered countries in which conflict occurred or which declared themselves bankrupt. For Ireland to regain its confidence, a frame of mind similar to that found during times of war must be adopted. We also need goodwill from the press and the Opposition. Ireland is faced with enormous challenges. When one hears people speaking lightly of default, one must remember Ireland is a modern trading country not a commodity-trading one like some in Africa or South America. It does not have autonomy in respect of its currency but it has friends in Europe in respect of which it can exert leverage. The Tánaiste designate, Deputy Gilmore, visited Europe last weekend and made a number of friends there. We will have allies again. The new Taoiseach visited Helsinki and gained allies and rebuilt bridges.

Greece, Portugal, Spain and Ireland are experiencing some form of economic difficulty at present. Our country is in trouble and some 130,000 people have emigrated. I wish to convey

a message to the latter. The individuals to whom I refer engaged in politics like never before and they are educated, informed and passionate. However, they became frivolous in their outlook because politics became inconsequential to many of their lives over a period. Now, they see that a particular form of leadership is required in order to restore the country to the position it should occupy.

Some 130,000 people are looking to this Government and stating that they want to return to Ireland because it is they who have the potential to drive the economy. There is no doubt that when people leave the country now, it is not as if they are going abroad for one year in order to travel and work. Those who are leaving are selling that which they own. Some of them are looking at returning in the distant future when their grandchildren have been born. I say to these individuals that they should go abroad, up-skill and return because we are going to provide them with a platform from which they can move forward by encouraging development in the areas of tourism, energy, agribusiness and micro-enterprise.

It must be remembered that above all else our people have passion. Leadership is what is required and I am happy to endorse the new Government in that regard. Those who will serve in it possess experience. However, they also have behind them the many young people who are sitting on these benches today who have ideas and who have access to those with ideas. We are going to make this country a better place but people must recognise that we are starting from a point that is below zero. There is no doubt that when we return Ireland to a position of parity, we have the talents to make it a better country. The young Deputies to whom I refer will work with those in government and *vice versa*. As a result, this country will be a better place. I commend the motion to the House.

**Deputy Michael Noonan:** Well done.

**Deputy Willie O’Dea:** I sincerely congratulate the new Ceann Comhairle, Deputy Barrett, on his election. As a man of integrity, I am sure he will jealously guard the independence and integrity of the high office to which he has been elected in our parliamentary democracy at a time of national crisis. I also sincerely congratulate each member of the new Government. On a personal level, I wish them very well. I particularly wish to congratulate my constituency colleague, Deputy Noonan, who, deservedly, is being appointed Minister for Finance. There are supposed to be two Ministers with responsibility for finance but henceforth Deputy Noonan will become known in Limerick as the real Minister for Finance in the same way the late Jack Lynch was known in Cork as the real Taoiseach.

**Acting Chairman (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** Is it Deputy O’Dea’s intention to share time?

**Deputy Willie O’Dea:** I intend to give a minute or two to Deputy Niall Collins.

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** Business as usual.

**Deputy Willie O’Dea:** I wish to commiserate with my other constituency colleague, Deputy Jan O’Sullivan, who did not make the cut. I want to make a special plea to the Tánaiste designate on the Deputy’s behalf. Deputy Jan O’Sullivan would make an outstanding Minister of State and the more important the Department to which she is appointed the better. I hope my recommendation will not damage her chances in any way.

I congratulate my colleague from the *Sunday Independent*, Deputy Ross, who made an outstanding contribution during the debate on the motion relating to the election of the Taoiseach. The Deputy is one of the few unkind individuals who work for the *Sunday Independent* and who are determined not to grant the new Government any honeymoon period whatsoever. In an article by Mr. Jody Corcoran in last Sunday’s edition of the newspaper, Deputy Ross is

[Deputy Willie O'Dea.]

quoted as saying in respect of Fine Gael and Labour that “their 14 years in the political wilderness of opposition have united them in one common mission: power. To hell with policy, it is time to divide the spoils. Spoils first, policy later”. As someone from the less cynical wing of the *Sunday Independent*, I hope that is not true. It would be a bad day for Ireland if it were.

It was also stated that in the article to which I refer that an unnamed senior Fine Gael Deputy is quoted as stating that “If we hand over the public sector to Labour the game is up, we will be finished before we start”. Another senior Fine Gael Deputy is quoted as saying, “If Fine Gael lets Labour have the public sector, it’s over for us, game, set and match”. We can conclude from this that at least two senior Fine Gael Deputies and, I suspect, many of their supporters are going to be extremely unhappy this evening because what they feared has come to pass.

While I wish the new Administration well and while I welcome some of the recommendations contained in its programme for Government, it is only right that I should seek elucidation in respect of a number of matters. The first of these relates to the target of reducing the deficit to 3% of GDP by 2014 in Fine Gael’s case and by 2016 in the case of Labour. The difference between the two dates has now been split. On the surface, this might appear logical. However, the Minister for Finance designate, Deputy Noonan, for whose judgment I have the highest regard, previously stated — in quite unequivocal terms — that a two-year extension in respect of reaching this target would add €5 billion to the national debt and approximately €300 million per year to the interest repayments relating to that debt. The timeframe has been extended by one year and this appears to indicate that Deputy Noonan has accepted — as the price of forming a partnership — that we should add between €2.5 billion and €3 billion to the national debt. The resulting interest payments would enable us to purchase three or four sets of electronic voting machines per annum. Everyone will recall the great furore which accompanied the initial purchase of such machines.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** Deputy O'Dea should not mention the war.

**Deputy Willie O'Dea:** I agree with the criticism levelled at a former Fianna Fáil colleague who stated that €50 million was not a large amount of money. It is a large amount but it certainly pales into insignificance beside the additional €3 billion those opposite are prepared to oblige taxpayers to pay in order that Fine Gael and Labour can form a Government based on cosy consensus.

It is strange — even inexplicable — that the size of the adjustment that is going to be required is missing from the programme for Government. The Labour Party previously stated that an adjustment of €7 billion would be required, while Fine Gael indicated that it would be of the order of €9 billion. There is a significant difference between these two amounts. Why the silence? Will the scale of the adjustment be €7 billion or €9 billion? Will the person who will be replying to the debate on the Government’s behalf indicate what will be the exact amount?

Fine Gael has worked out a very complicated system of weighting with regard to tax increases and public expenditure cuts. The proposed split in this regard is of the order of 72-28. The Labour Party previously stated that the split absolutely had to be 50-50. Inexplicably, the programme for Government is also silent on this matter. What will be the actual split? This matter goes to the heart of economic policy and we are entitled — on behalf of the people — to seek an answer to the question I have posed.

The programme for Government contains a commitment to the effect that current social welfare rates will be retained. This appears to be a simple enough proposition. However, another section of the programme commits the new Administration to implementing recom-

mendations relating to the elimination of disincentives to employment that are to be put forward by a commission on tax and social welfare which it is proposed to establish. If the commission recommends a reduction in social welfare rates in order to create incentives which will, in turn, generate employment, what will happen to the commitment contained in the programme for Government? Is the Government in a position to provide an unequivocal commitment to the effect that — regardless of the recommendations put forward by the commission to which I refer — it will adhere to its promise to retain current social welfare rates?

One can argue the point regarding the minimum wage both ways. I take Deputy Noonan's point that only 4% of workers are in receipt of the minimum wage. However, he conveniently ignores the fact that the level of this wage has a significant impact on higher wage rates. The change to the minimum wage is not the only labour market reform proposed in the programme for Government. There is also a commitment in respect of joint labour committees, JLCs. Will the opinion of the European Commission be sought in respect of the proposed changes to JLCs? The necessity to seek the Commission's opinion is part of the so-called bailout deal but there is no reference to it in the programme for Government.

The programme contains another rather messy compromise in respect of public sector reform. I recall Deputy Burton stating, with great vehemence, that reducing public service numbers by anything above 18,000 would involve cuts to front line services. According to the programme for Government, it appears those opposite are accepting that the numbers in the public service will have to be cut by at least a further 7,000. This will undoubtedly lead to cuts to front line services. An overall reduction in numbers of 25,000 will require redeployment on a fairly significant scale. The Croke Park agreement makes provision for the Government to force redeployment on people, in other words, to oblige them to move from one branch of the public sector to another. Is it the Government's intention to use this power?

As a result of the time constraints which apply, I am not permitted to refer to the promise which resonated from one end of the country to the other in respect of reducing the membership of this House by 12% or 20 Members. That promise has disappeared into the Bermuda triangle. What we have been presented with is a promise that the matter will be reconsidered when the forthcoming census has been completed. That is fair enough but does not reflect what those opposite were saying last week.

Fine Gael previously argued vehemently to the effect that the number of Ministers of State should be reduced to 12. However, it appears that its stance in this regard was relaxed even before the Government was formed. That was another strong opinion weakly held.

I will not even comment on the proposed bonfire of the quangos. The proposal to abolish or merge 145 quangos strangely and mysteriously disappeared in a puff of smoke when the time came to draft the programme for Government. Instead, 26 new quangos are to be established. A programme for Government that resiles from a promise to abolish 145 quangos and proposes the establishment of 26 new ones hardly leaves one bursting with enthusiasm.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** It is hoped Deputy Niall Collins can improve on Deputy O'Dea's contribution.

**Deputy Alan Shatter:** He is lucky to get a word in.

**Deputy Niall Collins:** I thank the Acting Chairman for the opportunity to contribute to this debate. I congratulate Deputy Seán Barrett on his election as Ceann Comhairle and wish him well. Also, I wish everybody elected to this House well given the serious job of work we have to do. I thank the people who gave me a renewed mandate to represent the people of County Limerick in Dáil Éireann. I am greatly appreciative of the opportunity afforded to me.

[Deputy Niall Collins.]

On Limerick and the mid-west region, I congratulate and wish well, as did the previous speaker, the new Minister for Finance, Deputy Michael Noonan, and Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs, Deputy Jimmy Deenihan. It is important the mid-west region is represented at Cabinet level.

We have heard much about the programme for Government. It has been hailed as a national Government approach, which I find ironic given that the backbone of it is the four year plan. There was no talk of a national Government prior to the election. The NewERA policy document fanfared by Fine Gael and laterally described as a public relations add-on contained no mention of Limerick or the mid-west region and neither does the programme for Government.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** It deals with regeneration. The Deputy should read it.

**Deputy Niall Collins:** We will be looking to the new Ministers from the mid-west region to deliver for the mid-west and Limerick.

**Deputy Michael Noonan:** I wish to share time with Deputy James Reilly.

**Acting Chairman (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** Is that agreed? Agreed.

**Deputy Michael Noonan:** I congratulate the Taoiseach and Tánaiste on their nominations and, in particular, the Taoiseach on his appointment by the President to the office of Taoiseach. It is extraordinary and unprecedented, in historic terms, for a Taoiseach to be elected in this House with a majority of 90 votes. I do not believe it has ever happened before. Whatever can be questioned in terms of Government policy no one can question the mandate of this Government as we set out on the long road ahead.

I thank the Taoiseach for nominating me to the position of Minister for Finance, in which office I hope to do my best and to succeed. I also thank Deputies O'Dea and Niall Collins for their complimentary remarks. The new Independent Deputies who have entered this brave new world should take note that they will not have it all their own way when Deputy O'Dea lets loose. He can be as entertaining and colourful as any of the new Members.

I always learn from elections. I have been through ten general elections and three local elections. I am always refreshed following an election. On this occasion, the country was reduced to two constituencies, those people who primarily were concerned about the future of the country, whether we will survive, if there will be work here for their children, whether they will be able to pay their bills and wondering if the Irish story has finished for a generation in penury. These people spoke about the bondholders, the disaster in the banks, the 450,000 people who are unemployed, and the 50,000 young Irish people emigrating every year and wondered whether anyone could get us out of the mess created by the outgoing Fianna Fáil-Green Party Government. The second constituency is even more interesting. For them the election was totally personal. All Members will have been approached by people wondering if their loved ones in wheelchairs would continue to have carers, whether, as a result of pension cuts, they would be able to continue to pay their bills and others who purchased a house at the height of the market and now have unsustainable mortgages because a spouse has become unemployed and they are living on only one income.

For me, the lesson of the recent election is that there are two constituencies to which the programme for Government must respond. That was the driver behind the programme for Government. As well as restoring the economic health of the country and having proposals to ensure growth and jobs in the economy, we must protect the most vulnerable in society and ensure that the correction is not made on the backs of the people who are so weak they cannot

bear it. It is not easy. Members will have heard from the contributions made by the Taoiseach and Tánaiste that a programme for Government has been put together, a programme which provides hope and optimism and points a clear way to the future. As leaders of their respective parties the Taoiseach and Tánaiste received a mandate from the people, which mandate was reflected today when the Taoiseach was elected by a majority of 90 votes. It is not going to be easy going forward.

When one contrasts the speeches made by the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste with the negativity of the Opposition it is clear why Members on this side of the House got the mandate and those on the Opposition side did not. Fianna Fáil bears all the appearance of survivors of a ship wreck who have swum to a rock and are looking around for other survivors. There are few survivors. Analysis from the Independents, whom I congratulate and welcome to the House, is all about the pain, suffering and difficulties brought about by the economic recession. However, I have not yet heard a single idea from them in regard to how anything could be changed for the better. They have cited dozens of ways they are going to stop us taking action but have not put forward a single statement which suggests an alternative way forward. This also applies to Sinn Féin who historically polish up the old grievance, afraid that it will go away because it is the *raison d'être* of their existence. They bring the patriot dead such as Emmet and Wolfe Tone as witnesses——

**Deputy Dessie Ellis:** Fine Gael has forgotten them.

**Deputy Martin Ferris:** And Frank Stagg.

**Deputy Michael Noonan:** ——and then go down the road of negativity, always looking back rather than forward. Sinn Féin can only tell us what it is going to block, stop or prevent us from doing and how it will do so here and in the communities but it has not put forward a single idea. Perhaps they might read Jonathan Swift who said that the true measure of a person who sought leadership was if he or she could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before.

**Acting Chairman (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** The Deputy's time has concluded.

**Deputy Michael Noonan:** That is the problem on that side of the House. I appeal to——

**Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin:** Gulliver's travels.

**Deputy Michael Noonan:** ——Members on that side to be more positive and to join us——

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** Hear, hear.

**Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin:** The Deputy's time is up.

**Deputy Michael Noonan:** ——in the task of rescuing this country.

**Deputy Joe Higgins:** The biggest conversion since Saul.

**Deputy James Reilly:** I congratulate Deputy Kenny on his appointment as Taoiseach. I believe he has proven himself as a leader and will prove to be a great Taoiseach for this country and all the people in it. I also congratulate Deputy Gilmore on his appointment as Tánaiste.

I would like to comment briefly on some of the contributions made to date. Deputy Martin alluded to my quotation that "I cannot think of a worse nightmare". Sadly, it is to be politics as ever as he spins on an issue. That quotation related to the HSE as second insurer along with the VHI to the exclusion of all others. One will not see that in our health care document, which

[Deputy James Reilly.]

is true to what we have been promoting around the country. It is a proposal which I believe the bulk of Irish people support. I am pleased to say it also mirrors the Labour Party document and as such is now the coalition document.

This is a new beginning for our nation. This will be the most reforming Government since the foundation of the State. We will reform the economy and the way it operates. We will reform the public sector so it can deliver the excellence which it and the people in it are so capable of delivering. We will reform politics and the way it works, and make it relevant and answerable to the people. We will create the jobs that are necessary to get our people back working, and reform the health service so it can deliver timely, safe and equitable care to all our citizens. No more will one's health outcome depend on where one lives or what one can afford. I assure the Irish people that this Government will implement our health policy as it has been mandated by them to do. No group, regardless of how powerful it perceives itself to be, will be allowed to frustrate the will of the Irish people. That said, I look forward to a co-operative approach with all those involved in the delivery of health care in this country. We have excellent people and we have the resources. This Government will bring the leadership necessary to achieve the reorganisation and management required to deliver the service the taxpayer has paid for and which our citizens deserve.

I am honoured to have been chosen by the people to serve and I am eager to serve them. We will give the people the Government they deserve, a Government that will serve their needs and no other.

**Deputy Mary Lou McDonald:** I wish to share time with Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin.

**Acting Chairman (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** Is that agreed? Agreed.

**Deputy Mary Lou McDonald:** Ar dtús, ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le gach duine a vótáil ar son Shinn Féin ar fud na tíre. Is mór an onóir domsa a bheith tofa do Bhaile Átha Cliath Láir agus is mór an onóir do gach Teachta i bhfoireann nua Shinn Féin sa Dáil seo a bheith tofa ag an bpobal.

I am pleased to make my first contribution in the House as an elected Deputy. Although new to this Chamber, I have a sense of *déjà vu*. We have heard all the rhetoric about openness, transparency, honesty and feeling the pain of the little people previously. In fact, we had long exposure to such talk during the recent general election campaign. I take the Taoiseach at his word that he wishes to deal with the people in a spirit of honesty. I believe he is sincere in that. Therefore, let us start today as we mean to proceed.

Let us honestly state that the salaries of the Taoiseach and his colleagues in the Cabinet are too high and must be cut, and that the vicious cutbacks in social welfare and the imposition of the universal social charge are crippling families. A review of the universal social charge is vastly insufficient; it must be abolished. Let us also be honest enough to say that the current programme for Government, regardless of how it is dressed up, is essentially Fianna Fáil-lite. It is essentially the four year plan. The Government's plans to reduce the structural deficit to 3% by 2015 will mean further crushing blows to the working class and working families throughout the State. If that is what the Government plans to do, and it appears to be so from its document, in that spirit of honesty it should be up front from the first day of its Administration.

The Government says it will not cut social welfare rates but in the next breath it says it will not raise taxes. It shares the neuralgia and paranoia of its predecessors about saying quite openly that those who have more must pay more, and that the reservoirs of wealth in the hands

of a minority in the State must be tapped at this critical time. I have a problem with the Government's honesty agenda because I cannot take it seriously when it speaks about supporting and assisting people on low incomes. It is its clear intention to walk the path laid down by its Fianna Fáil and Green Party predecessors. It is deeply frustrating that the Taoiseach will not, in his spirit of honesty, at least be upfront in that regard.

The Taoiseach met Chancellor Angela Merkel and is due to meet other leaders on the European scene in the coming weeks and months. Some of his colleagues in government appear to have a deep sensitivity about staying friends with our European partners. It is far more important that all Members here and particularly the Government understand their absolute obligation to represent the needs and interests of the citizens of this State first. That is the job. The cosy relationship the Taoiseach might have with Angela, Nicolas or Mr. Barroso is very much a secondary concern.

All of us are agreed that this is a great country, there is very heavy lifting to be done and anybody who holds ministerial office at this time will have their work cut out for them. However, it is the contention of Sinn Féin that the policy programme of the previous Administration and the one outlined by the current Government in recent days is wrong. It will deepen the hardship and the recession. It will not reduce the dole queues. For that reason alone, we will argue against tough austerity measures that target low and middle income people. We believe it to be not only unfair and unjust, but also economically counterproductive.

**Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin:** Ar dtús ba mhaith liom comhghairdeas a rá le gach Teachta ar bheith tofa ag an bpobal san olltoghchán. Déanaim comhghairdeas ach go h-áirithe leis na Teachtaí nua-thofa i ngach páirtí.

The real focus today should not be on the personalities of the Government but on the programme for Government. One can say with regard to the programme agreed by Fine Gael and the Labour Party that the bus has a new driver and even, perhaps, a new coat of paint but it is still travelling in the same direction, which is the wrong direction. The roadmap was drawn up by Fianna Fáil, the IMF and the ECB. If Fine Gael and the Labour Party continue in this direction they will assuredly drive us all over the cliff, just as if Fianna Fáil and the Green Party had remained at the helm. What was the timeframe of the Fine Gael and Labour Party drafters when they drew up this programme for Government? It was definitely not the next generation, let alone the next five years. It was clearly 6 March 2011, as they had to have the document carried by the Labour Party conference.

Behind all the fudges and ambiguities in the text, this programme for Government is a dolled up version of the Fianna Fáil and Green Party four year plan. It is as much the work of former Taoiseach Brian Cowen and Deputy Brian Lenihan as it is of the Taoiseach, Deputy Enda Kenny and Deputy Eamon Gilmore. It is based on continuing with the IMF-EU sell-out deal and continuing to pour public money into zombie banks. Instead of rejecting out of hand the IMF-ECB deal and the four year plan of further savage cuts and agreeing to make the senior bank bondholders pay, Fine Gael and the Labour Party have signed up to the Fianna Fáil and Green Party consensus for cuts. That consensus was already in place last November when the Green Party announced it would pull out of Government. What followed was a travesty of democracy, when a doomed Government with no political mandate proceeded with its four year plan, the IMF-ECB deal and the savage budget of 7 December 2010. All this was put in place before the general election.

There can be no doubt that the people voted for change, but Fine Gael and the Labour Party were at one with the outgoing Government on its basic flawed economic strategy. That



[Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin.]

flawed strategy remains intact in its programme for Government. It is far from the claim in the opening paragraph of the so-called programme of a democratic revolution having occurred. This is utter nonsense. Fine Gael fought the election on the slogan “Let’s get Ireland working”, but wanted to axe 30,000 public service jobs. The programme for Government seeks to axe 25,000 jobs. That sums up the balance of power in this Fine Gael dominated Government. I wish the new Tánaiste well, but what has the Labour Party done? It is pure fantasy to pretend that 25,000 posts can be axed without damaging front line public services. In our health system, we already have a staffing crisis in our public hospitals. It is true that the number of administrators, especially senior managers in the HSE, needs to be reduced, but for those who provide health care to the public and vital backup to front line health care providers, the current recruitment embargo needs to be lifted. There is no sign of such a commitment in this programme. It is committed to introducing universal health insurance. Sinn Féin is strongly in favour of universal single tier public health care, not based on the insurance model but based on fair taxation, and calls for an end to the State subsidisation of the private health care industry. The insurance based system in this programme will lead to the further privatisation of health care and to insurance companies being given an undue role in determining the level of care received by citizens.

What happens to health care in the meantime? Will the Government reverse the cuts to acute hospital services at a raft of hospital sites across the State? These are issues which Deputy Reilly raised in opposition. Will he guarantee to reverse them now that he is at the helm of health in the new Administration?

How much time have I left?

**Acting Chairman (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** The Deputy’s time has concluded.

**Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin:** I will conclude and I thank Deputy Kathleen Lynch for her tolerance. I hope it is an indication that she may well be wearing the robes yet as the Leas-Cheann Comhairle.

I welcome the appointment of Deputy Frances Fitzgerald to the new Department of Children. This is an innovative and important development and I welcome the commitment in the programme to hold a referendum on children’s rights, based on the wording agreed by the all-party committee in the last Oireachtas. I thank Deputy Howlin for his nod of assent in that regard. The referendum should proceed this year and it is a major challenge, not only for the Government, but for all parties to give a clear commitment to seeing it on the Statute Book.

We need full and detailed debate on this programme for Government. What has been promised next week, in respect of the various committees and so on, is not enough. I wish Deputy Kenny well as Taoiseach, but we need to hit the ground running. One of the first things we need to highlight is the number of failures in this so-called programme for Government, which is only taking from the leaf of Fianna Fáil and the Green Party. They have dropped the fig leaf; the Government should not do the same.

**Deputy Catherine Murphy:** I wish to share time with Deputies Finian McGrath and Mattie McGrath.

**Acting Chairman (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** Is that agreed? Agreed.

**Deputy Catherine Murphy:** Today is a day of optimism. At the end of the day, we will have a new Taoiseach and a new Government. That optimism is not so much about the personalities

that make up the Government, although that is important. It is about what the new Government will do. That is not the measurement by which we will judge the Government, but by which the citizens will judge the Government. The first thing the Government is asking us to do is to trust it. The first two years of the programme negotiated by Fianna Fáil and the Green Party will largely remain intact. This will impose much more pain on those who are already hard pressed and the discussion earlier about the reaction on the doorstep is something we all understand. It is a leap of faith and is basically a vote of confidence in European institutions such as the Party of European Socialists, the Christian Democrats and the European Central Bank.

This new Government does not propose to separate the bank debt from sovereign debt. It proposes to review the situation in two years. I hope I am proved wrong, but I believe it will be too late at that stage. I can foresee a situation whereby much of the bank debt is paid and so will be included in the gigantic national debt. That debt will impact on the ability to fund adequate public services, to pay pensions and social welfare. It will necessitate a reduction in the living standards through further taxation measures, either direct taxes or stealth taxes. This will impact on ordinary households.

There is a simple issue of justice that has been overlooked. If one causes a problem, one should expect to be punished for causing it. If one was not part of causing the problem, it is difficult to understand why one is being punished. I am sure that was raised with Government Deputies on the doorsteps. It was certainly raised with me on the doorsteps.

I am a democrat, and while I sometimes do not like the result of elections, I always accept the verdict of the people. I wish the new Government well. I think it needs to be very lucky. The make-up of the new Dáil is very different, but it needs to act differently. I intend to support those measures I believe are in the interests of the country and in the interests of those who elected me. I want to be constructive. I also believe there is a new opportunity to carve new political options. This large and diverse technical group, of which I am a member, might find it tempting to do just that. It is essential not only for the Opposition to be constructive, but it will also be essential for the Government to be generous and constructive. I note some of the comments made earlier in that respect.

I thank those who elected me. I wish the Ceann Comhairle well. I also wish the Taoiseach and especially the Tánaiste, with whom I started my career as a comrade all those years ago, well.

**Deputy Finian McGrath:** I thank the Acting Chairman for allowing me to speak on this important debate about the Taoiseach's appointment of new Ministers to the Cabinet. I congratulate them on getting these major posts and I wish them well in the future. In particular, I congratulate my constituency colleague Deputy Richard Bruton, and I wish him well in his role as Minister for Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation. It is an important day for the Ministers and their families, and I hope to see them delivering on their promises to the people. As an Independent Deputy, I will mark them on their work. I will also put forward solutions to many of the problems facing this country. The areas to which I will pay particular attention are jobs, health, disability, cystic fibrosis, mental health issues, education, small business, the public sector and foreign policy issues. I will also focus on developing the peace process, which will end the division of our people in this country and I will work with all Deputies on this important matter.

People are crying out for hope, change and solutions to our many problems. Members of the technical group have tremendous energy, passion and commitment to their job. They will chal-

[Deputy Finian McGrath.]

lenge these new Ministers. As we have seen already today, the Independent Members have ideas, solutions and a great sense of compassion and social justice. I will also judge the performance of these Ministers and how they deal with the jobs crisis, how they deal with the horrific problems of people on trolleys in accident and emergency departments in our hospitals, how they treat people with cystic fibrosis and disability, and how they treat the weaker sections of society. I will also challenge them on how to implement political and Dáil reform. People are crying out for reform, hard work and honest politics. They want us to build a new country based on equality, respect for difference and diversity, and an island built on social justice for all.

I am honoured and privileged to be re-elected again for a third time by the people of Dublin North-Central. I give a commitment tonight to fight hard for their interests and to ensure that the independent tradition of Noel Browne, Seán Dublin Bay Loftus and Tony Gregory continues, bringing new and independent ideas on policies to the House.

**Deputy Mattie McGrath:** Go raibh maith agat, a Chathaoirligh. I congratulate you on your re-election. I also congratulate the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste, agus na h-Airí go léir. I wish them well, and I hope and pray that this new Government will be able to give the fullest possible resourceful understanding and implementation of the people's hopes, aspirations and entitlements as expressed in the ballot box on 25 February.

I have been very disappointed already that the new Government is back-tracking regarding the renegotiation of the so-called EU-IMF bailout. That must be renegotiated and put to the people by way of referendum. We are already hearing sounds about a reduction in the interest rate, which was too high from the outset. I believe we must go all the way in that regard, and the people must have their say if they are expected to pay. We must renegotiate that rate because it is an albatross around our neck.

There has been a vague commitment to weed out and abolish the scandalous waste associated with the system of governance that has mushroomed in recent decades. I refer to the quangos, State boards and legions of inspectors enforcing legislation and regulation up and down the country. I will be looking for a change to a supporting role for those inspectors to support small business and assist people who are unemployed get back into the workforce and take the initiative to set up their own business. If we are to realise our full potential we must tackle the toxic baggage associated with that.

Where are the commitments in the programme for Government promised recently and during the election? I refer to the cuts imposed on the blind, those with disabilities and carers. The cut in the minimum wage must be reversed, and also the savage cuts at all levels of education. There has been no attempt to change legislation to introduce a maximum wage, which was announced in the last budget but got lost in the Finance Bill. I hope that will be introduced in the interest of fairness, showing leadership and expressing affinity with those people who have no wage or meagre incomes.

I hope the Government keeps its promise to abolish the Health Service Executive and the National Roads Authority. Both bodies were unaccountable to past Governments, elected representatives and anybody else. I hope the reconfiguration process throughout the country, which is the fancy word put on it, will be stopped in its tracks and hospitals like South Tipperary General Hospital will be maintained, enhanced and strengthened.

I will be supporting the Government, and I wish it well, provided it implements sensible, honest and decent policies. I also want to see relief introduced for people who are financially

stretched with mortgage difficulties. They must be helped out. We have NAMA for the rich and for the big developers. We must have some kind of NAMA for the ordinary people. I refer to the people who cannot get credit or are in negative equity. Meaningful efforts must be made to introduce fairness and to have those issues dealt with in the interests of the people.

We must also fast-track personal bankruptcy reform, which is needed to bring us into line with best international standards, and a flexible discharge period for honest, hard-working people who become bankrupt, through no fault of their own, and end up in default. They can be defined as people who are half compliant in terms of tax, NAMA and the Companies Acts, among others.

I will be holding the Government to account. I wish it well but it must live up to its commitments because, above all, the people need hope and inspiration but we also need to have optimism. Go n-éirí go geal libh go léir.

**Deputy Pat Rabbitte:** You will find it hard to compete with that, Finian. You are out-flanked on the populist——

**Deputy Peter Mathews:** I congratulate and give my warmest good wishes to our Taoiseach, our Tánaiste, the designate Ministers, the designate Attorney General and Minister of State. My first day here in Dáil Éireann has been a wonderful experience. The day was blessed, first, with an ecumenical service and, second, with blue skies and sunshine. That is a significant blessing for the work that is ahead of us all.

It is clear from the contributions of everybody here to the debate that there is great goodwill from all sides. That is a great beginning. We have been given a mandate from the electorate to do our best. It is a very big mandate on this side of the House in the partnership between Fine Gael and Labour. It is a surplus of 30 seats, and as Deputy Noonan pointed out, the mandate to the Taoiseach, Deputy Enda Kenny, is a surplus of 90 votes.

We have heard talk of a referendum to address one of the two big messages that came from the doorsteps — the bank crisis and bank debt. However, we have that mandate because of the *ancien régime* or the former state of play in the Dáil, only 20 representatives remain. A total of 166 Members of this Dáil minus the 20 from the *ancien régime* equals the colossal referendum mandate by the people of Ireland. It should be doable and achievable, therefore, to reopen and represent the true state of Ireland to our colleagues and counter-parties in Europe and in the IMF, and to the ECB, who are the main creditors of our banking system. Of that I am confident. If we present the story truthfully and in its true scale, it will be understood better and more fairly by those counter parties in Europe. Of that I am certain.

I would like to remind Members of what Deputy Enda Kenny said about truth and honesty. He said it behoves us all, no matter whether we are in the Government parties, Opposition parties or as Independents, to bring that reality into all the debates and all the Executive actions that follow from those debates in this Chamber. That should be our commitment. In the words and thoughts of Edmund Burke, we are not just delegates for the people who elected us here. We are trustees for them, and as trustees we have to take responsibility and think new ideas, formulate new plans and put them into action.

There is great enthusiasm and energy among all the people here. It was striking and wonderful that the youngest Member of the Chamber proposed the election of the Taoiseach. That in itself is significant. With that enthusiasm and energy, and with the hope that has been expressed here today, I am certain that we have set out on a five year journey with a new beginning and that we will bring our country back to vigour, health and to a place of enjoyment by young,

[Deputy Peter Mathews.]

old and the emigrants who will be able to come back, please God, at the end of this five year term.

I commend the motion to the House. I wish every Member great success in their respective roles as Members of the House. In particular, I wish every good fortune to the members of Government, and especially to our Taoiseach and our Tánaiste.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That brings the debate to a conclusion. I will therefore put the question on the motion: “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, 115; Níl, 26.

Tá

Bannon, James.  
 Barry, Tom.  
 Breen, Pat.  
 Broughan, Thomas P.  
 Bruton, Richard.  
 Burton, Joan.  
 Butler, Ray.  
 Buttimer, Jerry.  
 Byrne, Catherine.  
 Byrne, Eric.  
 Cannon, Ciarán.  
 Carey, Joe.  
 Coffey, Paudie.  
 Collins, Áine.  
 Conaghan, Michael.  
 Conlan, Seán.  
 Connaughton, Paul J.  
 Conway, Ciara.  
 Coonan, Noel.  
 Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.  
 Costello, Joe.  
 Coveney, Simon.  
 Creed, Michael.  
 Creighton, Lucinda.  
 Daly, Jim.  
 Deasy, John.  
 Deenihan, Jimmy.  
 Deering, Pat.  
 Doherty, Regina.  
 Donnelly, Stephen.  
 Donohoe, Paschal.  
 Dowds, Robert.  
 Doyle, Andrew.  
 Durkan, Bernard J.  
 English, Damien.  
 Farrell, Alan.  
 Feighan, Frank.  
 Ferris, Anne.  
 Fitzgerald, Frances.  
 Fitzpatrick, Peter.  
 Flanagan, Charles.  
 Flanagan, Terence.  
 Gilmore, Eamon.  
 Griffin, Brendan.  
 Hannigan, Dominic.  
 Harrington, Noel.  
 Harris, Simon.

Hayes, Brian.  
 Hayes, Tom.  
 Healy-Rae, Michael.  
 Heydon, Martin.  
 Hogan, Phil.  
 Howlin, Brendan.  
 Humphreys, Heather.  
 Humphreys, Kevin.  
 Keating, Derek.  
 Keaveney, Colm.  
 Kehoe, Paul.  
 Kelly, Alan.  
 Kenny, Enda.  
 Kenny, Seán.  
 Kyne, Seán.  
 Lawlor, Anthony.  
 Lynch, Ciarán.  
 Lynch, Kathleen.  
 Lyons, John.  
 McCarthy, Michael.  
 McEntee, Shane.  
 McFadden, Nicky.  
 McGinley, Dinny.  
 McGrath, Mattie.  
 McHugh, Joe.  
 McLoughlin, Tony.  
 McNamara, Michael.  
 Maloney, Eamonn.  
 Mathews, Peter.  
 Mitchell O'Connor, Mary.  
 Mitchell, Olivia.  
 Mulherin, Michelle.  
 Murphy, Dara.  
 Murphy, Eoghan.  
 Nash, Gerald.  
 Naughten, Denis.  
 Neville, Dan.  
 Nolan, Derek.  
 Noonan, Michael.  
 Ó Ríordáin, Aodhán.  
 O'Donnell, Kieran.  
 O'Donovan, Patrick.  
 O'Dowd, Fergus.  
 O'Mahony, John.  
 O'Reilly, Joe.  
 O'Sullivan, Jan.  
 Penrose, Willie.

Tá—*continued*

Perry, John.  
Phelan, Ann.  
Phelan, John Paul.  
Quinn, Ruairí.  
Rabbitte, Pat.  
Reilly, James.  
Ring, Michael.  
Ryan, Brendan.  
Shatter, Alan.  
Sherlock, Sean.  
Shortall, Róisín.

Spring, Arthur.  
Stagg, Emmet.  
Stanton, David.  
Timmins, Billy.  
Tuffy, Joanna.  
Twomey, Liam.  
Varadkar, Leo.  
Wall, Jack.  
Walsh, Brian.  
White, Alex.

Níl

Adams, Gerry.  
Collins, Joan.  
Colreavy, Michael.  
Crowe, Seán.  
Daly, Clare.  
Doherty, Pearse.  
Ellis, Dessie.  
Ferris, Martin.  
Flanagan, Luke ‘Ming’.  
Halligan, John.  
Healy, Seamus.  
Higgins, Joe.  
Mac Lochlainn, Pádraig.

McDonald, Mary Lou.  
McGrath, Finian.  
McLellan, Sandra.  
Murphy, Catherine.  
Ó Caoláin, Caoimhghín.  
Ó Snodaigh, Aengus.  
O’Brien, Jonathan.  
O’Sullivan, Maureen.  
Pringle, Thomas.  
Ross, Shane.  
Stanley, Brian.  
Tóibín, Peadar.  
Wallace, Mick.

Tellers: Tá, Deputies Paul Kehoe and Emmet Stagg; Níl, Deputies Aengus Ó Snodaigh and Catherine Murphy.

Question declared carried.

### **Appointment of Select Committee: Motion**

**The Taoiseach:** I move:

That, notwithstanding anything in Standing Orders—

(1) the Whips shall appoint thirteen members to the Select Committee standing established under Standing Order 103 (which shall be called the Standing Order 103 Select Committee);

(2) a Minister or Minister of State shall announce the names of the members appointed under paragraph (1) for the information of the Dáil on the first sitting day of the Dáil following their appointment;

(3) the Select Committee shall meet where necessary to perform the following functions:

(a) to consider the potential requirement for a reasoned opinion that a draft legislative act does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity as provided for in paragraph (1) of Standing Order 105;

(b) to consider such notifications under paragraph (1) of Standing Order 106 as may be referred to it by Dáil Éireann; and

(c) to consider potential infringements of the principle of subsidiarity as provided for in paragraph (1) of Standing Order 107; and

[The Taoiseach.]

(4) the Select Committee shall have the powers defined in—

(a) Standing Order 83, other than those set out in paragraph (4) thereof; and

(b) Standing Orders 105, 106 and 107.

Question put and agreed to.

The Dáil adjourned at 7.50 p.m. until 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 15 March 2011.