

DÍOSPÓIREACHTAÍ PARLAIMINTE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

SEANAD ÉIREANN

TUAIRISC OIFIGIÚIL—*Neamhcheartaithe*
(OFFICIAL REPORT—*Unrevised*)

Déardaoin, 5 Iúil 2012.

[illegible]

SEANAD ÉIREANN

Déardaoin, 5 Iúil 2012.

Thursday, 5 July 2012.

Chuaigh an Leas-Cathaoirleach i gceannas ar 10.30 a.m.

Machnamh agus Paidir.

Reflection and Prayer.

Business of Seanad

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: I have received notice from Senator Mary White that, on the motion for the Adjournment of the House today, she proposes to raise the following matter:

The need for the Minister for Children to retain the 50 week option in the delivery of the early childhood care and education scheme.

I have also received notice from Senator Kathryn Reilly of the following matter:

The need for the Minister for Education and Skills to discuss the use of the Geographical Information System in assessing the proposal to provide additional permanent accommodation at St. Mary's national school, Virginia, in County Cavan.

I have also received notice from Senator Mary Moran of the following matter:

The need for the Minister for Education and Skills to consider adjusting school transport arrangements for a child with special needs (details supplied).

I have also received notice from Senator Colm Burke of the following matter:

The need for the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government to outline how his Department proposes to deal with the serious flooding that was caused in Blackpool, Park Court, Ballyvolane and Meadow Brook, Riverstown, County Cork, and in particular if a special fund will be established to assist those who are not able to get insurance for flood damage.

I have also received notice from Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh of the following matter:

Go dtabharfaidh an tAire Talmhaíocht, Mara agus Bia eolas maidir leis na leibhéil eitinn atá ann — contaie ar chontae — ar fud na tíre, míniú cén fáth an bhfuil na leibhéil eitinn chomh hard i gcontaetha an Chláir, Iarthar Chorcaí agus Cill Mhantáin thoir agus cé chomh gníomhach is atá cláir fiadhúlra na Roinne maidir le broic a bhfuil an ghalair eitinn orthu a thógáil as na ceantair seo.

I have also received notice from Senator Martin Conway of the following matter:

[An Leas-Chathaoirleach.]

The need for the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to confirm if contracts have been signed for phase two of the Ennis flood relief scheme and to advise on the proposed time frame both for commencement and completion.

I have also received notice from Senator Thomas Byrne of the following matter:

The need for the Minister for Transport to discuss the lack of any public transport service to anywhere from Stamullen, County Meath, the largest town in Ireland without any public transport.

I regard the matters raised by Senators White, Reilly, Moran, Burke, Ó Clochartaigh and Conway as suitable for discussion on the Adjournment and they will be taken on the conclusion of business. The other Senators may give notice on another day of the matters they wish to raise.

I regret I have had to rule out of order the matter raised by Senator Byrne as the Minister has no responsibility in this matter. It is a matter for the National Transport Authority.

Order of Business

Senator Maurice Cummins: The Order of Business is No. 1, the Gaeltacht Bill 2012 — Committee Stage (Resumed), to be taken on the conclusion of the Order of Business and to conclude no later than 4 p.m., if not previously concluded, and business to be interrupted between 1.45 p.m. and 2.15 p.m. Members should note that since last Thursday, eight hours in total have been provided for Committee Stage of this Bill. Yesterday, we spent three quarters of an hour debating whether “shall” or “may” should be included in the Bill. I ask Members to focus on it to allow us conclude at 4 p.m.

Senator Paschal Mooney: Yesterday, a number of Members of this House attended the 4 July celebrations in the Phoenix Park. My colleague, Senator Leyden, paid tribute to our American cousins and wished them well on their Independence Day celebrations.

Following on that, the US ambassador, Ambassador Rooney, who is a great friend of Ireland, is quoted in today’s newspapers as saying that US investors continue to have confidence in Ireland and in the Irish economy. He went on to say that he had travelled throughout Ireland and had visited every county in Ireland. I wish the same could be said of IDA Ireland. Two weeks ago, our finance spokesperson in the other House tabled a parliamentary question on the policies of IDA Ireland. The question concerned the manner in which it goes about its business and whether it attempts to disburse much needed jobs across the Irish economy rather than focusing, as the statistics have indicated, on Dublin, Cork and, to a lesser extent, Galway while ignoring key areas of the country, including my own area of the north west. The north west has haemorrhaged young people, many whom are now contemplating their future after college in an economy that is failing to provide jobs.

I raised the issue at the time but I wish to return to it today because I believe we have reached a crisis point. It is important that the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation comes to the House to outline the reality of industrial policy as distinct from the perception of it. The perception is that the IDA and the Government are doing a wonderful job in attracting high technology companies into Ireland but when one examines the figures one discovers that large parts of the country are not even receiving visits. My own county has not been visited despite the fact that clusters of industrial units were established by successive administrations over the past 30 or 40 years in practically every county. Many of these units are now lying idle, with whins and thistles growing outside. There has been one IDA visit to County Roscommon,

where Senator Leyden lives. In his response to my previous inquiry on the matter, the Leader bemoaned the fact that Waterford has received few visits despite suffering severely from the economic downturn.

The main plank of this Government's policy platform was jobs creation and solving youth unemployment. If the driving engine of that policy is to be the IDA, it is vital that we know its policies and whether they are initiated internally or are being driven by the Government. I focus on this specific issue because we will begin summer recess in a couple of weeks. Young people are now contemplating their future. I would like to think that the hope and confidence conveyed by the US ambassador could also be conveyed by the Government. We have to build hope and confidence in the young people of this country if we are not to lose yet another generation to England, Australia, Canada and America. The consequences of repeating the mistake of previous generations, when the country lost real talent, do not bear thinking about.

Senator Ivana Bacik: Like Senator Mooney, I wish the US ambassador well and note that yesterday was US Independence Day. We have had a positive interaction with the US ambassador this week. We appreciated his presence in the Chamber on Tuesday during the discussions with the representative of the Orange Order. The British ambassador was also present. It was good to see representatives from various embassies in the Chamber, along with a number of representatives from the press.

Senator Mooney is being somewhat unfair to the IDA and Enterprise Ireland, particularly in light of the thousands of new jobs that have been created in recent months through the foreign direct investment they have supported. The success of the IDA and Enterprise Ireland in attracting investment has been noted in the House on numerous occasions, most recently by the Minister for Finance in Tuesday's debate on finance. It is important to receive positive indications of continued support from the US ambassador and other countries where investments are being made. One positive development in recent months was the trade mission to France by Irish food producers. It is not often appreciated that Irish food producers have a huge market in France and other European countries.

I ask the Leader to arrange a debate on the Middle East when we return in October. The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade has been in the House on several occasions to discuss foreign policy generally and we have often focused on the Middle East but in light of this morning's report from Amnesty International indicating worrying abuses of human rights in Libya under the new regime, we should be concerned to keep the situation under review by holding a debate on Libya and the changes that have occurred across the Middle East following the Arab Spring. I would welcome a debate of that nature and I am sure other Senators would agree.

Senator David Norris: We could discuss the American use of drones.

Senator Ivana Bacik: We could also discuss the ongoing situation in Palestine.

Last week I spoke about the appalling advertising campaign by Youth Defence and my efforts to persuade the Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland to deal with it in the same way that it deals with other commercial advertising campaigns. Various sanctions are available to it, such as requiring advertisers to amend or withdraw their campaigns. The authority has since informed me that the advertisements are outside its remit because the campaign is not commercial and I have now raised the issue directly with the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. This is not a matter of censorship. Anyone who uses commercial advertising spaces should be subject to the same monitoring regime and citizens should be able to submit complaints if they so wish. That is a fair position to take and I understand that

[Senator Ivana Bacik.]

hundreds of complaints have been made to the authority on the matter. It is unfortunate that it regards the campaign as lying outside its remit but, if that is the case, its remit must be changed.

Senator Mary Ann O'Brien: Senators may be aware the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government reconvened the forum on philanthropy in June 2011 and set it the task of increasing the level of philanthropic and charitable giving, along with developing fund raising capacity and best practice across the sector. The forum's findings and recommendations are contained in a report which was launched yesterday in the National Library by the Taoiseach and the Minister. The report makes four main recommendations which will be implemented over the next four years. The recommendations are as follows: a national giving campaign aimed at the public, high net worth individuals and corporations in Ireland; improving the fiscal environment and incentivising greater giving; developing better fund raising capacity, education and training among not-for-profit organisations; and creating a national social innovation fund supported by the Government and the philanthropic sector.

The publication of the report and the objectives set out in it must be welcomed and I encourage the Government to implement its recommendations at the earliest opportunity. As the Minister noted yesterday, while there is a strong awareness of the value that not-for-profit organisations bring to our quality life, the economic impact of the sector is often overlooked. The not-for-profit sector in Ireland employs more than 100,000 people and has an annual turnover of €5.7 billion, which means it is bigger than the IT and pharmaceutical sectors. The not-for-profit and charity sector generates €3.7 billion in wages and salaries and €290 million in employers' PRSI per annum. Moreover, funding channelled into the sector goes straight to work in every city, town and parish across country, thereby boosting local employment.

However, I fear the Government is putting the cart before the horse. Noticeable by its absence from the report is a plan to make the not-for-profit and charity sector more transparent. When pressed, the report's authors acknowledged the absence of a regulator for the charity sector. Until a regulator is established along the lines provided for by the Charities Act 2009 the sector's potential will be hampered because the public and the corporate sector will not have full confidence that the moneys given are spent properly. Once again, Ireland is behind the fence in this area because England, Scotland and Northern Ireland have already established fully functioning regulators.

With each passing week, services are being cut and we have no idea where the waste is being produced. Even though the budget for St. Michael's House was cut by €6 million it still has to pay €300,000 in increments this year. Organisations like St. Michael's House have to find savings somewhere but they cannot cut pay or make anyone redundant because of the public sector Croke Park agreement. The Brothers of Charity in Limerick stopped paying increments but the Labour Court ruled that withholding them represented a pay cut and ordered that they be reinstated retrospectively at a cost of €2 million to the charity.

Many charities have evolved into big businesses over the past few years but a statutory body has not yet been established to regulate them. In 2008 and 2009 the Houses of the Oireachtas went to huge efforts to introduce the Charities Act in order to provide the transparency and accountability which are badly needed to enhance public trust and confidence. I call on the Leader to ask the Minister when we are going to revisit that legislation and when will it be enacted.

Senator Martin Conway: I share some of Senator Mooney's sentiments in regard to the IDA. There is much concern in the mid-west in regard to the future role of the IDA in terms of the recent announcement that Shannon Development's remit in respect of foreign direct invest-

ment is to be transferred to it. That said, in terms of what has been happening during the past couple of years it will, I suppose, be considered an improvement. There is merit in our having a debate on the IDA's regional policy. While I acknowledge that there has been significant job creation and announcements in recent months, a number of them have been in the cities, in particular in Dublin. We are not getting the same level of job announcements on a regional basis in places such as Leitrim, Clare and so on from where thousands of people are emigrating to Australia because they cannot get work and do not want to spend a lifetime on the dole. There is merit in our having a debate on the role of the IDA, how it does its business, its action plan and its decision making process in terms of visits. I acknowledge that Ambassador Rooney, who has Clare connections, spends a great deal of time there, where he is always welcome.

I agree also with many of the sentiments expressed by Senator Mary Ann O'Brien today. I believe a charities regulator is essential to the proper management and corporate governance of charities. It is appalling that people who have jobs continue to receive increments while service users are suffering. I call on the Leader to ask the Minister of State with responsibility for disability issues, Deputy Lynch, to publish the value for money audit which has been sitting on her desk now for almost six weeks.

Senator Sean D. Barrett: On the Leader's point about the debate yesterday on "shall" versus "may", for Senators who were not present, it was an important debate. The amendment, which I did not table but supported, sought to amend the Bill by substituting the Minister "may" do something to promote the Irish language, as provided for in the Bill, with the Minister "shall" do something about the Irish language. We wanted the Minister to be held accountable in this regard. It was not a semantic debate. A serious point was being made in regard to the responsibility of Ministers to the courts and the Houses of the Oireachtas.

The Gaeltacht Bill is the worst prepared and worst intentioned Bill to come before this House in a long time. We have identified numerous faults in it and there has been no regulatory impact assessment of it. We are trying to promote the Irish language and the Minister is trying to abolish the democratic election of people to *Údarás na Gaeltachta* because the Department does not want to be accountable. It is obvious, given the number of notes passed to the Minister by a tribe of civil servants, that that is what is going on. The democratic people in this House should protest against it. We are not deliberating delaying the legislation. There are serious issues to be addressed. I fear for the language if the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht becomes as unaccountable as it wishes to be in terms of the legislation providing that the Minister "may" do things and its getting rid of democratically elected people.

I note the publication of more evidence in regard to our problems with mathematics. I am sure Members will agree that what we do not need in this regard is another committee. While I accept the bona fides of the Minister, Deputy Quinn, and Minister of State, Deputy Sherlock, what we need is action, in particular in respect of teacher training because having unqualified people teaching mathematics does not serve us well.

I support the comments made by the Minister, Deputy Howlin, and Senator O'Brien, in regard to allowances and expenses. We need to get this under control. According to the Book of Estimates 2012 travel and subsistence allowances in respect of the Departments of the Taoiseach, Finance and the Environment, Community and Local Government, and the appeals commissioners has increased by 18%, 34%, 53% and 21%, respectively. I am sure the Leader will agree that is unacceptable at a time when we are all facing constrained budgets. I support the call by the Minister, Deputy Howlin, for a full evaluation in this regard and call on him to ensure that the base year for 2013 is the year when the recession commenced, otherwise we could have a situation whereby next year's allowances will be cut by 10% despite having been increased over the years by 23%. It appears the travel and subsistence budget has built up a

[Senator Sean D. Barrett.]

war chest at the expense of an economy that is in serious recession and wherein money is being cut back in all types of areas. I call on the Leader to ask the Minister, Deputy Howlin, to make a presentation to us on the reason the travel and subsistence budget in some Departments is growing by multiples of the rate of inflation and how this might be restrained in 2013.

Senator David Norris: However, they are going after Deputy Joe Higgins.

Senator Susan O’Keeffe: I share some of the sentiments expressed by Senator Mooney in regard to employment and the IDA and, as mentioned by others, its regional policy. However, I suggest to the Senator that there is, perhaps, a bit of rewriting of history going on in that while this Government did come into office with a pledge for jobs, that pledge is subject to the mess left behind when it took office. One cannot create anything until an attempt has been made to clear up that mess.

The National Treasury Management Agency is today putting its toe back into the water, which conjures up an interesting picture. It is taking a long time to repair the damage which undoubtedly was created by the previous Government. Before throwing brick bats at the IDA and its capacity to create jobs, Members should perhaps take a reality check in terms of the difficult environment in which we are operating and the difficulties facing the Government and the European Union in creating jobs.

I would like if I may to celebrate Peter Higgs’s great hypothesis of 50 years ago, which now turns out to be correct, that there is a glue which holds the world together, which is rather comforting to know. What great timing in terms of world focus on science and its value in communities in the world and the commencement of the science festival here today which celebrates all cultural institutions, including theatre, art and science in which people are encouraged to take part. Perhaps in the midst of that celebration and in acknowledging the great work going on in Geneva and Mr. Peter Higgs’s hypothesis of 50 years ago, we could invite the Minister to the House to discuss the National Competitive Council’s findings in relation to, as raised by Senator Barrett, our struggle in this country in terms of mathematics, in particular teacher training in this regard. We are falling behind. While we are celebrating science and there are many bright and wonderful people working in that area, our school children need more attention if we are to create the jobs which we undoubtedly need.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Ba mhaith liom tacú leis an méid atá ráite ag an Seanadóir Barrett maidir le Bille na Gaeltachta. Tugaim faoi deara go bhfuil sceideal na seachtaine seo chugainn curtha amach agus gur luadh ansin go mbeimid ag plé Chéim na Tuarascála agus Céim dheireanach den Bhille Dé Chéadaoin. An dtabharfaidh an Ceannaire soiléiriú an gciallaíonn sin go bhfuil críoch á chur le Céim an Choiste inniu?

It could be misconstrued from the Leader’s statement that we were, in terms of our discussion around “may” and “shall” in relation to the Gaeltacht Bill, debating semantics. However, as will be evident from the transcripts there was a wide ranging debate, in which the Minister also engaged, on the fundamental issues of this Bill, for which we have been waiting 56 years. This legislation will have a fundamental affect on life in the Gaeltacht and on the Irish language and institutions and is connected to the Government’s 20 year strategy for the Irish language, which was agreed across all parties. It introduces fundamental changes in all of these areas.

I note from the schedule issued this morning that we will debate Report and Final Stages of the Bill next Wednesday. Perhaps the Leader will clarify if this means the Committee Stage debate today is to be guillotined, which would be a retrograde step. We often complain about the lack of coverage of Seanad debates on Bills.

I wish to make it known to the House that the Gaeltacht Bill and our debates have been receiving extensive coverage on all Irish language media in recent weeks. Every morning, the debates have been covered with panels discussing what has been debated and considering whether the issues are relevant. I am not saying they agree with either side but they are certainly giving it coverage and the Irish language community and Gaeltacht people are very engaged with the debate. In comparison to other Bills eight hours might seem a long time, but we have been waiting for the Bill for 56 years. The Minister has stated he wants to get it right and we need to get it right. Although it might seem an inordinate amount of time it is not in the context of what we are debating.

I note we are not sitting tomorrow but that we will sit next Friday and the following Friday. I would have no issue with us coming in tomorrow, if necessary, to debate Committee Stage if required to get this right. Serious issues are being raised and not only by Senators. They are also being raised by people outside of the House. I implore the Leader to clarify this and ensure we have full time to debate all of the issues and amendments that need to be debated fully and completely before the Bill moves to the next Stage.

Senator Terry Brennan: Yesterday I read in the newspaper about a lady returning to a house in Donegal to discover it had been ransacked and items had been robbed. She rang the local Garda station to discover the Garda could not come to investigate the crime; she had to collect him in her car and bring him to her home to see what had happened.

Senator John Gilroy: It was privatised.

Senator Terry Brennan: It is laughable.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: This is the Order of Business and not a venture of storytelling.

Senator Terry Brennan: I understand, but I call for an urgent debate in the House with the chief superintendent, the Minister or both. It is a necessity. It does not matter what day of the week it is, break-ins and robberies occur. I am aware of six such incidents in my neighbourhood which have a common denominator. I am convinced there must be local input if a house is robbed between 10.15 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. on Sunday. These incidents have happened within a one-mile radius and affected elderly people, a woman who lost her husband and two business people who were robbed at 3 p.m. This type of crime is escalating in parishes throughout the country. I was out for a spin with my wife on a Sunday afternoon and three people on foot, whom I had passed two hours earlier five miles from my home, arrived at my home at 3 p.m. Luckily enough my youngest son was there. I was not there. They did not ring the bell because my car was not there. My son, who was watching a football match, discovered they had robbed everything I had in my garage including a lawnmower. An urgent debate is required. We cannot let this escalate any further in every parish in every town in the country. I am convinced there is local input. If local people are not doing it themselves they are advising those from afar on which houses are vacant and at what time.

Senator Diarmuid Wilson: I join Senator Mooney in calling for a debate on the IDA. Senator Mooney made a very eloquent contribution and made his point very well and very clearly. In her contribution, Senator O'Keeffe alluded to the fact my colleague may have been criticising the IDA. Far from it. He did not deny the fact it does excellent work in getting jobs for the country. What he disputes is where they are located. It is quite obvious the jobs being created in recent years are going to major urban areas. There is a reason for this, namely, if the IDA does not bring foreign investors to areas other than the big urban areas they will not locate there. This is the point my colleague made.

[Senator Diarmuid Wilson.]

I propose an amendment to the Order of Business that the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Deputy Bruton, comes to the House today to discuss not only the IDA but the more urgent situation continuing since 15 December last year when 27 former employees of Lagan Brick were told the factory would close with immediate effect and they were dumped on the side of the street. Since then they have been protesting 24 hours a day outside the factory in Kingscourt, County Cavan, for their entitlements from the very profitable company which has continued to receive State contracts throughout the country.

Senator Paschal Mooney: Shame.

Senator Diarmuid Wilson: It is deplorable this company obtains State contracts at a time when it is denying 27 of its former employees and their families their entitlements. I call on the Minister to come to the House today to outline what progress has been made to date by him and the Department on this matter.

Senator Michael D'Arcy: It has been brought to my attention that a particularly unfair anomaly exists with regard to the early child care year concerning certain crèches which provide the service. Parents pay less if the crèches have staff with FETAC level 8 qualifications. This is an anomaly and is unfair and means fees are less in some crèches than in others. This is an unintended consequence of a decision made. I ask the Leader to raise the matter with the Minister for Children.

Approximately 61% or 62% of increments paid to public sector workers are to very low paid people who earn between €30,000 and €35,000. When their salaries are taxed at the appropriate rates they do not have an awful lot left. The big problem we have in Irish society at present is the gap between those earning and those not earning is not wide enough. When we speak about increments we should differentiate between those in lower paid work and higher paid work rather than bundling them together. This is important to note when we discuss increments in the public sector.

Senator David Norris: Will the Leader request the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Deputy Bruton, and his colleague, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Deputy Gilmore, to examine the situation whereby 34 young people applied to take a course with Pilot Training College in Waterford and paid up to €80,000, €90,000 for €100,000? As a mandatory part of the exercise they had to take a course at the Florida Institute of Technology. A dispute has broken out between these two bodies, as a result of which these young people have been left stranded. They are in danger of losing their entire investment and not getting the qualification. This is situation that concerns both job and visa because while these people are waiting, their visa may run out. Can any way be found by the two Departments to assist them?

Will the Leader ask the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Deputy Deenihan, if at the very last moment, he can find a philanthropic sponsor to buy at least some of the contents of Mount Congreve? This house was very generously left to the State and has magnificent world-class gardens designed by the late Ambrose Congreve. For some reason, however, Mr. Congreve did not leave any of the furniture to the State. The house would be bereft without its furniture. I know times are difficult and I do not ask the Government to act on this but perhaps the Minister might take a look around, in order that the furniture which belongs in the house not be lost.

I partly agree with my distinguished colleague, Senator Barrett, in that it is astonishing that civil servants and bureaucrats should increase their travelling allowances at such an exponential rate. However, I deplore the attacks on Deputy Joe Higgins by a particular section of the

media, in both broadcast and newspapers, all controlled by the same interest. It seems extraordinary that pressure should be put on politicians to become more local, more parochial, more tied to their constituents and servile to these interests, and that they should not be allowed to travel outside their own little parish, as Deputy Higgins did, on a bus or a train, staying in bed and breakfast accommodation. This is not luxury. The same people would confine Daniel O'Connell to Kerry if he was still alive and campaigning for Catholic emancipation. Here it is becoming increasingly like working in some kind of downgraded factory, with constant supervision by a hostile and permanently installed time and motion study team that does not know one end of its anatomy from another.

Senator Denis Landy: I support the comments of Senator Wilson in respect of IDA Ireland. When I was a county councillor there was an IDA office in Waterford and at the time the south east got its fair share. That office was closed although we vehemently opposed the closure. We predicted we would see job announcements going to the areas of high population such as Cork and Dublin. That office in Waterford has been closed for a number of years. Since it closed, there have been no significant announcements for south Tipperary, which proves the point. It is worthwhile having a debate on this matter.

I refer to the independent broadcasting sector in Ireland. Yesterday we had a presentation in Buswell's Hotel by the IBI, which made a very strong case. I ask that the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources come to the House in the coming weeks, or perhaps after the recess, to discuss this issue. Independent broadcasting in Ireland is public service broadcasting, the same as that of RTE. It serves local and regional areas. Every day seven out of ten people take as their first choice of listening local or regional radio, but 40% of revenue has been lost during the economic downturn.

The current programme for Government has committed to a review of public sector broadcasting, encompassing the dominant broadcaster, RTE, and commercial entities. The IBI calls for four specific actions and I suggest the debate should be based around these. First, to recognise the public service contribution of commercial radio; second, to set up a fund to support public service broadcasting in the commercial radio sector; third, to amend the 2009 Broadcasting Act to define and limit the commercial role and mandate of RTE; and, fourth, that the funding of the BAI come from the new household broadcasting charge. These are four clearly defined requests or aims on the part of the IBI.

Will the Leader ask the Minister, Deputy Rabbitte, to come to the House? Most of us who are not high-profile politicians, who came up through local government and became Members of this House, have relied on and worked with local and regional radio in our own areas for, at this point, probably 20 years. It is only fair that the pitch should be levelled and that this service which has been given to Ireland, to which seven out of ten people listen every day of their lives for sport, local news and issues, even for death notices——

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: The Senator can speak on this in the debate.

Senator Denis Landy: I am sure the Leas-Chathaoirleach listens to the death notices——

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: The Senator can make those points in the debate.

Senator Denis Landy: ——on Kerry Radio or 96FM. I ask for fair play and for the Leader to arrange a debate.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: I remind Senators that all 12 speakers who contributed today exceeded their limit. In one case, a Senator spoke for four minutes and 30 seconds. I am trying to be fair but some people take advantage of my situation in the Chair. It upsets the business

[An Leas-Chathaoirleach.]

of the day. I ask people, in so far as possible, to obey the Chair. Sometimes when I give an inch they take a mile. It is unfair. The last speaker spoke for three minutes, although entitled to one. That is unfair on the Chair. I call Senator Mark Daly.

Senator Mark Daly: I second the amendment to the Order of Business proposed by my colleague, Senator Diarmuid Wilson. Will the Leader organise a debate on the US-Ireland Alliance? One issue I would like discussed is the reason the president of the alliance, Ms Trina Vargo, has not attended the Oireachtas joint foreign affairs committee in spite of being requested to do so. She indicated to the committee Chairman she would either come or give an answer——

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: The Senator is not entitled to name people. It is a breach of the protocol of the House. I ask him to be careful.

Senator Mark Daly: We were told we would receive an answer to our request for the lady to come before the committee by the end of June but that deadline has passed and we have not received any response as to whether she will attend. She has questions to answer. The US State Department has cut funding to the Mitchell Scholars programme which is run by the US-Ireland Alliance. Many, probably all Senators, will have received an e-mail from the alliance on 20 June, stating that funding had been cut by \$500,000. That decision was made by the Secretary of State on 13 February 2012 but the US-Ireland Alliance seems to have become aware of it only in June. It costs €1 million annually to run the Mitchell Scholars programme and 12 students come here each year. Senators might find it extraordinary to learn that €1 million is spent on 12 students but \$500,000 was contributed by the State Department.

As of the end of 2010 there was €3.7 million sitting in the programme account. The reason I would like a debate is, first, we do not seem to be able get the president of the US-Ireland Alliance to attend the foreign affairs committee and, second, some of that €3.7 million is Irish taxpayers' money. What will be done with it? Will the programme be discontinued? Should it be transferred to another organisation? I ask the Leader to organise a debate on the US-Ireland Alliance. If the president of the alliance attends the committee before such a debate, well and good, we will not need the debate in the House but can ask questions of that person in committee. She should either attend the committee or resign because Irish taxpayers' money is sitting in that account and we cannot get answers. We cannot even put questions to the alliance as to what will be done with the money or ask why a cut of \$500,000 has been made by the US State Department to the Mitchell Scholars programme.

Senator Michael Mullins: I will keep within the minute. I strongly support the call made by Senator Landy for a debate on the funding of broadcasting in Ireland. We all want to see a fairly funded broadcasting sector that serves the entire country and every community. I agree that local radio stations provide a vital service in the areas of news, current affairs and sport but they are at a major disadvantage. The 1960 Broadcasting Act gave the entire television licence fee to RTE. We all want to see a strong, vibrant and innovative national broadcaster but it is unfair that the entire fee should go to the national broadcaster. There must be a much fairer and more level playing field. My local radio station in Galway pays approximately €10,000 a week in fees and levies simply to operate before taking wages or running costs into consideration. We all want to ensure that the vibrancy local radio stations provide continues. I ask the Leader to request the Minister to come to the House in the autumn in order that we can thrash out the funding of broadcasting in Ireland to ensure we have a much more level playing field into the future.

Senator Feargal Quinn: I support what Senator O’Keeffe said about this week providing a great opportunity to enhance interest in science. Dublin is at the centre of the science world this week. We had a good debate on science here recently and I thank the Leader for that opportunity. I hope what is happening will support the same steps in science, as those about which Senator Barrett spoke with regard to interest in mathematics, and we should make sure there is interest in science.

On another point related to science, one of the threats to agriculture are the discussions taking place about obesity. I cannot believe a claim is being made that there should be a ban on the advertising of cheese. That does not make sense. I believe science has answers to this issue and we can do something about that and we should ensure we do so in the future. The opportunities to solve many of the challenges in agriculture will be helped a great deal by science. We have great food and produce in Ireland and we should ensure that continues to be the case.

(Interruptions).

Senator Cáit Keane: Like Senator Norris, I raised the issue of the financial loss suffered by trainee pilots yesterday. We should have a debate on that matter. It turns out that only very rich people can afford to be pilots and families having to take out a loan of €80,000 to €100,000 for their child’s training. We have to do something about that.

I want to put a positive note on the record. The market has just closed and €500 million of Irish treasury bills are being auctioned. It is the first time since 2010 that has happened. This is a very positive sign. It is not the bond market but the auction of €500 million of treasury bills. It has been recognised internationally as Ireland doing its work and going in the right direction. I wanted to put that on the record because we regularly get negative news. This is a positive day for Ireland.

The Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government published a report on unfinished estates yesterday. There are many vested interests in those estates ranging from financial institutions, NAMA, housing agencies, builders and banks to residents who live in them and many local authority residents who may come to live in them. On foot of that report, the Seanad should have an input into what will happen with regard to them. These estates are being categorised and worked through to determine what action will be taken. The resolution would be for them to be made into viable living spaces. As a Seanad, we should discuss that report and I ask the Leader to request the Minister to come to the House for such a debate.

Senator Rónán Mullen: Senator Bacik adverted today to her sense that there is a difference between censorship and what she might see as regulation of billboard advertising. I wonder whether she is the best person to be putting this case. I would like if we could have a debate, whether it be about lobbyists and registering them, and about how these things can tip over into a censorship mentality that would allow the suppression of free speech.

I was contacted by a former student of Trinity College yesterday who told me about the time when a certain students’ union leader instigated a referendum on abortion information. Unfortunately, the pro-life group in the college was silly enough to boycott it so there was no debate except for some UCD students standing outside the campus. Under a by-law that was feverishly advocated by the then student leader, they were not allowed on campus to express their point of view. However, they found a loophole by way of a Trinity student who brought them in and they were able to express their point of view. That Trinity student wrote to me yesterday and that student leader was the Deputy Leader of the Seanad. We need to be careful about limping over into——

Senator Ivana Bacik: I think Senator Mullen is referring to an issue between Trinity and UCD students.

Senator Rónán Mullen: With affection for my colleague——

Senator Martin Conway: It is amazing.

Senator Rónán Mullen: ——I would say that we need to be careful that we sometimes have a censorship mentality——

Senator Paschal Mooney: No censorship.

Senator Rónán Mullen: ——but we might not be ready to admit it.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: I am not sure that is relevant business.

Senator Ivana Bacik: On a further point——

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: No, Senator Bacik. Senator Mullen, tá an t-am críochnaithe.

Senator Rónán Mullen: Trinity students have very long memories and they sometimes write to Senators.

Senator Ivana Bacik: We should not all dredge up issues from the murky past of our student politics.

Senator Tom Sheahan: I want to raise an issue concerning representations I received in my office from a lady regarding her social welfare payments. She qualifies for and is receiving lone parent's allowance and she has two children but is only receiving payment for one of those children. She applied for the second child's payment on 7 October 2010 but her deciding officer did not examine the case for over a year. Then her social welfare inspector moved from the Tralee office in November to Cork and since last November the social welfare inspector position for her area and the surrounding areas has been left vacant and nobody is deciding on any social welfare cases in that area. There is no deciding officer and no social welfare inspector to deal with all such cases due for review since last November.

A source within the social welfare office in Tralee informed me that the new inspector is due to start in the coming weeks. This is in response to our investigations. For the past eight months a large portion of Kerry has not had a social welfare inspector dealing with cases. The same source within the social welfare office told me that they did not have anyone to fill the vacancy due to the number of people who retired from the office last February. This begs the question as to what good the Croke Park agreement is when we cannot address situations such as this. Are we not supposed to be able to transfer staff between Departments, functions and areas. I call on the Leader to request the Ministers, Deputy Howlin and Deputy Burton, to come to the House to debate this as a matter of urgency.

Senator Mary Moran: I would like to raise the issue of the severe cutbacks in the service provided by St. John of God services in Drumcar, County Louth, and the effects they are having on the users of the service. St. John of God north-east services provides for the care of people with an intellectual disability. This year the cutbacks in the service have amounted to €1.5 million. Since 2005 it has had cutbacks of more than €4.366 million. It has continually implemented increased efficiencies to avoid curtailing the service offered to the clients and the staff have taken on additional responsibilities. However, they are at the point where they can no longer continue to deliver the previous level of services within the current financial allocation.

St. John of God north-east services would be well known not only in the north-east region but throughout the country for the excellent service it provides in terms of residential services but, unfortunately, it reports that it will be unable to accept any more admissions unless specific funding is provided for such places. At present, several people are on the waiting list and seven are in urgent need of accommodation. From 12 June there will be only one respite house in operation and the service will be provided on a four-week cycle. These vulnerable users of the service and their families are the ones who will suffer. In the children's unit alone, they will now only have ten days every month to avail of respite. Up to now St. John of God services was able to accommodate a child if there was a major family problem or an urgent need for such care arose but now if a family emergency occurs outside the ten allocated days in the month, nothing will be able to be done for that child. It is frightening that again it is the most vulnerable who are affected. At present there are no places for school leavers to go on to day services.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: The Senator is calling for a debate.

Senator Mary Moran: I call on the Leader to have a debate on services provided for people with an intellectual disability.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: I remind Senators that they can call for a debate but they should not have that debate on the Order of Business. The time allocated is now up. I note three Members are offering and if they are quick of the mark I will allow them in.

Senator Colm Burke: I received a letter from a constituent of the Leas-Cathaoirleach's yesterday. He raised the issue of trying to get visas for people who are very highly qualified and that we cannot get people with that qualification to come to work here. He pointed out that there are more than 20,000 jobs vacant here because we do not have the people with the required qualifications. It is time we examined this issue. Are there that many vacancies that cannot be filled because we do not have the people with the qualifications? If so, we need to fast track the procedure for filling those jobs and then adjust the educational system immediately to ensure that Irish people will have those qualifications in the not too distant future. The Minister should give this matter his immediate attention.

Earlier speakers criticised IDA Ireland but the IDA has to provide jobs and it does so in areas where people have the necessary qualifications. We are not dealing with the issue and it is being put on the back burner. There is a trickle down effect from the creation of 20,000 jobs. We need to respond immediately to the market demands. I ask the Leader to bring this matter to the attention of the Minister and I ask for a debate on this issue. I understand there are currently more than 1,600 job vacancies in the financial services centre which cannot be filled. If this is the case, then it is time we started to respond to the market demands. I ask for a debate at an early date.

Senator Paul Coghlan: I support Senator Landy's call which is also supported by Senator Mullins, that the Leader arrange a debate in due course on the future of broadcasting in Ireland. Everyone in this House and in the other House is aware of the public service contribution of the local radio stations. We all know the value of the local radio stations which reach out to every parish and every community in their respective counties. I know a little bit about this as I am a small shareholder in one of these small local radio stations——

Senator Rónán Mullen: All local in its politics.

Senator Paschal Mooney: How many stations? Is it two or three?

Senator Paul Coghlan: All politics is local. I do not have a conflict of interest as my interests are always declared fully in this House as Senators know, particularly from contributions I have made on the matter in the previous Seanad. We are all agreed that it is a matter of levelling the playing pitch. I strongly support that call from Senator Landy. I was very sorry yesterday that I missed these good people when they were here lobbying Members. I somehow missed the event.

Senator Catherine Noone: I refer to the point about Members of the other House claiming travel expenses to travel the country for campaign purposes. It has brought attention on themselves. These were law makers who were travelling the country——

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: The business of the other House should not be discussed here.

Senator Catherine Noone: I will finish my point if the Leas-Chathaoirleach will indulge me. They were travelling the country as law makers and encouraging the citizens of the State to break the law. This should not be encouraged and these expenses will be difficult to justify. I do not disagree with Senator Norris's general point on the media but the salient point is that law makers should not be encouraging citizens to break the law.

On the funding of broadcasting, I support other Senators in their call for a debate. It is easy to understand how this came about because RTE was the first broadcaster and local radio stations were established subsequently. It may be necessary to review the sector with a view to making it more equitable for all concerned.

Senator Maurice Cummins: The Acting Leader of the Opposition, Senator Mooney, raised the matter of the policies of the IDA. He was supported in his comments by Senators Conway and O'Keeffe and others. I agree there has been a concentration of investment in Dublin, Cork and Galway to the detriment of other areas. However, the companies decide on their preferred locations. I agree that all areas should be given an equal opportunity and fair play should be practised. We must acknowledge the successes of the IDA with regard to foreign direct investment. Unemployment and job creation still remain the most important priorities for this Government and I will arrange a debate with the Minister, Deputy Bruton, after the summer recess. I agree with a number of the sentiments expressed by Senator Mooney.

Senator Bacik asked for a debate on the Middle East. I have already requested such a debate with the Tánaiste and I hope he will respond positively in the near future.

Senator Mary Ann O'Brien spoke about the importance of the not for profit and charity sector and the lack of regulation in that sector. She suggested the Charities Act should be revisited. I commend her very good comments in that regard. If she wished, the Senator could introduce a Private Members' Bill in order to address some of the points she raised. I will inquire whether the Government intends to revisit that legislation.

Senator Barrett referred to unqualified people teaching mathematics. I agree with the Senator's point. It is acknowledged there are significant problems in the teaching of mathematics as outlined by the National Competitiveness Council. Unqualified teachers are also teaching other subjects and this must be addressed. I will endeavour to have the Minister for Education and Skills come to the House to debate the report of the National Competitiveness Council with specific reference to the teaching of maths.

Senator O'Keeffe addressed the difficulties facing the IDA and she also spoke about the city of science. As Senator Quinn said, we had a very constructive debate with the Minister of State, Deputy Sherlock on that matter and it needs to be kept on the agenda.

In reply to Senator Ó Clochartaigh the Committee Stage of the Gaeltacht Bill will conclude at 4 p.m. today. It has taken 56 years for such a Bill and considering the progress on Committee Stage I think it will take another 56 years to complete it, in the way it has been dealt with——

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: That is an insult to muintir na Gaeltachta.

Senator Maurice Cummins: The House will have completed eight hours on Committee Stage of the Gaeltacht Bill. It is envisaged that Committee Stage will be concluded today and Report Stage next week.

Senator Brennan raised the problems associated with the Garda transport fleet and Senator Reilly made a similar point yesterday. The issues of law and order and robberies are debated at length in the joint policing committees which are working very well. I will arrange with the Minister for Justice and Equality to have a debate on crime statistics.

Senator Wilson proposed an amendment to the Order of Business to have the Minister, Deputy Bruton, come to the House to discuss the situation at Lagan Brick. The Minister was in the House less than one month ago when he addressed that matter at length which had been raised by Senator Wilson. I do not propose to agree to the amendment to the Order of Business as proposed and seconded.

Senator D'Arcy asked about the anomaly in the pay rates for child care staff. I suggest he raise the matter on the Adjournment. I note the majority of increments are paid to people on low pay and I agree with him that the higher paid should be targeted. Senator Norris and also Senator Keane raised the matter of the pilot training college. The Irish Aviation Authority regulates, approves and oversees flight training organisations. Its primary functions in this regard are that oversight, safety, quality and standard of training be delivered, and the conduct of examination and flight tests. It also has the capacity to seek evidence that organisations have sufficient resources in place to conduct training and approve standards. The pilot training college in Waterford is such a flight training organisation and also has a pilot training college in Melbourne and Florida to take advantage of the better weather and visual flight operations. Students undergoing training in Florida normally return to Ireland to complete the multi-engine, multi-crew instrument rating to European standards.

The pilot training college in Waterford has a contract in place with the Florida Institute of Technology to deliver the flight training in Florida. On 26 June, the Irish Aviation Authority was informed that the Florida Institute of Technology was ceasing all training activities in Florida due to a commercial dispute concerning payments. The Irish Aviation Authority immediately sent a senior inspector to establish the training situation and he has met the students in question. There are approximately 180 students in the Florida facility and 37 in Waterford at various stages of training. The students comprise sponsored students from international airlines and those with individual commercial contracts. Students have paid the pilot training college in Waterford for training and the college has a personal relationship with Florida Institute of Technology to provide flight and ground training. Contracts between the self-sponsored or the airline sponsor students in their training organisations are a matter outside the remit of the Irish Aviation Authority. The matter is being addressed and, I hope the students will be accommodated. Certainly assurances should be given that sufficient funding is available to continue the operations at Waterford given that the operations at the Florida Institute of Technology have ceased. Given the training the students have received they should be accredited for the work they have done and steps are being taken to ensure that happens.

Senator Denis Landy raised the issue of the restructuring of IDA Ireland, on which I will seek to arrange a debate.

[Senator Maurice Cummins.]

With Senators Paul Coughlan, Michael Mullins and Catherine Noone, the Senator also raised the funding of the independent broadcasting sector in Ireland. I will endeavour to have the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Deputy Pat Rabbitte, come to the House to debate the matter.

Senator Mark Daly asked the reason the president of the US-Ireland Alliance did not appear before the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade. As that is a matter for the committee I do not propose to comment further.

Senator Feargal Quinn noted that Dublin is at the centre of the science world this week. He also mentioned a ban on the advertising of cheese. It is ridiculous that somebody would suggest we should not advertise cheese.

Senator Cáit Keane said that the fact that the National Treasury Management Agency was going to the markets was a positive sign. We would all agree that this morning's successful auction of three-month treasury bills by the National Treasury Management Agency was an important milestone on Ireland's continuing path to recovery. The yield on the bonds at 1.8% was very competitive against its peer group and market commentators were agreed that any level under 2% would be considered a good result. Demand was strong among investors.

This is the first time the NTMA has raised money in the markets since September 2010 and highlights the significant progress the Government has made in restoring Ireland's reputation. The markets have reacted positively to our strong programme implementation to date, to the decisive "Yes" vote in the recent referendum on the stability treaty and the decision taken at last week's summit to break the negative links between the sovereign and the banks. This has been seen by the yields in the long term Government bonds which have been halved in the past 12 months, making Irish bonds the best performing sovereign bond in the eurozone in the past year. The Government is certainly focused on emerging from the programme and returning to the markets next year. Today's return to the treasury bill market is a small but important first step in this regard. The Government will continue to take the necessary measures to fully implement the programme and reduce the deficit in line with our commitments. That was a positive development this morning in respect of the NTMA.

In response to Senator Rónán Mullen's query, I am not going to get involved in a debate on student politics.

Senator Rónán Mullen: I understand that.

Senator Maurice Cummins: I will leave that issue to the University Senators to discuss among themselves.

Senator Catherine Noone: They will take it outside.

Senator Maurice Cummins: Senator Tom Sheahan raised an issue concerning social welfare payments which has arisen in Kerry and the lack of personnel to deal with personal problems. That is unacceptable. I will raise the matter with the Minister. I suggest the Senator also raise the matter on the Adjournment.

Senator Mary Moran raised the issue of cutbacks in the service provided by St. John of God services. Perhaps she too would submit a motion for an Adjournment debate in order to get more specific details on the matter than I can provide.

Senator Colm Burke raised the important question of visas for people with high level qualifications that are necessary for industry in Ireland. The most important part is responding to market demands for the Department to ensure we can provide the necessary people to fill the

posts into the future. That matter can be debated with the Minister when he comes to the House to discuss youth unemployment, job creation and a number of other issues on which Members have called for a debate.

I agree with Senator Catherine Noone's comments that lawmakers should not encourage people to break the law.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: On a point of order——

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: Perhaps the Senator will wait for a moment.

Visit by US Delegation

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: Before proceeding further I am sure the Members of the House would wish to join with me in welcoming the Governor of the State of Washington, Ms Christina O'Grady Gregoire, who is in the Visitors Gallery. On my own behalf and on behalf of all my colleagues in the House, I extend a warm welcome and good wishes for a successful visit to Ireland.

Order of Business (Resumed)

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh wishes to raise a point of order.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Ba mhaith liom iarradh ar an gCeannaire an ráiteas a rinne sé maidir leis An Bille Gaeltachta a tharraingt siar mar sílim go bhfuil sé maslach do phobal na Gaeilge agus na Gaeltachta an beag is fiú atá sé ag déanamh faoin díospóireacht tábhachtach atá ar siúl faoi láthair. Tá sé maslach go bhfuil an Rialtas ag cur baic ar dhíospóireacht daonlathach, oscailte agus cuimsitheach maidir leis na cúinsí seo ó thaobh na Gaeltachtaí de. Is mór an náire don Rialtas é go bhfuil a leithéid ar siúl

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: Níl sé ceart ná cóir sin a ardú anois. Ní pointe oird é.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Ba mhaith liom go dtarraingeodh sé siar an ráiteas a rinne sé. Tá an rud adúirt sé faoi 56 bliain náireach. Tá sé ag déanamh beag is fiú——

Senator Cáit Keane: Bhí an ráiteas sin fíor. Dúirt sé——

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Tá an Seanadóir féin ag maslú mhuintir na Gaeltachta.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: With respect, Senator Ó Clochartaigh, tóg go bog é.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Tá sibh ag maslú mhuintir na Gaeltachta. Tá sibh ag tarraingt acmhainní ó phobal na Gaeltachta ach níl sibh sásta é a phlé.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: Senator Keane is not helping the situation. These are matters the Senator can debate with the Minister in a minute.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Le cead, is é an Ceannaire a rinne an ráiteas. Táim ag iarraidh air an ráiteas, maidir le 56 bliain caite againn ag fanacht le Bille Gaeltachta agus go mbeidh muid 56 bliain eile ag plé na ceiste, a tharraingt siar.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: Níl sé ceart nó cóir é sin a phlé ag an am seo.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Níl an ráiteas ceart nó cóir agus ba chóir don Ceannaire é a tharraingt siar. Is mór an náire don Rialtas é.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: Senator Diarmuid Wilson has moved an amendment to the Order of Business, “That a debate on the ongoing dispute at Lagan Brick be taken today.”

Amendment put.

The Seanad divided: Tá, 14; Níl, 30.

Tá

Barrett, Sean D.
Byrne, Thomas.
Cullinane, David.
Daly, Mark.
Leyden, Terry.
Mooney, Paschal.
Norris, David.

O’Sullivan, Ned.
Ó Clochartaigh, Trevor.
Ó Domhnaill, Brian.
Power, Averil.
Reilly, Kathryn.
White, Mary M.
Wilson, Diarmuid.

Níl

Bacik, Ivana.
Bradford, Paul.
Brennan, Terry.
Burke, Colm.
Clune, Deirdre.
Coghlan, Eamonn.
Coghlan, Paul.
Comiskey, Michael.
Conway, Martin.
Cummins, Maurice.
D’Arcy, Jim.
D’Arcy, Michael.
Harte, Jimmy.
Hayden, Aileen.
Heffernan, James.

Higgins, Lorraine.
Keane, Cáit.
Kelly, John.
Landy, Denis.
Moloney, Marie.
Moran, Mary.
Mulcahy, Tony.
Mullen, Rónán.
Mullins, Michael.
Noone, Catherine.
O’Keeffe, Susan.
Quinn, Feargal.
Sheahan, Tom.
van Turnhout, Jillian.
Whelan, John.

Tellers: Tá, Senators Ned O’Sullivan and Diarmuid Wilson; Níl, Senators Paul Coghlan and Susan O’Keeffe.

Amendment declared lost.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: Is the Order of Business agreed?

Senator Paschal Mooney: In light of the proposal by the Leader to guillotine one of the most important Bills to come before the House in 56 years we cannot possibly agree to the Order of Business. This Government enjoys the most unprecedented majority in the history of the State. If the Dáil cannot stop this Government from being anti-democratic this House has an obligation to do so. We are opposing the Order of Business on the basis of a very anti-democratic decision.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: This Bill constitutes a flagrant disregard for democracy. It is about pushing through the democratic principles we fought for before the Civil War. It is a disgrace.

Question put: “That the Order of Business be agreed to.”

The Seanad divided: Tá, 27; Níl, 17.

Tá

Bacik, Ivana.
Bradford, Paul.
Brennan, Terry.
Burke, Colm.
Clune, Deirdre.
Coghlan, Eamonn.
Coghlan, Paul.
Comiskey, Michael.
Conway, Martin.
Cummins, Maurice.
D'Arcy, Jim.
D'Arcy, Michael.
Harte, Jimmy.
Hayden, Aideen.

Heffernan, James.
Higgins, Lorraine.
Keane, Cáit.
Kelly, John.
Landy, Denis.
Moloney, Marie.
Moran, Mary.
Mulcahy, Tony.
Mullins, Michael.
Noone, Catherine.
O'Keeffe, Susan.
Sheahan, Tom.
Whelan, John.

Níl

Barrett, Sean D.
Byrne, Thomas.
Cullinane, David.
Daly, Mark.
Leyden, Terry.
Mooney, Paschal.
Mullen, Rónán.
Norris, David.
O'Sullivan, Ned.

Ó Clochartaigh, Trevor.
Ó Domhnaill, Brian.
Power, Averil.
Quinn, Feargal.
Reilly, Kathryn.
van Turnhout, Jillian.
White, Mary M.
Wilson, Diarmuid.

Tellers: Tá, Senators Paul Coghlan and Susan O'Keeffe; Níl, Senators Ned O'Sullivan and Diarmuid Wilson.

Question declared carried.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: We will now move on to Bille na Gaeltachta.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Ar phointe oird——

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: There is no point in raising a point of order because the Order of Business has been agreed to. If the Senator has a point to make on the Bill, I suggest he makes it when the Minister of State is here.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Tá sé scanallach go bhfuil an Rialtas ag cur coisc ar dhíos-póireacht daonlathach sa Teach seo ar chúrsaí Gaeltachta. Taispeánann sin drochmheas. Ba cheart go mbeadh náire ar an gCeannaire.

Senator Maurice Cummins: Speak on the Bill.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Níl sé fiú in ann mé a fhreagairt i nGaeilge. Is mór an náire dó é. Táthar ag tarraingt acmhainní ó phobal na Gaeilge agus na Gaeltachta agus ag cur coisc ar dhíos-póireacht——

(Interruptions).

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Dá mbeadh sé ag tarlú don Seanad, bheadh siad ag léimnigh suas agus anuas. Ba cheart go mbeadh náire orthu.

Senator Thomas Byrne: Ar phointe oird, tháinig an tAire Airgeadais isteach sa Teach seo Dé Máirt agus dúirt sé nach raibh sé ceart reachtaíocht a chur tríd an Teach seo faoi dheifir. Níl sé ceart an reachtaíocht seo a chur tríd an Teach faoi dheifir agus bhí an ceart ag an Aire Airgeadais faoi sin.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: Ní pointe oird é sin. All of these points should be made to the Minister of State when he arrives.

Gaeilteacht Bill 2012: Committee Stage (Resumed)

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Tosnóimid anois ar leasú Uimh. 10.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Nach bhfuil muid fós ar leasú Uimh. 9?

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Chríochnaigh muid le leasú Uimh.9. We voted on it and the amendment was lost.

Government amendment No. 10:

In page 10, subsection (2)(b), line 2, to delete “part” and substitute “a part”.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: On a point of order, ba mhaith liom ceist a chur faoi an bhfuil leasú Uimh.10 in ord, mar deireann sé: “Níl gá le leasú comhréireach ar an téacs Gaeilge anseo.” Ní thugann sin aon mhíniú ar chén téacs Gaeilge atá i gceist. An bhfuil sé ag caint faoin Bhille ar fad, ar alt faoi leith nó céard atá i gceist ann.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): I have been advised it has been deemed in order.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: An bhféadfadh an cathaoirleach a mhíniú dom cén téacs atá i gceist?

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Baineann sé le leathanach 10, subsection (2)(b), line 2.

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Dinny McGinley): Is leasú teicniúil é seo. Baineann an rud atá i gceist leis an leagan Bhéarla amháin. Sa leagan Gaeilge deirtear: “(b) cuid de limistéar Gaeltachta,”. Sa leagan Bhéarla deirtear: “(b) part of a Gaeltacht area,” agus táimid ag cur isteach an focal “a” chun “a part of a Gaeltacht area” a rá. Táimid díreach ag cur isteach litir amháin. Tá an leagan Gaeilge ceart go leor mar atá sé.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: A gceart don Aire Stáit, níor léigh mise an leagan Bhéarla den cháipéis, mar ní léann mé leaganacha Bhéarla. Mar sin, nuair a léann duine an leagan Gaeilge, léann sé ag Uimh. 10, “Níl gá le leasú comhréireach ar an téacs Gaeilge anseo.” Níor léigh mé an leagan Bhéarla agus ní thuigim cén téacs Gaeilge atá i gceist anseo. Ba mhaith liom an pointe a dhéanamh nach bhfuil sé soiléir ón leasú atá i nGaeilge céard atá i gceist.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): An bhfuil an Seanadóir sásta anois go bhfuil míniú tugtha?

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Nílim sásta ar chor ar bith mar is dóigh liom go dtaispeánann sé drochmheas má táimid ag brath ar an leagan Bhéarla atá luaite ar an leathanach eile: In page 10, subsection (2)(b), line 2, to delete “part” and substitute “a part”. Taispeánann seo

meon an Rialtais seo i leith na Gaeilge, rud atá feicthe againn ar maidin, gur tábhachtaí dóibh an leagan Bhéarla ná an leagan Gaeilge agus is mór an náire dóibh é.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Tá a fhios ag an Seanadóir nach féidir direct translation a chur isteach, but that the amendment is to allow the Irish version to agree with the English one and the Minister of State has explained that.

Amendment agreed to.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Tógfaidh muid leasuithe Uimh. 11 go dtí 14, iniata, le chéile. Amendments Nos. 11 to 14, inclusive, will be taken together. Is that agreed? Agreed.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: I move amendment No. 11:

In page 10, between lines 8 and 9, to insert the following subsection:

“(3) When designating a specified area under *subsection (2)*, the Minister shall be cognizant of the linguistic circumstances of the community who live in that area and will not designate an area which contains communities which are linguistically dissimilar to each other.”.

Tá imní mór orm agus mé ag labhairt anseo inniu, de bhrí go bhfuil an cuma ar an scéal go bhfuil Ceannaire an Tí agus an Rialtas ag iarraidh an Bhille seo a bhrú tríd an Teach inniu agus guillotine a chur ar an t-am atá leagtha amach don Bhille, ag 4 i.n. inniu. B’fhéidir go rachaimid tríd na leasuithe go léir, ach b’fhéidir nach rachaidh. Is drochmheas é don Teach seo agus don daonlathas Billí mar seo a bhrú tríd an Teach.

Ba mhaith liom tagairt a dhéanamh do chúpla focal adúirt an tAire Airgeadais sa Teach seo Dé Máirt nuair a thug sé freagra don Seanadóir Byrne. Dúirt sé: “If the Senator wants to ram the Insolvency Bill through during the next three weeks, without due consideration, I do not think this is the way to carry out legislative business. Bills need to be considered and given due consideration and time.” That is exactly the opposite of what is happening here. Is náire é.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Gabh mo leithscéal, tá an Seanadóir ag caint faoin am atá againn don Bhille, ach tá an Seanadóir féin ag imeacht i bhfad ón bpointe.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Baineann seo leis an mBille go ginearálta.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Ní bhaineann. Ní bheidh muid críochnaithe go deo má leanann an Seanadóir ar aghaidh mar sin.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Tá sé soiléir go bhfuil brú ann an Bille seo a bhrú tríd an Teach seo gan deis a thabhairt dúinn na leasuithe go léir a phlé. Tá sé sin náireach agus scanallach.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Pléigh an leasú, led thoil.

Senator Paschal Mooney: It is not the Acting Chair’s job to stifle debate.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: I agree.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Gabh mo leithscéil, mar chathaoirleach, caithfidh mé——

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Nach bhfuil cead agam a rá nach aontaím leis an dóigh atá an Bille seo á bhrú tríd an Teach? Tá a fhios agam nach bhfuil sin ceart. Nílim ag cur lochta ar an Aire Stáit ná ar an feidhmeannaigh, ach tá Ceannaire sa Teach seo agus tá sé ag iarraidh

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an Bhille seo a bhrú tríd an teach inniu. Tá sin náireach, mar nach bhfuil deis againn é a phlé thar ceann pobal na Gaeltachta agus na Gaeilge. Is masla go huile agus go hiomlán é ar phobal na Gaeilge agus na Gaeltachta go bhfuiltear ag iarraidh an Bhille seo a bhrú tríd an Teach gan deis a thabhairt dúinn na pointí sonrach a phlé.

This goes totally against the word of the Minister for Finance in this House last Tuesday. What has changed between Tuesday and today?

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): An bhfuil an Seanadóir chun caint ar an leasú os ár gcomhair?

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Labhairfidh mé ar anois.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Mar chathaoirleach, caithfidh mé aird an tSeanadóra a dhíriú ar na leasuithe.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Tá seo tábhachtach fosta. An aontaíonn an cathaoirleach go bhfuil sé seo tábhachtach?

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Tá sé an-tábhachtach, ach cloígh leis an leasú le do thoil. Tá an Seanadóir ag cur ama amú.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Rushed or guillotined legislation is not the way to do business. The programme for government and the Fine Gael and Labour Party manifestos suggested there would be a new way of doing politics and that legislation would be given due consideration and time for debate. That is not what is happening here. It is downright disgraceful.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Chaith muid trí ceathrú uair ag plé “shall” agus “may”, neart ama.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Leanfaidh mé ar aghaidh. Tá fearg orm i dtaca le seo ach nílim ag cur lochta ar an Aire Stáit ná ar na feidhmeannaigh atá anseo. Tá an cinneadh déanta. Bhí vóta againn agus bhrú muid an pointe ar an taobh seo, ach ar an drochuair, tá an cuma ar an scéal go bhfuil brú ag teacht ó áit éigin sa Rialtas i dtaca leis an Bille seo a bhrú tríd an Teach sa dóigh go mbeidh deireadh le daonlathas sa Ghaeltacht.

Tá ceithre leasú le chéile anseo, cúpla ceann ardaithe ag an Seanadóir Ó Clochartaigh agus ceann nó dhó i m'ainm féin. Séard atá i gceist le leasú Uimh. 11 ná go bhfuil muid ag iarraidh fo-alt breise a thabhairt isteach idir línte 8 agus 9 ar leathanach 11 le rá: “(3) Le linn don Aire limistéar sonraithe a ainmniú faoi fho-alt (2), cuirfidh an tAire san áireamh staid 12 o'clock na Gaeilge sa phobal atá ina gcónaí sa limistéar sin, agus ní ainmneoidh sé nó sí limistéar ina bhfuil cónaí ar phobail atá neamhchosúil lena chéile go teangeolaíoch.” Tá sin tábhachtach. De réir an staidéar teangeolaíochta i 2007, bhí an Ghaeltacht roinnte ina trí chuid — A, B agus C — agus leagadh amach moltaí sa staidéar i dtaobh todhchaí na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht.

Tuigim ón Bhille seo go bhfuil an Ghaeltacht anois á bhriseadh isteach i 19 ceantair agus go bhfuil cuid de na ceantair sin istigh le chéile, ach nach bhfuil na pobail ar fad sásta go bhfuil dhá pharóiste nó dhá cheantar le chéile. Mar shampla, tá Múscaí agus oileán amuigh ón chósta istigh le chéile, ach níl an pobal sa cheantar sin sásta go bhfuiltear ag brú an dá cheantar le chéile. Níl seo féarálte ar na ceantair atá lag ó thaobh na Gaeilge de agus níl sé féarálte ar na ceantair atá láidir ó thaobh na Gaeilge de má táthar ag iarraidh na gceantar sin a chur le chéile agus an sprioc amháin a bhaint amach. Má táimid le daoine a thabhairt linn agus má táimid le

na daoine sna ceantair Gaeltachta atá níos laige ná ceantair eile ó thaobh na Gaeilge de a tharraingt linn, a thabhairt le chéile agus tacaíocht a thabhairt dóibh, tá sé tábhachtach nach mbeidh na ceantair laga buailte ar na ceantair láidre. Cuirfeadh sin brú ar na ceantair láidre na ceantair laige a thabhairt go dtí caighdeán níos deacra ná mar a bhféadfadh siad a bhaint amach. Sin an méid atá i gceist leis an leasú seo agus tá sé tábhachtach maidir leis na pleananna teanga atá le haontú agus an obair a bheidh le déanamh maidir le plean teanga a chur le chéile.

Tá 95,000 duine ina gcónaí sa Ghaeltacht agus má tá 19 ceantar ann, an bhfuil sé i gceist go mbeidh thart faoi 6,000 nó 7,000 duine, nó níos mó, ina gcónaí i ngach áit a bhfuil plean? Cuirfidh sin brú ar na coistí a mbeidh an dualgas orthu na pleananna seo a ullmhú. Cuirfidh sé brú orthu, b'fhéidir, limistéar an-mhór a tharraingt le chéile. Laige í a bheith ag amharc ar 19 ceantar in áit a bheith ag amharc ar pharóistí nó ceantair eile ar an gcaoi céanna le Cumann Lúthchleas Gael. Bheadh sé i bhfad níos fearr amharc ar phlean mar sin nó ar an phlean a leagadh amach sa staidéar teangeolaíochta 2007. Ar a laghad, má tá plean le hullmhú do cheantair le chéile, ba cheart go mbeadh an caighdeán Gaeilge thart ar an leibhéal céanna sna ceantair sin. Mar shampla, i nGort a'Choirce, mo cheantar féin, tá thart faoi 85% den daonra ag labhairt Gaeilge go laethúil agus ní cheart an ceantar sin a chur isteach, mar shampla, le ceantar i nach bhfuil ach 30% den daonra ag labhairt Gaeilge go laethúil. Níl sin féaráilte ar cheachtar acu. Cruthódh sin deacrachtaí don ceantar lag agus don ceantar láidir. Caithfear idirdhealú a dhéanamh i gcásanna mar seo. Caithfidh na spriocanna a bheith sa phlean don ceantar lag a bheith difriúil do na spriocanna atá sa phlean don ceantar láidir. Beidh dréachtú iomlán le déanamh ar na phleananna seo agus caithfidh difríocht a bheith eatarthu maidir leis na critéir agus na spriocanna a bheidh leagtha amach iontu. Sin an fáth go gcreidim go gcaithfidh gacadh leis an leasú seo. Maidir le leasú Uimh. 14, baineann sé le hÚdarás na Gaeltachta agus eagraíochtaí bunaithe ins na limistéir Gaeltachta. Tá an leasú ag iarraidh na focail "or adjacent to" a bhaint amach as an mBille. Má tá an údarás i gceannas ar na pleananna seo a ullmhú, ba chóir don údarás a bheith i gceannas sa tír go hiomlán. Má tá an Bille ag moladh go mbeidh an údarás i gceannas sa Ghaeltacht leis an spriocanna agus na pleananna éagsúla a aontú agus a chur i bhfeidhm, ní fheictear domsa go bhfuil aon chiall leis na focail "an organisation based in or adjacent to", mar de réir an Bhille, tá an dualgas ar an údarás sa Ghaeltacht agus taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht tá Foras na Gaeilge i bhfeidhm. Níl an fhoclaíocht cruinn sa Bhille. Is féidir ciall a bhaint as sin go bhfuil an t-údarás freagrach taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht chomh maith. Caithfidh sin bheith níos soiléire ná mar atá leagtha amach sa Bhille faoi fho-alt(4).

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Tá mé ag tacú leis na moltaí atá á ndéanamh agus á bplé faoin ghné seo den Bhille. Nuair a bhí an tAire deireanach, Pat Carey, i mbun na Roinne, bhí plé idir an Aire Stáit agus é féin sa Dáil. Seo an rud a dúirt an tAire Stáit ag an am:

Aontaímid go léir go bhfuil an straitéis tábhachtach ach tá cur i bhfeidhm na straitéise níos tábhachtaí fós. Tá ceisteanna bunúsacha, tábhachtacha le freagairt ag an Aire. Má amharcann duine ar chaiteachas na Roinne don bhliain seo, agus don bhliain seo chugainn, agus na blianta amach romhainn, tá titim thubaisteach ann. In 2007, bhí €112 milliún ag an Roinn agus an bhliain seo chugainn tá €40 milliún, beagnach an rud a dúirt an Bord Snip Nua, a dúirt €36 milliún. Nach n-aontaíonn an tAire go mbeidh sé an-deacair ar fad freagracht a ghlacadh ar straitéis na Gaeilge agus ar rudaí eile a bhaineann leis an Ghaeltacht nuair atá titim chomh tubaisteach sin ar an chaiteachas atá á chur ar fáil don Roinn sa bhliain seo chugainn agus na blianta ina dhiaidh sin? Níl sin dodhéanta. Tá an Rialtas ag cleasaíocht, mar níl sé i gceist aige ach an straitéis a chur amach nuair nach bhfuil sé ar intinn aige í a chur i bhfeidhm.

Cuirim i leith an Aire go bhfuil an chleasaíocht chéanna ar bun aige féin inniu. An bhfuil náire air bheith ina shuí anseo inniu tar éis an chinnidh atá déanta ag an Cheannaire sa Teach seo

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cosc a chur ar an díospóireacht ag 4 p.m. inniu ar ghnéithe fíorthábhachtacha den Bhille seo? Is léir go bhfuil an gilitín le himirt tráthnóna inniu agus go bhfuil Fine Gael agus Páirtí an Lucht Oibre ag déanamh hatchet job ar chúrsaí Gaeilge agus Gaeltachta agus is mór an náire dóibh é.

Deirim sin sa chomhthéacs go bhfuil an tAire Stáit féin tar éis a rá an lá faoi dheireadh go bhfuil an próiseas le tosú maidir le daoine a roghnú le cur ar bhord Údarás na Gaeltachta, gan fiú Céim an Choiste rite sa Teach seo, gan é a bheith pléite sa Dáil, gan é a bheith sínithe ag an Uachtarán. Nach beag an meas atá ann don phróiseas daonlathach? Nach léiríonn sin an dearcadh atá ag an Rialtas i leith bhord Údarás na Gaeltachta agus go bhfuil an meas céanna aige ar an Seanad, nach bhfuil sé sásta fiú go mbeadh an díospóireacht thart nuair atá na cinntí ag dul ar aghaidh? Bhí cruinniú ag feidhmeannaigh na Roinne inné i gConamara le baill agus ionadaithe ó na comharchumainn agus na comhlachtaí pobalbhunaithe nuair a dúradh leo go gcuirfí an Bille i bhfeidhm ar an bhealach seo. Níl an Bille fiú pléite agus críochnaithe sa Teach seo. Nach bhfuil náire ar bith ag an Aire Stáit, nach bhfuil meas ar bith aige ar an bpróiseas daonlathach sa Teach seo? Dá mbeadh an tAire Stáit ar an taobh seo Tí, bheadh sé ag rá rudaí cosúil leis an méid a dúirt sé go bhfuil an Rialtas ag cleasaíocht mar níl sé i gceist aige ach an straitéis a chur amach nuair nach bhfuil sé ar intinn aige í a chur i bhfeidhm.

Sin atá ar bun ag an Aire Stáit anseo, cleasaíocht le seachtain go leith, ag ligean air féin go bhfuil meas aige ar an Teach seo agus go bhfuil suim aige sa straitéis a chur i bhfeidhm. Dá mbeadh suim aige sa straitéis a chur i bhfeidhm, chuirfeadh sé na hacmhainní cuí ar fáil agus níl sé a dhéanamh sin. Dá mbeadh suim aige sa daonlathas, bheimis ag leanúint ar aghaidh le toghchán Údarás na Gaeltachta ach is léir nach bhfuil ag an Aire Stáit ná ag a chomhghleacaithe a vótáil ar maidin leis an ghilitín a thabhairt isteach.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian Van Turhout): Can I ask the Senator to stick the amendment, the Order of Business has been agreed?

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Baineann sé go dlúth leis an leasú agus míneoidh mé cén fáth. Tá mise ag tagairt, mar a bhí an tAire Stáit ag tagairt, do chur i bhfeidhm na straitéise. Tá an Bille seo bunaithe ar na limistéir teanga ina bhfuil an straitéis le cur i bhfeidhm. Tá grúpaí le bheith ainmnithe sna ceantair sin leis an straitéis a chur i bhfeidhm agus tá an Rialtas ag rá gur féidir sin a dhéanamh gan acmhainní. Seo iad na ceantair phleanála teanga atá i gceist: i gCorcaigh, Múscraí agus Oileán Cléire, i gCiarraí, tá Ciarraí thiar agus Ciarraí theas, I nDún na nGall, tá tuaisceart Dhún na nGall — Fánaid, Ros Goill, an Tearmann, na Dúnaibh agus ceantar eile, tá Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir, ansin tá Cloich an Chionnaola, Gort an Choirce, Toraigh, an Fál Carrach agus Machaire an Rabharthaigh. Ina dhiaidh sin, tá Na Rosa, an Clochán Liath, Ailt an Chorráin, Arainn Mhór agus Leitir Mhic an Bhaird, tá an Ghaeltacht Lár agus ansin tá Dún na nGall theas. I nGaillimh, tá an tEachréidh agus ansin tá Maigh Cuilinn, Bearna, Cnoc na Cathrach curtha le chéile. I gCois Fharraige, táimid ag caint faoin cheantar ó Na Forbacha siar go Ros an Mhíl agus faoin Cheathrú Rua agus Ceantar na nOileán curtha le chéile, Aiorras Aithneach agus Corr na Móna, atá na mílte ó na chéile, curtha le chéile agus Oileáin Árann. I Maigh Eo, tá Acaill and Tuar Mhic Éadaigh agus Aiorras. I gContae na Mí, tá Ráth Chairn agus Baile Ghib agus tá Na Déise i bPort Láirge.

Caitheadh suas le €500,000 ar staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíocht, a rinne saineolaithe ó Acadamh na hOllscolaíocht Gaeilge, ag comhoibriú le comhghleacaithe ó Ollscoil Mhá Nuad, ina rinneadh plé iomlán cuimsitheach trasna na tíre le daoine atá ag plé le hearnáil na Gaeilge agus na Gaeltachta, a chuir moltaí ar fáil, agus tá mé ag iarraidh fáil amach nach bhfuil an tAire Stáit ag glacadh leis na moltaí a rinne siad tar éis an staidéar sin ar fad a dhéanamh.

Tá mé tar éis a rá go bhfuil an tAire Stáit ag déanamh beag is fiú den Teach seo, den díospóireacht agus de na leasuithe mar is léir ón méid leasuithe lenar nglac an tAire Stáit nach bhfuil sé ag tabhairt aird ar bith ar na leasuithe, ní amháin a chuir muidne síos ach a cuireadh síos trínne ag eagraíochta agus daoine amuigh ansin atá ag plé le hearnáil na Gaeilge agus na Gaeltachta leis na blianta fada, a bhfuil saineolas acu ann chomh maith leis an Roinn.

An bhfuil an tAire Stáit ag rá go bhfuil níos mó saineolais aige ar na ceisteanna seo ná na dreamanna eile ar fad? Bhí ionchur acu sin ar fad sa staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíochta. Moladh ansin go rangófaí na ceantair Ghaeltacha i rannóg A, B agus C ó thaobh na Gaeilge de. An rud atá ar bun ag an Rialtas sa Bhille seo ná ag cur na gceantar seo i mullach a chéile.

Léiríonn sin cúpla rud dom. Léiríonn sé, b'fhéidir, gur cuma leis an Aire Stáit sa diabhal faoi iad a bheith caite isteach i mullach a chéile nó nach dtuigeann sé go mbeidh sé an-deacair pleananna cuimsitheacha teanga a bheidh éifeachtach a chur i bhfeidhm sna ceantair sin mar gheall ar na codarsnachtaí atá ann ó thaobh leibhéil labhairt na Gaeilge sna ceantair féin. Tóg Cois Fharraige, ó na Forbacha siar go dtí Ros an Mhíl, ceantar uafásach leathan. Ní ionann an caighdeán Gaeilge agus an méid daoine atá ag labhairt na Gaeilge sna Forbacha agus atá thiar i Ros an Mhíl. Tá riachtanais iomlán difriúla acu agus tá an tAire Stáit ag iarraidh go mbeadh eagraíocht amháin as an gceantar sin ag cur an phlean teanga i bhfeidhm ar fud an cheantair sin ar fad. Cén saineolas a tugadh ar bord go ndeachaigh an Rialtas i gcoinne na moltaí sa staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíochta maidir leis na limistéir A, B agus C? Ar airgead amú a bhí sa méid airgid a chaith muid ar an staidéar sin nó an bhfuil an tAire Stáit ina Aire Stáit *à la carte* ó thaobh an staidéir de, ag piocadh píosaí anseo agus ansiúd? Má tá an tAire Stáit ag déanamh sin, tá sé ag déanamh dearmaid agus tá sé ag dul buille an bháis a thabhairt don Ghaeilge seachas í a shlánú mar a dúirt sé féin atá sé ag iarraidh a dhéanamh. An rud a dúradh sa staidéar cuimsitheach ón léamh a rinne mé air ná go raibh práinn leis na moltaí ach gur gá na moltaí ar fad a chur i bhfeidhm ina n-iomláine. Níl an tAire Stáit ag déanamh sin sa Bhille seo.

Sin an fáth go bhfuilimid ag cur leasuithe chun cinn maidir leis na limistéir atá an tAire Stáit ag ainmniú. Cén fáth sa diabhal go bhfuil an tAire Stáit ag cur áiteanna cosúil le Iorras Aithneach agus Corr na Móna, atá iomlán difriúil óna chéile, atá mílte ó na chéile, isteach san áit amháin? Níl aon nasc traidisiúnta ag an dá cheantar sin lena chéile, ní bhíonn aon ghluaiseacht mhór pobail idir Corr na Móna agus Iorras Aithneach. Ansin, tá an tAire Stáit ag tógáil cheantar Thuar Mhic Éadaigh agus á chur isteach le hOileán Acaill. Is daoine breátha iad muintir Thuar Mhic Éadaigh agus muintir Acla ach is mó teacht le chéile a bhíonn ag muintir Thuar Mhic Éadaigh agus muintir Chorr na Móna lena chéile mar tá an dá cheantar buailte ar a chéile. Is pobal dhúiche Sheoigheach a bhíonn ansin a thagann le chéile.

Níl mórán céille ag baint leis an leagan amach atá déanta ach caithfidh an tAire Stáit tógáil san áireamh staid na teanga sna bailte éagsúla taobh istigh de na limistéir atá déanta ag an Roinn. Sin atá molta sna leasuithe atá a gcur chun cinn anseo: agus an tAire limistéir shonracha a ainmniú, cuirfidh an tAire san áireamh staid na Gaeilge sa phobal atá ina gcónaí sa limistéir sin agus ní ainmneoidh sé limistéir ina bhfuil cónaí ar phobal atá neamhchosúil lena chéile go teangeolaíoch.

Beidh na Seanadóirí Rialtais agus Seanadóirí eile san Fhreasúra ag rá “cén dochar?”. Ag brath ar an eagraíocht atá le roghnú ó thaobh chur chun cinn an plean teanga sa ceantar sin, d'fhéadfadh leatrom a bheith ann ó thaobh amháin den phobal nó ón taobh eile. Mar shampla, agus níl mé ag rá go dtarlóidh seo, ó thaobh na Forbacha go Ros an Mhíl, cén eagraíocht a roghnóidh an tAire chun an plean a chur i bhfeidhm? Abair go bhfuil tromlach ann ó thaobh an cheantair sin ina bhfuil an Béarla in uachtar, agus é ag teacht níos láidre. Luíonn sé le réasún go mbeidh daoine ón taobh sin ag troid go gcaithfear níos mó acmhainní ar an taobh

[Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh.]

sin, san áit ina bhfuil daoine ag foghlaim Gaeilge agus nach bhfuil an pobal chomh láidir, agus go mbeifear ag déanamh neamhshuim den dream atá láidir ó thaobh na Gaeilge, atá dhá labhairt mar theanga pobail agus mar sin de. Sin an cineál lochta a fuaireadh ar scéim na gcúntóirí teanga, scéim a raibh sibh in ainm agus a bheith ag déanamh athbhreithnithe air agus scéim nua a thabhairt chun cinn. Dúradh go raibh an scéim dírithe, nuair a thosnaigh sé, go huile agus go hiomlán ar fhoghlaimeoirí Gaeilge, in áit a bheith ag díriú ar saibhriú teanga ar an dream a bhfuil Gaeilge ó dhúchas acu sna tithe. Is dóigh liomsa gur sin an fáth gur mhol an staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíoch go gcaithfear sonrú a dhéanamh idir na limistéir A, B agus C. I na limistéir A, tá an Ghaeilge i ndáiríre ina theanga pobail, á labhairt ag na teallaigh agus sna scoileanna agus le cloisteáil sa séipéal, sna siopaí agus sna gnóthaí agus mar sin de. Má chuirtear na ceantair eile isteach ina mullach orthu, ní bhfeifear in ann fócas mar is ceart a chur ar na hacmhainní teoranta atá dhá úsáid.

An cheist mhór eile ná an é go bhfuil an tAire Stáit ag magadh fúinn, ag ligint dúinn an díospóireacht seo a chur cinn agus ansin cruinnithe a eagrú leis na comharchumainn agus na comhlachtaí pobalbhunaithe agus ag rá leo go mbeidh an mbuiséad níos lú, ach go mbeidh sé ag cur ualaigh breise oibre orthu? Ní bheidh siad in ann é a dhéanamh. D'admhaigh an tAire Stáit féin dhá bhliain ó shin nuair a bhí roinnt airgid fós fágtha, go raibh an buiséad gearrtha go feirc ag an údarás agus go raibh brú ar na chomharchumainn. An bhfuil a chloigeann sna scamail ag an Aire Stáit nó an bhfuil sé ag magadh fúinn? An gcreideann sé an rud atá á rá aige nó an ceap magaidh é seo? An bhfuil sé ina phuipéad ag an Aire Airgeadais agus ag an Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe, atá ag déanamh ciorruithe agus ag cur na ciorruithe sin i bhfeidhm, agus é ag déanamh iarrachta a chur ina luí ar phobal na Gaeilge agus na Gaeltachta go bhfuil siad dáiríre? Dá mbeadh siad dáiríre, bheadh siad ag cur an airgid ar fáil leis an straitéis a chur i bhfeidhm.

Tóg mar shampla ceann de na limistéir pleanála teanga agus má tá, mar shampla, ranganna Gaeilge ag teastáil sna Forbacha, cé tá chun iad sin a chur i bhfeidhm? An hfuil daoine ón údarás nó ón Roinn chun ranganna Gaeilge a chur ar fáil saor in aisce mar gur stát sheirbhísigh iad? An dtiocfaidh trasna tráthnóna ag a seacht a chlog mar go bhfuil sé sa bplean teanga atá ag an gceantar sin go dteastaíonn ranganna Gaeilge? Níl an t-airgead ag na comharchumainn lena leithéid a chur ar bun. Má táimid ag iarraidh na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn, caithfear acmhainní a chur ar fáil.

Tá amhras orm go bhfuil cur i gcéill ar bun. Tá amhras orm go bhfuil an tAire Stáit agus an Roinn chun ligint orthu go raibh díospóireacht fiúntach anseo agus gur phlé muid an Buille le huaireanta fada. Ach i ndáiríre, níl ar bun acu ach ag cur suas facade go bhfuil siad ar son na Gaeilge nuair atá fórsaí eile sa Rialtas, idir Fine Gael agus Páirtí an Lucht Oibre atá diongbháilte ar deireadh a chur le cúrsaí Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht, deireadh a chur leis an mhaoiniú agus ar mholtaí McCarthy agus an bord snip nua a chur i bhfeidhm, beag beann ar na riachtanais. Cuirfidh siad an milleán ansin ar an troika agus mar sin agus iad ag ochón nach bhfuil aon airgead againn agus go bhfuil orthu na ciorruithe a chur i bhfeidhm, ach iad ag rá go bhfuil an t-ádh linn go bhfuil údarás againn.

Throid muid ar son an údaráis. Throid daoine a chuaigh romham ar son an údaráis. Throid siad ar son an daonlathais agus troidfidh muid arís. Táimid chun na leasuithe atá curtha chun cinn agus táim ag súil go mór le freagraí an Aire Stáit ar na cheisteanna a d'ardaigh mé.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: D'éist mé leis an bheirt Sheanadóir. Bhí am agam éisteacht leis an méid a bhí le rá acu. Ó cheapadh mise i m'Aire Stáit, ceann de na ceisteanna is mó a tháinig aníos sa Dáil le linn tráth na gceist seachtain i ndiaidh seachtaine, mí in ndiaidh míosa, ná cad atá á dhéanamh ag an Aire agus an Rialtas mar go bhfuil an straitéis 20 bliain ann agus go

bhfuil bliain imithe gan faic na fríde déanta. Deirtear go bhfuil muid ag cur dallamullóg ar an phobal, ar an Ghaeltacht agus ar ghach éinne agus go bhfuil cleasaíocht ar siúl againn. Má tá cleasaíocht ar siúl ag éinne, is istigh anseo leis an bhFreasúra atá an chleasaíocht. Ní seo an chéad uair do chuid den bhFreasúra an chleasaíocht a chleachtadh, mar tá cleasaíocht ar siúl acu i ngach réimse de shaol na tíre, ní hamháin ar réimse na Gaeltachta. Le reifrinn agus gach rud eile, is í an chleasaíocht the lowest common denominator.

Tá mise bródúil agus mórtasach gur éirigh liom Bille Gaeltachta a thabhairt isteach. Ainneoin an méid adúirt na Seanadóirí, tá an Bille anseo anois. Tá plé leathan déanta ar na rudaí seo le blianta anuas, ar chimisiún Gaeltachta, suirbhé teangeolaíochta, teagmháil le pobal na Gaeltachta agus straitéis 20 bliain. Anois tá Bille Gaeltachta againn, agus táthar ag rá nach raibh aon seans acu anseo plé a dhéanamh air, nach raibh aon seans ag an Ghaeltacht plé a dhéanamh air, go bhuil muid ag brú rudaí agus go bhfuil gilitín ann agus mar sin de. Seo an chéad uair atá gilitín ann, ach tá plé an-fhada déanta ar an Bhille cheana féin. Ar ndóigh, sílim go mbeidh tuilleadh plé an tseachtain seo chugainn ar an Bhille. Fair play, beidh mise anseo. Tá mise sásta teacht isteach lá i ndiaidh lae agus é a phlé, chomh fada agus a fhanann muid taobh istigh de rialacha an Tí seo.

Deirtear nach bhuil muid ag déanamh aon phlé leis na ceantair Gaeltacht. Táimid ag déanamh plé leo. Tá an Seanadóir féin i ndiaidh a rá go raibh an Roinn amuigh le cúpla lá agus go raibh siad ag plé seo le muintir Chonamara agus muintir na Gaeltachta san iarthar. Táthar i mo cheantar féin, i dTír Chonaill, ag plé agus ag dul i gcomhairle leis na daoine thuas ansin. Beidh siad i gCúige Mumhan agus Cúige Laighean gan mhoill agus beidh siad in nGaeltacht na Mí gan mhoill. Tá siad ag dul timpeall na tíre. Tá siad amuigh ag plé leis na pobail agus níl an Bille reachtáilte agus níl chun aon leithscéal a ghabháil maidir le sin. Táimid ag ullmhú an talaimh. Muna raibh siad amuigh, bheadh an Seanadóir Ó Clochartaigh ag rá nach bhfuil muid dáiríre agus nach bhfuil muid i dteagmháil le pobal na Gaeltachta. Tá sé ag labhairt amach ó dhá thaobh a bhéal. Tá sé ag déanamh sin ó thosnaigh sé anseo. Tá sé in am aige smaoineamh ar mhuintir na Gaeltachta, seachas a bheith ag déanamh political football den rud. Sin an méid a bhfuil sé ábalta a dhéanamh.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Tá cleachtadh mhaith ag an Aire Stáit ar sin a dhéanamh.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Labhair an Seanadóir faoi quangos an lá eile.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Ní raibh. B'shin an Seanadóir Ó Domhnaill.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Níl mise chun éisteacht le Trevor Ó Clochartaigh ag caint ar quangos anseo.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Ar phointe oird, ba mhaith liom a chur ar an taifead nár luaigh mise an focal “quango” aon uair a labhair mé an fhad agus a bhí muid ag labhairt ar seo an tseachtain seo caite. Tá dul amú ar an Aire Stáit agus ba chóir dó sin a tharraingt siar. Is é an Seanadóir Ó Domhnaill a luaigh quangos an tseachtain seo caite agus ba mhaith liom go dtarraingeodh an tAire Stáit siar an ráiteas, mar is léir go bhfuil——

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): The Senator should resume his seat.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Bhí an Seandóir ag caint faoi bhoird agus mar sin de. Dúirt mise go mbeidh bord ar Údarás na Gaeltacht as a mbeidh muid bródúil, má bhíonn an deis agam é sin a dhéanamh agus má théann an Bille tríd an dá Theach seo agus má shíníonn an tUachtarán é. Tá bord agus daoine i dTuaisceart éireann, ach fiú amháin, muna bhuil an creideamh ceart ag duine, ní gheobhaidh sé áit ar an bloody board. Coinnítear daoine ó bhord ansin mar nach

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bhfuil an creideamh ceart acu, ní amháin polataíocht, mar shampla, an bord uisce thuas ansin. Scannal mór atá ansin. An é sin an rud atá i gceist ag an Seanadóir?

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Cén fianaise atá ag Aire Stáit faoi sin? Tabhair an fhianaise dúinn má tá sé ann. Sin bréag.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Tá sé le léamh ar pháipéir na tíre.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Má chreideann an tAire Stáit chuile shórt a léann sé ar na páipéir——

Senator Thomas Byrne: Ar phointe oird, tá leasú tar éis teacht isteach ón Rialtas ar an ríomhphoist díreach anois. Tá sé scanallach go bhfuil leasú ag teacht isteach anois. Caithfimid stop a chur leis an díospóireacht seo. Níl sé ceart dul ar aghaidh mar seo. Tá daoine sásta díospóireacht a dhéanamh ar an Bhille, ach tá leasuithe ag teacht isteach chuig na hoifigigh. Tá sin scanallach agus náireach.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): Is the Senator calling a quorum? No, just raising a point of order. With regard to those trying to listen to the translation, the volume has decreased in the past five minutes and I have asked for the volume to be raised. It is because of the lack of volume we are struggling with this.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Aontaím leis an Seanadóir Byrne. He has pointed out something very important. We are in here debating and do not have access to our e-mails or printers. We can get e-mails on our I-phones, but we do not have access to the additional amendments from the Government.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): My understanding is that it is not an additional amendment, just a correction to the text. I understand there are not new amendments.

Senator Thomas Byrne: Is cuma más athrú atá ann, sin leasú.

Senator Thomas Byrne: We have not seen the changes. We are in here debating the Bill and Committee Stage is to be guillotined at 4 p.m. This is not the way to do business.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Cé nach n-aontaím go minic leis an méid a bhíonn le rá ag an Aire Stáit, sílim gur ceart go mbeadh a chomleacaithe anseo leis an meas atá acu ar Bhille na Gaeltachta a léiriú. Tá sé scanallach nach bhfuil níos mó acu anseo agus mar sin ba mhaith liom córam a ghlaoch.

Notice taken that 12 Members were not present; House counted and 12 Members being present,

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Tógfaidh mé leasuithe Uimh. 11 go 14 go huile le chéile. Tá sé mar aidhm ag an Bhille seo feidhm reachtúil a thabhairt don phróiseas phleanála sa Ghaeltacht trí dheis a thabhairt do na pobail éagsúla Gaeltachta plean——

Senator Thomas Byrne: On a point of order, I would like a ruling on amendment No. 143. The ruling I am seeking is that the amendment was not envisaged when the House made a decision on the Order of Business this morning to guillotine the Bill. I want a ruling, therefore, that the amendment is not part of the guillotine and cannot be considered by the House. If it is to be considered by the House, Committee Stage should be extended and the guillotine

removed. We did not know this amendment would be before us when the House agreed the use of the guillotine.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): The amendment to amendment No. 143 is a technical correction to the Irish version and we will deal with it when we come to amendment No. 143. I suggest we continue and listen to the Minister of State. We are now dealing with amendments Nos. 11 to 14.

Senator Thomas Byrne: With all due respect, can I make a point about technical corrections? Every amendment to legislation is a technical correction, that is the whole point. That is not an excuse. This is a disgrace and an abuse of democracy.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): I have noted the Senator's point.

Senator Sean D. Barrett: Are the tactics of the Government to ensure we never get near amendment No. 143? That is what the Government is doing.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Beidh 19 limistéar pleanála teanga i gceist dá réir. Beidh na pleananna ullmhaithe faoi réir rialachán a tharraingeoidh suas na critéir le haghaidh pleanála teanga. Tá an 19 ceantar bunaithe cuid mhaith ar na limistéir le haghaidh pleanála atá in úsáid ag Údarás na Gaeltachta cheana féin. Ciallaíonn an cur chuige seo go bhfuil dlús maith daonra sna ceantair éagsúla agus beidh mórfhean teanga le réiteach ina leith.

Tabharfaidh an mórfhean seo aitheantas do na cúinsí teanga éagsúla taobh istigh de na limistéir le haghaidh pleanála teanga. I gcás na bpobal sin ina labhraíonn mórán na ndaoine Gaeilge iontu, beidh béal ar chosaint na Gaeilge mar ghnáth-theanga an phobail, agus i gcás pobail eile nach bhfuil an Ghaeilge chomh láidir iontu, beidh béal ar na gréasáin phobail Ghaeilge atá iontu a láidriú.

Is cur chuige praiticiúil é seo a thugann aitheantas don phrionsabal gur faoin phobal atá sé, i ndeireadh na dála, cinneadh a thógáil maidir le todhchaí na Gaeilge mar theanga theaghlaigh agus phobail agus beart dá réir a dhéanamh le tacaíocht chuí ón Stát. Beidh deis ag na pobail teanga atá níos láidre ag limistéar pleanála teanga spreagadh a thabhairt do na pobail teanga eile nach bhfuil chomh láidir sin. Ar scáth a chéile a mhairfidh siad. Níl sé beartaithe mar sin agam idirdhealú a dhéanamh faoin reachtaíocht idir catagóirí A, B agus C, mar a rinneadh sa staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíochta. Mar sin, níl sé i gceist agam glacadh leis na leasuithe seo dá réir.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Tá dul amú ar an Aire Stáit maidir leis an gcur chuige atá aige. Nuair a rinneadh an staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíochta, rinneadh go leor staidéir agus baineadh úsáid as go leor fíricí éagsúla a bhain le labhairt na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht, ceann amháin acu sin ná scéim labhairt na Gaeilge.

Thug scéim labhairt na Gaeilge le fios cé mhéad duine óg a chuir isteach ar an deontas áirithe sin. Tá an tAire Stáit ag iarraidh fáil réidh den scéim mar bhraith sé nár chóir go mbeimis ag íoc airgid le daoine sa Ghaeltacht le bheith ag labhairt na Gaeilge. Sin díospóireacht le haghaidh lá eile. An rud eile a bhí úsáideach maidir le scéim labhairt na Gaeilge ná gur thug sé slat tomhais dúinn ar cé mhéad Gaeilge a bhí á labhairt sna ceantair éagsúla agus tá sin imithe anois.

Luaigh an Seanadóir Ó Domhnaill go ndéanfar áireamh ar staid na Gaeilge sna ceantair. Cén chaoi go bhfuil sé i gceist ag an Aire an cuntas sin a dhéanamh maidir le dul chun cinn nó easpa dul chun cinn atá a dhéanamh ar na pleananna teanga sna limistéir éagsúla? Cén chaoi go bhfuil sé ag dul a mheas go bhfuil níos mó nó níos lú á labhairt iontu agus dá bhrí sin, cén

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slat tomhais atá aige go bhfuil plean ag obair nó nach bhfuil ag obair? An mbraitheann sé ar cén ghiúmar atá ar an Aire Stáit maidin Luain nó chuaigh sé chuig coisir sa Spidéal agus bhí an-chraic ann agus labhair daoine an Ghaeilge leis, nó a mhalairt, go ndeachaigh sé go dtí na Forbacha agus go raibh sé ina sheasamh taobh amuigh den údarás agus gur áirigh sé roinnt daoine ag siúl thairis suas an bóthar agus iad ag Béarlóireacht eatarthu? An mbeadh an tAire Stáit ansin ag déanamh a chinnidh féin go bhfuil an Ghaeilge ag dul chun cinn nó nach bhfuil? Cá bhfuil na critéir? Cén phróiseas atá le measúnú leanúnach a dhéanamh ar dul chun cinn na bpleananna? Tá sin tábhachtach sa chás seo mar ní hé an slat tomhais céanna a bheidh in úsáid sna ceantair éagsúla. Cuirim i gcás, agus an tAire Stáit ag cur Thur Mhic Éadaigh isteach le hAcaill, má thiteann an tóin as Gaeltacht amháin acu ó thaobh labhairt na Gaeilge, an bhfuil an tAire Stáit chun an ceantar iomlán a tharraingt anuas?

In éagmais scéim labhairt na Gaeilge, cén slat tomhais atá ag an Aire Stáit? An mbeimid ag fanacht leis an daonáireamh chuile roinnt blianta? Má táimid, beidh an Gaeilge básaithe go maith faoin am a bheidh an straitéis curtha i bhfeidhm. Má tá orainn fanacht leis an daonáireamh chuile uair a thagann sé chun cinn, ní bheidh an Roinn in ann measúnú leanúnach a dhéanamh ó sheachtain go seachtain maidir le dul chun cinn na bpleananna sna ceantair éagsúla.

Baineann seo leis an 19 limistéar. Cén fáth nach bhfuil an tAire Stáit ag glacadh leis an saineolas ó Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge? Cén fáth nach bhfuil sé ag glacadh leis an saineolas a bhí ag Ollscoil Mhá Nuad, a raibh ionchur láidir aici maidir leis an staidéar teangeolaíochta? Dúirt an tAire Stáit féin go raibh muid blianta fada go dtí go raibh coimisiún na Gaeltachta ann, agus bhí, go dtí go raibh an staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíochta againn, bhí, go dtí go raibh ráiteas Rialtais againn i leith na Gaeilge, bhí, agus ansin go dtí go raibh an straitéis 20 bliain ann. Bhí go leor plé ann agus rinneadh an t-uafás moltaí ach tá an tAire Stáit ina Aire Stáit *à la carte* ag piocadh píosaí anseo agus ansiúd. Tá seo déanta aige leis an straitéis 20 bliain agus anois le Bille na Gaeltachta. Níl sé ag cur na straitéise ina hiomláine nó na moltaí uilig sa staidéar cuimsitheach i bhfeidhm. Tá sé ag piocadh píosaí anseo agus ansiúd. Bhí go leor plé ann; sin an fáth go bhfuil an díospóireacht seo chomh tábhachtach, mar faoin chur chuige atá ag an Rialtas, ní chuirfear i bhfeidhm na moltaí a rinneadh.

Bhí na moltaí sin bunaithe ar shaineolas acadúil, ionchur ó na pobail agus ionchur ó na páirtithe polaitíochta ar fad. Tá an tAire Stáit ag déanamh beag is fiú díobh agus tá a chomhleacaithe Rialtais ag aontú leis agus fiú, mar a rinne siad an lá faoi dheireadh, ag tabhairt bualadh bos dó as an dea obair, mar dhea, atá á dhéanamh aige. Ar ndóigh, ní thuigeann siad an dochar atá á dhéanamh acu agus is mór an náire dóibh é sin.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): I remind Senators that they should stick to the amendments before us.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: D'éist mé go cúramach leis an freagra a thug an tAire Stáit. An fhadhb a fheicim anseo ná má tá sé chun ceantair atá níos laige ná ceantair eile a chaitheamh le chéile, ní oibreoidh sin. Níl aon bunús eolaíochta ná teangeolaíochta le é sin a dhéanamh. Sa bhliain 2007, chuir an Rialtas ag an am staidéar teangeolaíoch ar fáil ar úsáid na teanga sa Ghaeltacht. Staidéar proifisiúnta a bhí ann ina raibh moltaí sonracha faoin Ghaeltacht a bhriseadh suas i ranna A, B agus C, ach tá cuma ar an scéal anois go bhfuil na moltaí agus an obair sin curtha ar leataobh agus go bhfuil slat tomhais úr ann anois.

Tá ceistanna agam faoi seo. Cén fáth an bhfuil an staidéar sin fágtha ar leataobh? Cén fáth nach bhfuil na moltaí sa staidéar i dtaca le ceantair Gaeltachta á chur san áireamh sa Bhille

seo? Cad iad na critéir atá in úsáid ag an Roinn agus an Rialtas leis an 19 ceantair atá molta a tharraingt le chéile? Cé a rinne an cinneadh na ceantair sin a tharraingt le chéile? An raibh aon plé leis an Coimisinéir Teanga i dtaca leis an 19 ceantair seo? An raibh aon plé le Údarás na Gaeltachta agus an rannóg pleanála teanga san údarás i dtaca leis an 19 ceantair atá á tharraingt le chéile. Muna bhfuil freagraí le fáil ar na ceisteanna bunúsacha seo, taispeánfaidh sin na laigí le se, ach fanfaidh mé anois leis na freagraí.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Maidir leis an 19 ceantair Gaeltachta, tá siad go léir lonnaithe taobh istigh de cheantair aitheanta Gaeltachta. Ní smaoineamh úr é 19 ceantair Gaeltachta a bheith ann, mar tá Údarás na Gaeltachta ag plé ar bhonn teanga leis na 19 ceantair seo le 30 bliain anuas. Táimid anois ag díriú isteach ar cheantair ansin a bhfuil taithí acu a bheith ag obair le chéile agus a bheith ag comhoibriú leis an údarás. Ar ndóigh, beidh cinnteofar na ceantair sna rialacháin a dhéanfar nuair a rachaidh an Bille tríd an Teach. Tá a fhios agam go bhfuil ceantar anseo agus ceantar ansiúd agus gur mhaith leo athruithe beaga. Sin an fáth go bhfuil oifigigh na Roinne amuigh i láthair na huaire ag dul ar fud na tíre agus ag éisteacht le muintir na Gaeltachta agus leis na heagraíochtaí. Más gá leasuithe a dhéanamh anseo agus ansiúd, beidh sin sna rialacháin. Níl insan Bille ach deis dúinn na rialacháin a thabhairt isteach agus iad a chur i bhfeidhm.

Labhair an Seanadóir faoin staidéar teangeolaíoch agus na ceantair teanga A, B agus C agus mar sin de. Níl a fhios agam an aontódh fiú an Seanadóir é féin leis na catagóirí go léir a rinne an staidéar teangeolaíoch. Tá aithne mhaith aige ar cheantar Rann na Feirste. Tá mé féin im chónaí in aice leis. Ní shílím go bhfuil duine ar bith nach n-admhódh go bhfuil scoth na Gaeilge i Rann na Feirste, ach ní raibh sé i gcatagóir A ar chor ar bith. Bhí sé i gcatagóir B nó C agus bhí raic uafásach ann de bharr sin. Rud amháin é a rá linn cloí le sin, ach bhí deacrachtaí le sin a dhéanamh, ní amháin i Rann na Feirste ach in áiteanna eile. Tá na feidhmeannaigh amuigh anois. Tá siad suas i dTír Chonaill inniu agus bhí siad thiar inné. Tá siad ag dul thart le dearcadh an phobail a fháil. Maidir leis na pleananna teanga seo, is pleananna an phobail iad. Ní pleananna Údarás na Gaeltachta iad, pleananna an phobail féin.

Labhair an Seanadóir Ó Clochartaigh faoi scéim labhartha na Gaeilge. Níl an scéim sin ann a thuilleadh mar rinneadh cineadh deireadh a chur leis an scéim. Rinneadh an cinneadh sin sular tháinig mé féin isteach sa Roinn. Déarfadh mé seo áfach, dá ma rud é gur éirigh leis na scéim sin, a bhí ar bun le idir 60 agus 70 bliain, an cuspóir a bhí aige a bhaint amach, ní bheadh aon ghá inniu le Bille Ghaeltachta mar bheadh muintir na Gaeltachta go léir ag labhairt na Gaeilge. Mar atá a fhios againn anois, sa daonáireamh deireannach tá 96,000 duine ina gcónaí sna ceantair Gaeltachta — chuaigh an méid in airde — ach ní labhraíonn ach 23,000 acu sin Gaeilge go laethúil, duine as gach ceathrar. Tá a fhios againn go léir go bhfuil ceantair sa Ghaeltacht atá níos laige ná ceantair eile agus ceantair atá níos láidre ná ceantair eile. Táimid ag iarraidh na ceantair aiceanta a thabhairt le chéile ionas go mbeidh an taobh láidir, an áit ina bhfuil an Ghaeilge fréamhaithe, in ann tionchur a imirt ar an dream eile agus an caighdeán a thabhairt aníos de réir a chéile. Sin an rud atá i gceist againn. Tá seanfhocal sa Ghaeilge: “Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na sléibhte.” Is cinnte gur ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine agus gur ar scáth a chéile a mhairfidh an Ghaeilge agus muintir na Gaeltachta. Tá mise lán sásta.

Inné chaith mé cúpla uair a chloig i gCluain Dolcáin, bruachbhaile do Bhaile Átha Cliath. Chuala mé trácht ar Chluain Dolcáin agus an obair iontach atá á dhéanamh acu ansin maidir leis an Ghaeilge agus an teanga. Chuaigh mé amach ansin inné le cuid d'oifigigh na Roinne agus caithfidh mé a rá go ndeachaigh an méid atá ar siúl amuigh ansin i bhfeidhm go mór orm. Tá Áras Chrónáin ansin ag freastal ar an phobal, ó na daoine óga go dtí na daoine meán aosta agus seandaoine. Tá imeachtaí Gaeilge ar siúl, ceol, cultúr, traidisiún agus teanga ag sul ar

[Deputy Dinny McGinley.]

aghaidh ansin seacht lá na seachtaine. Níor tháinig éinne ann as an Ghaeltacht nó as aon áit eile ach ó phobal Chluain Dolcáin agus chuaigh siad agus an áras i bhfeidhm go mór orm de bharr an méid Gaeilge a bhí le feiceáil agus na comharthaí Gaeilge a bhí ann. Tá 1,200 dalta ansin, there are 1,200 boys and girls in that area of Clondalkin. Bhí mé ag caint le fear ó Chonradh na Gaeilge faoi seo agus d'aontaigh sé liom go bhfuil an-obair á dhéanamh ansin, gan brú orthu ó éinne. D'fhéadfaí a rá go bhfuil Gaeiltacht ansin. Tá líonra Gaeilge ann agus tá na buachaillí agus na cailíní ansin ag fáil a gcuid oideachais trí Ghaeilge agus chuaigh sin i bhfeidhm go mór orm.

Ní raibh na daoine seo ag brath ar Bhille na Gaeilge, ní raibh siad ag brath ar Bhille na Gaeltachta, ní raibh siad ag brath ar an Rialtas ná ní raibh siad ag brath ar Dinny McGinley, Pat Carey ná Éamon Ó Cuív. Rinne siad féin an rud atá déanta acu. Caithfidh muid anois féachaint an féidir linn an deathoil agus an deamhéin sin don teanga atá ar fud na tíre a thabhairt linn. We must harness that good will, that understanding and that sympathy for the language that I found in Clondalkin. We must try to harness that, but not through coercion. We must ask the people to make up their own minds, while offering them all the advice and help we can, and let them do it themselves. That has been proved.

Bhí mé i mBeanntraí trí seachtain ó shin ag oscailt Gaelscoile, cé nach bhfuil Beanntraí sa Ghaeltacht. Tá 200 dalta sa scoil sin agus bhí na tuismitheoirí ag an oscailt. Níor thug éinne ordú dóibh Gaeilge a labhairt, ach fós dúirt na tuismitheoirí go raibh siad ag iarraidh a gcuid páistí a thógáil le Gaeilge. Fuair siad scoil úr agus bhí daltaí ann ó trí nó ceithre bliana d'aoise suas go dtí 12 agus iad ag labhairt na Gaeilge go nádúrtha. Ní raibh coercion ná brú orthu. Tháinig siad go deonach as a stuaim féin. Tá an rud atá ag dul ar aghaidh i gCluain Dolcáin agus Beanntraí ag dul ar aghaidh ar fud na tíre. Tá idir 150 agus 200 Gaelscoil ar fud na tíre taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht. Tá na líonraí sin ann agus níl siad chun éisteacht le brú, caithfidhmid iad a mholadh. Mol an oíge agus tiocfaidh sí. Mol na daoine seo agus tiocfaidh siad linn, ná cuir brú orthu.

Tá mé ag imeacht ón phointe ach níl Seanadóir amháin anseo a chloígh leis an phointe ó tháinig mé isteach. Ba mhaith liom an oiread seo a rá faoi acmhainní. We are in a different country. Bhí an Seanadóir ag caint faoi rudaí mar a bhí siad trí bliana ó shin. Tá a fhios aige go maith cad a tharla le trí bliana anuas; tá acmhainní teoranta againn, níl dabht faoi sin. Dá n-éistfimis le Sinn Féin cúpla seachtain ó shin, agus dá votálaimis “No” sa reifreann, ní bheadh aon acmhainní ann ar a chor ar bith. We would be the beggar men of Europe. Buíochas le Dia, níor éist muintir na hÉireann le Sinn Féin.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Fan go bhfeicimid an toradh a bheidh ar an reifreann.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Níor éist siad leis an phraiseach agus leis an amaidí a bhí ar siúl ag Sinn Féin. Anois, táimid ag fáil cuidiú ón Eoraip agus tá mise dóchasach sna blianta amach romhainn, le cuidiú Dé, go mbeidh níos mó acmhainní le fáil againn leis an phlean seo a chur i bhfeidhm.

É sin ráite, agus tá mé ag diriú mo shúl ar an economist atá inár measc, an Seanadóir Barrett ó Choláiste na Tríonóide, táimid chun €60 milliún i mbliana a chur isteach sa Ghaeilge sa tír seo. Níl suim bheag í sin. Táimid ag cur €500 milliún isteach sa Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna le teagasc na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn. Níl mise sásta go bhfuilimid ag fáil luacha ar ár gcuid airgid agus sin an fáth go bhfuil comhráití ag dul ar aghaidh idir mo Roinn agus an Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna i láthair na huaire. Beidh athruithe móra ag teacht ar theagasc na Gaeilge sna blianta amach romhainn.

Táimid ag cur acmhainní isteach sna meáin chumarsáide, TG4. Moladh go deo le hUachtarán na hÉireann, Michael D. Higgins, agus le Fine Gael nuair a bhí siad i gcumhacht, gur bhunaigh siad TG4.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Ar phointe oird, nuair a rialaigh an Cathaoirleach Gnómhach ar ball beag go raibh muid ag imeacht ón phointe, stopadh sinn. Tá an tAire Stáit imithe ar strae ar fad ón bpointe. Ba cheart a rá leis coinneáil leis an bpointe.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): That is not a point of order.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Níl ag an Aire Stáit ach é féin agus tá iallach air freagra a thabhairt do gach duine.

Táimid ag cur acmhainní isteach i Raidió na Gaeltachta. Táimid ag cur acmhainní isteach sna foilseacháin Ghaeilge. Déarfainn go mbeadh €1 billiún sa bhliain curtha isteach againn. B'fhéidir nár leor é ach táimid ag brath ar dhaoine an t-airgead a thabhairt dúinn. Nuair a gheobhaimid ár neamhspleáchas eacnamaíochta, when we regain our economic and financial independence, tá súil agam go mbeidh níos mó airgid le cur isteach.

Níl, áfach, airgead chun an Ghaeilge a thabhairt ar ais. No, people cannot be bought to speak a language, it has been proved again and again. Mar a dúirt mé, níl ach dóigh amháin leis an Ghaeilge a choinneáil slán sa Ghaeltacht agus le daoine a chuidiú taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht: iad a mhealladh agus a mholadh, agus comhairle agus cuidiú a thabhairt dóibh. Dá n-éireodh leis an straitéis a bhí againn ó bunaíodh an Stát, ní bheadh aon fhadhb agam inniu agus sinn go léir ag labhairt Gaeilge agus ní bheadh deacracht ag éinne. Tá mise ag iarraidh tarrtháil a thabhairt ar an Ghaeltacht, tá mé ag iarraidh cuidiú leis an Ghaeilge ar fud na tíre agus sin an fáth go bhfuil mé thar a bheith sásta leis an Bhille atá againn ag an phointe seo. Sin an fáth nach mbeidh mé ag glacadh le haon cheann de na leasuithe seo, leasuithe Uimh. 11, 12, 13 nó 14.

Senator Jimmy Harte: Listening to the Minister of State on the reason so many people do not speak Irish in the country, 60 or 70 years of bad language, I am a victim of that, I am the classic case, coming from an area in Donegal.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: No different from anyone else in the country.

Senator Jimmy Harte: I went through national school and secondary school and had an Irish class every day for 15 years. I am embarrassed to say that I have more French than Irish, and I do not speak French very well. We should be in a situation where I could speak Irish comfortably because I spent 15 years learning it at school. If we continue to do this, the next generation will have the same Irish ability as I have. My own bean chéile, my wife, is fluent, from west Donegal, and that rubbed off on my children, who had good academic results in Irish. As well as that, they went to the Gaeltacht every summer, and that was a massive help.

Sinn Féin, which espouses the Irish language, has shown less than glorious commitment in Northern Ireland. On top of that, the MLAs all come to their holiday homes in west Donegal but refuse to pay the local charge in the Gaeltacht areas.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: On a point of order. Tá an Seanadóir ag vafláil faoi rudaí nach bhfuil baint dá laghad acu leis na sonraí. Má tá sé ag iarraidh a bheith ag tabhairt amach faoi Shinn Féin, ligtear dó, ach níl sé ag labhairt ar na leasuithe.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): I would ask the Senator to stick to the amendment.

Senator Jimmy Harte: I am making a valid point.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): I would like Senators to stick to the amendments before us. We are on Committee Stage and discussing amendments Nos. 11 to 14.

Senator Jimmy Harte: I want to reiterate the Minister of State's remarks that the previous Administrations' policies, even the previous Fine Gael-Labour Governments in the 1970s and 1980s, did not deliver the Irish language tuition all children in this country should have. I spoke recently to a Polish person in Poland, and I was told they learn Russian first.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): That is not relevant to the amendment.

Senator Jimmy Harte: It is relevant because they were not taught Polish, they had to learn Russian.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): I am trying to apply the same rules to all Senators.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Tá mé ag éisteacht go cruinn. Dúirt an tAire Stáit go leor ach níor fhreagair sé aon cheist a cuireadh air maidir leis na leasuithe áirithe seo. Labhair sé faoi scéim labhairt na Gaeilge agus an chaoi a cuireadh deireadh leis. An cheist a chuir mise faoin scéim ná bhí na figiúirí don dream a bhí ar an scéim sin á n-úsáid le slat tomhais a bheith ann maidir le húsáid na Gaeilge agus bhí daoine in ann a fheiceáil tríothu an raibh níos mó nó níos lú daoine óga ag labhairt na Gaeilge. D'iarr mé cén phróiseas atá ann le measúnú leanúnach a dhéanamh ar labhairt na Gaeilge in éagmais a leithéid agus an bhfuilimid ag brath ar an daonáireamh amháin.

Luaigh an tAire Stáit an €60 milliún atá á chaitheamh ar chúrsaí Gaeilge agus Gaeltachta. Bheadh sé go breá dá dtabharfadh an tAire Stáit briseadh síos dúinn ar cad go díreach ar a bhfuil an €60 milliún sin á chaitheamh agus an bhfuil sé ar fad á chaitheamh ar chúrsaí Gaeilge agus Gaeltachta.

Ba mhaith liom ceist a chur ar an Aire Stáit agus ar gach duine ar bhinsí an Rialtais. Tá achoimre agam anseo ar an staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíocht ar úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht. Cá fhad a a chaith an tAire Stáit á leamh? Ar léigh aon duine eile dá chomhghleacaithe ar bhinsí an Rialtais an staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíocht ar úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht?

Seo an moladh a rinneadh, agus tá seo ag tagairt go sonrach do na limistéir Ghaeltachta, go ndéanfar leasú maidir leis na limistéir Ghaeltachta:

Féadfaidh an Rialtas ó am go ham le hordú a chinneadh gur limistéar Gaeltachta de chuid:

(i) Chatagóir A iad limistéir shainithe pleanála teanga a bhfuil mórchuid an phobail ina gcainteoirí gníomhacha Gaeilge iontu mar a léirítear i bhfaisnéis an daonáirimh agus i bhfaisnéis scéim labhairt na Gaeilge, a bhfuil tumoideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge á chur i bhfeidhm iontu ag an mbunleibhéal agus ag an leibhéal an iar-bhunoideachas agus a bhfuil plean teanga comhaontaithe ag an Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta [mar a bhíodh] ina leith le príomhpháirtithe leasmhara na bpobal sin chun críche buanú a dhéanamh ar an nGaeilge mar phríomhtheanga theaghligh agus phobail na limistéar atá i gceist.

(ii) Chatagóir B iad limistéir shainithe phleanála teanga, a bhfuil líon suntasach den phobal ina gcainteoirí gníomhacha Gaeilge iontu, mar a léirítear i bhfaisnéis an Daonáirimh agus i bhfaisnéis Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge, a bhfuil tumoideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge á chur i bhfeidhm iontu ag an mbunleibhéal agus ag leibhéal an iar-bhunoideachais, agus a bhfuil plean teanga comhaontaithe ag an Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta

ina leith le príomhpháirtithe leasmhara na bpobal sin chun críche buanú agus forbairt a dhéanamh ar na gréasáin Ghaeilge atá ar marthain sna limistéir atá i gceist.

(iii) Chatagóir C iad limistéir shainithe phleanála teanga, a bhfuil líon beag don phobal ina gcainteoirí gníomhacha Gaeilge iontu, mar a léirítear i bhfaisnéis an Daonáirimh agus i bhfaisnéis Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge, a bhfuil tumoideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge á chur i bhfeidhm iontu ag an mbunleibhéal agus ag leibhéal an iar-bhunoideachais, agus a bhfuil plean teanga comhaontaithe ag an Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta ina leith le príomhpháirtithe leasmhara.

Sin an méid atá sa staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíocht, agus tá súil agam go bhfuil sé léite ag an Aire Stáit agus na Seanadóirí ar fad.

Sin croílár an phlean, go mbeadh muid ag sainiú ceantar sna gcatagóirí A, B agus C. Tá cúis le sin, mar tá na cuspóirí atá sna catagóirí A, B agus C — de réir na saineolaithe pleanála teanga — difriúil agus is gá acmhainní difriúla a bheith againn le dul i ngleic leo agus is gá cur chuige difriúil ins na catagóirí éagsúla. Duine ar bith a mbeadh an staidéar léite aige, thuigfeadh sé é sin.

An cheist a chuir mise agus an Seanadóir Ó Domhnaill ar an Aire Stáit ná, os rud é nach bhfuil sé ag glacadh leis an saineolas seo, cén saineolas lena bhfuil sé ag glacadh? Cad air ar bhunaigh sé a chinneadh gan bacadh le A, B agus C? Tá na catagóirí bunaithe ar staidéar idirnáisiúnta déanta ar fud na cruinne maidir le teangacha neamhfhorleathana agus iad ag dul i léig agus seo an slat tomhais is fearr atá againn maidir leis an Ghaeilge a tharrtháil. Tá an tAire Stáit ag briseadh síos na ceantair Gaeltachta i 19 ceantair pleanála ach moladh sa staidéar go ndéanfaidh iad a chur i gceantair A, B agus C. Tá an tAire Stáit ag tógáil cur chuige difriúil ar fad agus mar sin táimid ag iarraidh a fháil amach — tá sé féaráilte fiafraí dó — cad ar a bhunaigh sé a thuairim, cén fáth ar bhunaigh sé é agus an bhfuil sé in ann seasamh leis ó thaobh staitisticí, staidéar idirnáisiúnta agus ó thaobh cur chuige a úsáideadh i dtír éigin eile. An bhfuil sampla den cur chuige seo in aon tír eile ina bhfuil miontheanga á labhairt, mar shampla, An Bhreatain Bheag, Ceanada nó Albain? An bhfuil an cur chuige seo in úsáid in aon áit eile ar fud na hEorpa? Má tá, glacfadh mé le sin. Ba mhaith liom soiléiriú a fháil ar chéard a bhfuil tuairimí an Aire Stáit bunaithe.

Bhí cuid mhaith den staidéar bunaithe ar an daonáireamh agus staitisticí scéim labhairt na Gaeilge agus an fáth ar bhriseadh síos na ceantair i gcatagóirí A, B agus C ná mar gheall ar na héagsúlachtaí eatarthu. Ach sa bhriseadh síos atá déanta maidir leis na limistéir atá roghnaithe, tá an tAire Stáit tar éis A, B agus C a chur isteach i mullach a chéile. Ní dhéanann sin ciall nó réasún. Ní chuirfidh sé an Ghaeilge chun cinn ar an mbealach is cóir í a chur chun cinn agus ní bhaineann sé an leas is fearr as na hacmhainní teoranta atá ar fáil. In áit a bheith ag déanamh ráitis mhóir drámatúil dá lucht féachana anseo, atá breá sásta bualadh bos a thabhairt dó ó am go chéile, ba bhreá liom dá bhfreagróidh an tAire Stáit na ceisteanna atá á chur air againn.

Senator Sean D. Barrett: I agree with much of what the Minister of State said about “Mol an óige” and I fear the consequence of what we are doing to the Gaeltacht in this Bill is the exact opposite. We need spoken language as in the language of Wayne Rooney and the broken English we use in international conferences. That is spoken in the Gaeltacht. If we undermine the Gaeltacht, Irish becomes the book language, the philology so that children learn it for ten years and as Senator Harte said, they cannot speak it. I plead with the Minister of State not to damage the Gaeltacht and undermine it. That is why I am in the Chamber for all of this debate.

By withdrawing voting rights, the Minister is doing serious damage. The Minister of State referred to fooling the public. That is deeply ironic I presume because on 6 July 2010, two years ago, he gave that great speech in the Dáil about people who were merely postponing

[Senator Sean D. Barrett.]

voting rights in the Gaeltacht. He was the fear daonlathach that day and he should still be that man. The then Senator Jerry Buttimer gave a fantastic speech here in favour of democratic elections in the Gaeltacht. The fooling of the public is being done by the members of Fine Gael and the Labour Party. Two years ago there were expressions of completely different policies from the then Senators, Deputies Alex White, Frank Feighan, Jerry Buttimer and the Minister of State. I do not know what changed the opinions of these Members.

Do the Fine Gael Members who have a Gaeltacht in their constituency agree with what is going on? Jerry Buttimer mentioned the Fine Gael Deputies who do very well in election. Have they been brought on board? The Minister of State mentioned the President. How will the President, who was a distinguished Minister for the Gaeltacht, feel when he is asked to sign this Bill into law? Did the Minister of State refer to Conradh na Gaeilge? It wrote to me saying it was against the Bill. Donncha Ó hEalaithé has stated in *The Irish Times* that he is against the Bill. There is significant public opinion against this Bill. One has to reply when the Minister of State states that Conradh na Gaeilge and Donncha Ó hEalaithé are in favour of the Bill, because they are not and have written about their opposition to it. I suspect one of the reasons for the guillotine is that the Minister of State knows this opposition will grow. How can the views of the Minister of State change from being a proponent of voting rights for Gaeltacht people two years ago to being part of a guillotine today?

That is fooling the people.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): Is the Senator pressing the amendment?

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: I will press the amendment, but I wish to say a few words. Aontaím go huile agus go hiomlán leis an Seanadóir Harte. I agree with Senator Harte when he spoke about the education system, the importance of education, and people leaving school without being fluent in the Irish language. We know that even happens in Gaeltacht areas, but it happens outside of Gaeltacht areas as well. It is unfortunate that this happens. One of the major reasons, if we are absolutely honest, is the flippant regard of the Department of Education and Skills for the Irish language. An organisation established in the State called COGG deals with Gaelscolaíochta — oideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge and they are not even recognised in this Bill. We say it is important to mol and óige, an óige thabhairt linn an óige agus a dhéanamh cinnte go mbeidh an Ghaeilge á fhorbairt. COGG is not recognised, so education is not really formally recognised in this Bill. That is a major mistake. Senator Harte has raised a point that is important and that viewpoint should be reflected upon before the enactment of this legislation.

I dtaca lena bhfuil muid ag tagairt, d'ardaigh mé roinnt ceisteanna ach ní bhfuair mé freagra orthu. Tugadh freagraí ginearálta maidir leis an dóigh atá an Bille seo á chur i bhfeidhm, ach níor tugadh aon fhreagra maidir leis na critéir eolaíochta nó teangeolaíochta atá in úsáid leis an 19 ceantair a roghnú. Beidh plé againn agus beidh regulations ag teachta i bhfeidhm ach tá na ceantair seo roghnaithe cheana. Cad iad na critéir a bhí in úsáid leis an ceantair sin a roghnú? Ceist bunúsach í sin. Freisin, an raibh aon phlé leis an Coimisinéir Teanga? Cad é an plé a bhí ann leis an Coimisinéir teanga go dáta i dtaca le Bille na Gaeilge?

Dúirt an tAire Stáit go bhfuil cruinnithe poiblí á reachtáil ar fud na Gaeltachta ag an Roinn. Tá cruinniú poiblí i nGaoth Dobhair inniu i dtaca leis an Bille seo. Cén fáth go bhfuil an cruinniú ar siúl inniu? Tá an Bille á phlé sa Seanad inniu agus tá 160 leasú i dtaca leis an Bille á phlé. Mar sin, cén fáth nach raibh an cruinniú sin ann trí nó ceithre mhí ó shin nuair a bhí an Bille á dhréachtú, in áit an Bille a bheith scríofa. Tá an cuma air nach bhfuil an Rialtas sásta glacadh le leasú ar bith uainn, ach tá na cruinnithe poiblí seo ar siúl chun tuairim an

phobail a fháil. Tá tuairim an phobail an-soiléir ó thaobh na grúpaí agus na pobail atá ag labhairt linne. Tá sin soiléir ó chuid de na leasuithe atá istigh againn.

Ó thaobh plé leis an pobal, a bheith ag iarraidh daoine a mhealladh agus cuidiú a thabhairt don phobal, tá sin uilig ceart agus aontaím go huile agus go hiomlán leis an Aire Stáit faoi sin, ach cén dóigh an dtig leis sin a dhéanamh ar lámh amháin agus ar an lámh eile, an vóta daonlathach atá ag pobal na Gaeltachta a bhaint díobh sa Bhille seo.

The provisions of the Bill are contradictory. The Minister of State is trying to bring people with him and trying to ensure people sign up, support, play a role and feel they are part of the process. On the other hand the Bill takes away the one thing they have, namely, a democratic voice for elections to the board of *Údarás na Gaeltachta*, an organisation which under this legislation will be given the authority to define the language plans for each area, yet the people who will be on the board, making the executive decisions will be placed——

Senator Sean D. Barrett: Yes men.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Cronies.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Cronies, one can call them whatever — councillors.

Senator Jimmy Harte: That is an insult to councillors.

A Senator: Seven place men

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Seven members will be placed on the board by the Minister. I am sure they will be respectful people and will do their best. It is not about who they are or what they represent, it about taking away the voice of the people. The person in Bun A Leaca or Rossaveal who may not be listening to today's debate but will be implicated by this legislation in not being allowed to cast his or her vote at the local booth for the next *údarás* elections because the Minister will appoint the person instead. That is fundamentally wrong. That is why I feel — má tá an tAire Stáit ag iarraidh daoine a thabhairt leis agus ar an lámh eile ag baint cearta bunúsacha ar shiúl uathu nach bhfuil sin ceart. Níl sé ceart. Tá sin sa Bhille seo agus dá bhrí sin, beidh mé ag brú an leasaithe.

Senator Cáit Keane: Mar gheall ar ainmneacha na limistéar atá neamhchosúil do theangeolaithe. Tá an cheist seo tábhachtach. Ceist oideachais agus ceist faoin teanga a chur chun atá ann agus ba cheart é a dhéanamh i gceart. Tá ceist agam. Tá dhá scoileanna ann faoin dóigh is fearr Béarla nó matamaitic a mhúineadh. Tá scoileanna ann freisin, chomh maith leis an méid atá ráite ag na Seanadóirí Ó Clochartaigh agus Ó Domhnaill ar na leasuithe, a dúirt gur meascán caighdeán ar gach leibhéal an chaoi is fearr gach ábhar a fhoghlaim. Tá ceist oideachais ann faoi sin. Tarraingíonn na daoine láidre na daoine laga. Sin é an cheist. Sin a bhrí atá ag an Aire Stáit, sin a dhéanamh, na daoine laga a tharraingt leis na daoine laga. Tá a fhios ag gach éinne go bhfuil scoil cinnte áirithe faoi mhúineadh sna scoileanna, streaming, atá ag dul amach, agus meascán ag teacht isteach. Sin é a cheist. Níl an ceart ag éinne. Tá dhá scoil oideachais ann agus tá mé ag ceapadh go bhfuil an staidéar déanta ag an Aire Stáit leis an mBille seo. Níl a fhios agam ach is mian liom, nuair atá an tAire Stáit ag tabhairt an Bille seo tríd an Dáil, go ndéanfaidh sé an cheist sin a phlé i gceart agus an feidhm cheart chun an teanga a chur i gceart, más meascán an rud ceart nó gan é a mheascadh agus cosúil le chéile a chur le chéile. Sin ceist. Tá mé ag iarraidh ar an Aire Stáit breathnú arís air agus nuair atá sé sa Dáil á dhéanamh, an cheist sin a freagair dom.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): We must stick to the amendments.

Senator Cáit Keane: That is what the amendment is about.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): I am conscious of time.

Senator Cáit Keane: It is about choosing particular areas.

Acting Chairman (Senator Jillian van Turnhout): I was listening carefully.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Tá pointe an-tábhachtach déanta ag an Seanadóir Keane a bhaineann leis na leasuithe. Ag dul ar ais chuig an staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíochta, tá go leor leor cainte ar chúrsaí oideachais agus tá go leor cainte ó thaobh na limistéar éagsúil agus ó thaobh na gcatagóirí éagsúil, sin ceann de na cúiseanna gur moladh catagóirí A, B agus C sa staidéar, mar gheall ar an gcaighdeán oideachais trasna na gceantar éagsúil. Na critéir a moladh sa staidéar ná go ndéanfar catagóir A a rangú mar gheall go mbeadh 66% den daonra a bheith ina gainteoirí líofa Gaeilge, úsáid na Gaeilge a bheith in uachtar i nós-mhaireachtaí sóisialta agus institiúideach an limistéir, an teagasc ar fad, cé is móite de ranganna Béarla, ag an mbunleibhéal agus ag an dara leibhéal a riaradh trí Ghaeilge ón gcéad lá scoile agus go mbeidh polasaí iompar teanga á fheidhmiú go héifeachtach sna scoileanna a thacaíonn le húsáid na Gaeilge mar theanga shóisialta lasmuigh den seomra ranga. Moladh chomh maith curaclam na scoileanna a bheith á fheidhmiú ar bhealach a fheileann na riachtanais daltaí arb í an Ghaeilge a gcéad teanga. Luaitear socruithe faoi leith a chur i bhfearas na limistéar seo chun tacú le leanaí nach bhfuil an Ghaeilge acu an teanga a shealbhú sula bhfreastalóidh siad ar naonra, ar bhunscoil nó ar iar-bhunscoil.

Déanann an staidéar sonrú difriúil ó thaobh catagóirí B agus C, bunaithe ar shaineolas idir-náisiúnta. Sin go breá. Glacadh leis an staidéar ach tá an tAire Stáit ag caint faoi oideachas agus cá bhfuil oideachas luaite sa Bhille? Cé mhéad úair atá oideachas luaite sa Bhille. Agus an Rialtas ag caint ar oideachas, tá súil agam go dtacóidh Seanadóirí Rialtais leis na leasuithe atá leagtha síos againn a deir gur cóir ról a thabhairt d'Údarás na Gaeltachta i gcur chun cinn an oideachais mar níl sin luaite ag an Aire Stáit sa Bhille.

Tá an Rialtas ag rá go bhfuil an t-oideachas iontach tábhachtach, “mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí”, a deir an tAire Stáit, ach níl se ag tabhairt na gcumhachtaí chuig an údarás dul i ngleic leis sa Bhille. Cén chaoi is féidir, mura bhfuil na cumhachtaí tugtha chuig an údarás sa Bhille, sin a chur a bhfeidhm sna limistéir agus sna pleananna atá á gcur chun cinn? Sin an fáth go bhfuilimid ag rá go bhfuil an Bille fabhtach agus lochtach — mar gheall nach bhfuil an Rialtas ag tógáil an tsaineolais atá ann ar bord agus nach bhfuil oideachas luaite sna háiteanna cuí sa Bhille, go háirithe ó thaobh feidhmeanna a thabhairt don údarás, rud atá molta, dála an scéil, sa leasú gur cóir a dhéanamh ar chumhachtaí an údarais dar leis an staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíochta.

Tacaím leis an méid atá an Rialtas ag rá ach caithfidh me fiafraí arís ar léigh an tAire Stáit agus na Seanadóirí Rialtais an staidéar. Má tá sé léite acu, inis dom cén áit sa Bhille cén áit ina bhfuil an rud atá siad ag iarraidh baint amach, cén áit go bhfuil na cumhachtaí sin tugtha leis sin. Ní léir dom go bhfuil sé ann.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Chuir an Seanadóir Ó Domhnaill ceist faoin gCoimisinéir Teanga. Tá ról soiléir aige ó bunaíodh a oifig maidir le hAcht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla. Baineann cuid feidhmeannaí an choimisinéara le cur i bhfeidhm an Achta sin agus na forálacha atá san Acht sin. Ar ndóigh, tá saor-chead ag an gCoimisinéir Teanga, cosúil le gach éinne eile, moltaí a dhéanamh. Tabharfar aird ar aon mholtaí a thagann isteach. Níl aon chosc air é sin a dhéanamh. Sin an ról atá aige de réir na reachtaíochta a cuireadh fríd an Oireachtas in 2003 nuair a bunaíodh a oifig. Táimid ag déanamh aithbhreithniú ar Acht na dTeangacha i láthair na huaire.

Níl an t-athbhreithniú críochnaithe go fóill. Táimid ag déanamh anailíse ar na moltaí agus na tuairimí a tháinig isteach ach sin ceist do lá eile.

Maidir leis an daonlathas, mar a dúirt an Seanadóir Ó Clochartaigh, agus ag freagairt go speisialta ar an Seanadóir Barrett, atá den bharúil nach bhfuil aon daonlathas ann do mhuintir na Gaeltachta, this is the most democratic approach to the situation regarding Irish in the Gaeltacht areas. If we allow things to continue as they are, the Senator's worries, and my concerns, will be a reality; there will be no native Irish speakers. The surveys have indicated that. Sin an fáth go bhfuil daoine inné, inniu agus amárach, sna Gaeltachtaí ag labhairt le muintir na Gaeltachta atá ag iarraidh an teanga a chur ar aghaidh. Tá siad ag insint dóibh cad tá sa Bhille seo. Bhí próiseas fada comhairliúcháin againn mar ullmhúchán ar an Bhille seo. Táimid ag coinneáil na ndaoine ar an eolas, chan á gcoinneáil sa dorchadas. Nuair a bheidh an reachtaíocht rite, beimid ag dul ar ais chuig na pobail seo agus ag cur in iúl cad tá le déanamh. Beidh siad ag ullmhú, ag cuimhneamh agus ag smaoinreamh.

Tá pointe tábhachtach sa méid a bhí le rá ag an Seanadóir Keane. Bhí mé i mo mhúinteoir scoile le tamall fada chomh maith. Bhí an rud seo againn ag an am, streaming. Bhí na páistí maithe leo féin agus na páistí nach raibh go maith leo féin. Tá a fhios againn go raibh toradh uafásach leis sin. Anois, tá dearcadh úr ag teacht isteach, gur cóir do na páistí le hard-intleacht a bheith istigh leis na páistí nach bhfuil na buanna céanna acu agus gó dtógann siad a chéile. Tá sin go maith ó gach taobh de agus san fhealsúnacht agus san eolas is nua-aimsire atá againn, moltar mixed ability. Tig linn an rud céanna a rá faoi na ceantair. Tá cuid de na ceantair Ghaeltachta níos láidre ná na ceantair eile. Tá mé ábalta cuimhneamh orthu i mo dháilcheantar féin agus an dearcadh atá agam ná iad a thabhairt le chéile go mbeidh na ceantair láidre in ann na ceantair nach bhfuil chomh láidir sin a tharraingt aníos leo. Sin an rud atáimid ag iarraidh a dhéanamh, go mbeidh an comhoibriú sin ann agus na ceantair nach bhfuil go láidir, go bhfeicfidh siad cad é tá á dhéanamh ag na ceantair láidre, go mbeidh siad ag cuidiú lena chéile, cosuil leis an mheitheal a bhí ann sna blianta fada ó shin.

Rinne an Seanadóir Ó Clochartaigh tagairt arís do scéim labhairt na Gaeilge. Thug mé freagra dó sin roimhe.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Níor thug. Luaigh mé é go sonrach i gcomhthéacs slat tomhais ar cé mhéad páiste atá ag labhairt na Gaeilge.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Tá mé chun freagra a thabhairt ar sin má thugann an Seanadóir deis dom

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Ba bhreá liom dá dtabharfadh.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Is dócha gur thug an scéim slat tomhais de chineál éigin dúinn. Níos a bhfuil agam cé chomh cruinn is a bhí an slat tomhais sin. Ba é an dearcadh a bhí ag na saineolaithe agus na daoine eile a thagair an Seanadóir ná nach raibh an scéim ag baint amach na spriocanna a bhí ar intinn faoin scéim. Chosain scéim labhairt na Gaeilge €700,000 in aghaidh na bliana. Caithfidh mé a rá gur slat tomhais an-chostasach a bhí ann.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Cén slat tomhais a bheidh againn ina háit?

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Is féidir dóigheanna níos fearr a fháil chun úsáid a bhaint as €700,000 ná opinion poll a dhéanamh ar conas mar atá ag éirí leis an nGaeilge sa Ghaeltacht bliain in aghaidh bliana. Nuair a bheidh na ceantair pleanála teanga ar bun agus monatóireacht an-chúramach á dhéanamh orthu, coinneoidimid súil ar conas mar atá rudaí ag dul ar aghaidh i gcomhthéacs spriocanna trí bliana, cúig bliana, cúig bliana nó seacht mbliana. Beidh a fhios

[Deputy Dinny McGinley.]

againn go díreach cad atá ag dul ar aghaidh. Tá sé ag tarlú i gCluain Dolcáin cheana féin. Níl siad ag brath ar Acht teanga nó Bille na Gaeilteacht — tá siad á dhéanamh iad féin.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Cén slat tomhais atá á úsáid i gCluain Dolcáin?

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Is é atá i gceist inár straitéis ná an pobal a thabhairt linn agus mar sin de. D'fhéadfainn plé a dhéanamh ar leasuithe Uimh, 11, 12, 13 nó 14 go dtí meánoíche. Tá mé i ndiaidh mo thuairim a chur in iúl. D'éist mé go cúramach leis na Seanadóirí. Sílim go bhfuil an rud atá á dhéanamh agam thar a bheith réasúnta. Molaim é arís gan glacadh leis na leasuithe seo.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Níl sé ar intinn agam dul siar ar an méid atá ráite roimhe seo. D'ardaigh an tAire Stáit pointe an-tábhachtach nuair a dúirt sé gur tharla próiseas fada comhairliúcháin nuair a bhí an reachtaíocht seo á ullmhú. Ba bhreá liom a fháil amach cén próiseas fada comhairliúcháin atá i gceist aige. Ní fhaca mé aon cruinniú poiblí i gConamara. Bhí cruinniú gearr ginearálta againn leis an Aire Stáit agus an Aire, an Teachta Deenihan, ceart go leor. Ní thuigim go raibh aon cruinniú poiblí fógartha ar Raidió na Gaeilteacht, Gaelscéal nó Foinse. An bhfuil an Aire Stáit ag rá gur leagadh amach na moltaí a bhí le cur chun cinn i mBille na Gaeilteacht mar chuid de phróiseas comhairliúcháin? Ní dóigh liom gur tharla sé sin. Labhair sé freisin faoi cruinnithe poiblí a tharla le cúpla lá anuas. De réir mar a thuigim, is cruinniú dúnta a bhí ann i gConamara. Tugadh cuireadh do chuid de na dreamanna atá ag obair leis na comharchumainn agus na comhlachtaí pobalbhunaithe. Ní thabharfainn “cruinniú poiblí” ar sin. Dá mba rud é gur cruinniú poiblí a bhí i gceist, bheadh sé fógartha go hoscailte. B'fhéidir go ndéanfaidh an Aire Stáir cur síos ar an próiseas fada comhairliúcháin, a luaigh sé nóiméad ó shin, a tharla nuair a bhí an reachtaíocht seo á ullmhú. Tá mé cinnte go mbeadh spéis ag na heagrais Ghaeilge sa mhéid sin. Ní dóigh liom go bhfuair siad cuireadh páirt a ghlacadh in aon próiseas comhairliúcháin fada poiblí.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Bhí mé ag éisteacht le blianta mar gheall ar cad a dhéanfaidh an choimisiún. Rinneadh plé poiblí ar sin agus ar an staidéar teangeolaíochta. Nuair a tháinig tuairiscí eile amach, rinneadh plé orthu sna meáin Ghaeilge. Níl aon rud ar Raidió na Gaeilteacht, lá i ndiaidh lae, ach plé ar pleanáil teanga agus Bille na Gaeilteacht, srl. Go minic, bíonn na daoine céanna ag déanamh a gcuid pointí. Ba bhreá liom bheith ar níos minicí ná mar atá mé anois. Tá pointí déanta agus athdhéanta sna meáin Ghaeilge, na nuachtáin ina measc. Is rud leanúnach é an plé seo. Is dócha go mbeadh daoine áirithe sásta coinneáil ar aghaidh leis ar feadh 15 bliain eile. Má tharlóidh sé sin, beidh an Ghaeilge marbh. Tá cinneadh déanta ag an Rialtas an Bille seo a chur tríd. Is é seo an rud is fearr gur féidir linn a dhéanamh. Táimid ag iarraidh muintir na Gaeilteacht agus na daoine taobh amuigh den Ghaeilteacht a thabhairt linn. Sa daonáireamh is déanaí, dúirt formhór an 96,000 duine atá ina gcónaí sa Ghaeilteacht go labhraíonn siad an Ghaeilge. Dúirt 1.77 milliún duine taobh amuigh den Ghaeilteacht go bhfuil eolas acu ar an nGaeilge. B'fhéidir nach bhfuil mórán eolas ag cuid acu, ach dúirt siad go bhfuil eolas éigin acu ar an teanga. Nuair atá an straitéis 20 bliain ag teacht chun críche, ba mhaith linn go mbeidh 250,000 duine as an 1.77 milliún duine sin ábalta a rá go labhraíonn siad an Ghaeilge go laethúil. Maidir leis an Ghaeilteacht í féin, táimid ag iarraidh go dtiocfaidh méadú de 25% ar líon na ndaoine sna Gaeilteachtaí a labhraíonn an Ghaeilge i rith an lae. Nílimid chun an domhain mór a athrú. Más féidir linn na spriocanna seo a bhaint amach, sílim gur fiú é seo. D'fhéadfaimis coinneáil ag labhairt faoi na leasuithe seo ar feadh an chuid eile den lá. Tá leasuithe eile ag teacht aníos. Ba mhaith liom a rá arís nach bhfuil sé ar intinn agam leasuithe Uimh, 11, 12, 13 nó 14 a ghlacadh.

Sitting suspended at 1.45 p.m. and resumed at 2.20 p.m.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: I welcome the Minister of State back to the House. We will resume our consideration of the Bill on amendments Nos. 11 to 14, inclusive.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Bhí plé leanúnach againn ar na leasuithe seo roimh an mbriseadh. Níl mé chun mórán níos mó a rá fúthu, ach tá mé chun iad a bhrú. Tá sé soiléir sa Bhille seo go bhfuil neamhaird iomlán déanta ar an staidéar teangeolaíochta a bunaíodh i 2007 agus a leag amach critéir chun pleananna teanga a chur i bhfeidhm. Dá bhrí sin, agus os rud é nach bhfuil an tAire Stáit sásta glacadh leis an leasú seo, iarraim ar an Teach vótáil a dhéanamh air.

Amendment put.

The Seanad divided: Tá, 15; Níl, 26.

Tá

Barrett, Sean D.
Byrne, Thomas.
Cullinane, David.
Daly, Mark.
Leyden, Terry.
Mooney, Paschal.
Mullen, Rónán.
Norris, David.

Ó Clochartaigh, Trevor.
Ó Domhnaill, Brian.
Power, Averil.
Reilly, Kathryn.
van Turnhout, Jillian.
White, Mary M.
Wilson, Diarmuid.

Níl

Bacik, Ivana.
Brennan, Terry.
Burke, Colm.
Clune, Deirdre.
Coghlan, Eamonn.
Coghlan, Paul.
Comiskey, Michael.
Cummins, Maurice.
D'Arcy, Michael.
Gilroy, John.
Harte, Jimmy.
Hayden, Aideen.
Heffernan, James.

Higgins, Lorraine.
Keane, Cáit.
Kelly, John.
Landy, Denis.
Moloney, Marie.
Moran, Mary.
Mulcahy, Tony.
Mullins, Michael.
Noone, Catherine.
O'Keeffe, Susan.
O'Neill, Pat.
Sheahan, Tom.
Whelan, John.

Tellers: Tá, Senators Brian Ó Domhnaill and Diarmuid Wilson; Níl, Senators Paul Coghlan and Susan O'Keeffe.

Amendment declared lost.

Senator Thomas Byrne: Before we move on to the next amendment, it might be worth noting that Senator Leyden entered the Oireachtas 35 years ago today.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: I congratulate the Senator.

Senator Terry Leyden: It is a special occasion. I took my seat this day 35 years ago, having been elected in June 1977. It has been a very enjoyable period. I was out of the Oireachtas for ten years. I am glad to be back. I am delighted to have such great colleagues in this House. I would like the Seanad to be retained because it is a great outlet.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: I would like to extend congratulations to Senator Leyden from the Chair.

Senator Thomas Byrne: I was a month old at the time.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Lunch will be served in the Members' restaurant in ten minutes, compliments of Senator Leyden.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: We will move on to amendment No. 12, which has already been discussed.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: I move amendment No. 12:

In page 10, between lines 8 and 9, to insert the following subsection:

“(3) When designating a specified area under *subsection (2)* of this section the Minister shall take into account the state of the Irish language in the community living in that area, and he or she shall not specify an area where linguistically dissimilar communities live.”.

Amendment put.

The Seanad divided: Tá, 15; Níl, 29.

Tá

Barrett, Sean D.
Byrne, Thomas.
Cullinane, David.
Daly, Mark.
Leyden, Terry.
Mooney, Paschal.
Mullen, Rónán.
Norris, David.

Ó Clochartaigh, Trevor.
Ó Domhnaill, Brian.
Power, Averil.
Reilly, Kathryn.
van Turnhout, Jillian.
White, Mary M.
Wilson, Diarmuid.

Níl

Bacik, Ivana.
Bradford, Paul.
Brennan, Terry.
Burke, Colm.
Clune, Deirdre.
Coghlan, Eamonn.
Coghlan, Paul.
Comiskey, Michael.
Conway, Martin.
Cummins, Maurice.
D'Arcy, Jim.
D'Arcy, Michael.
Gilroy, John.
Harte, Jimmy.
Hayden, Aileen.

Heffernan, James.
Higgins, Lorraine.
Keane, Cáit.
Kelly, John.
Landy, Denis.
Moloney, Marie.
Moran, Mary.
Mulcahy, Tony.
Mullins, Michael.
Noone, Catherine.
O'Keeffe, Susan.
O'Neill, Pat.
Sheahan, Tom.
Whelan, John.

Tellers: Tá, Senators Trevor Ó Clochartaigh and Kathryn Reilly; Níl, Senators Paul Coghlan and Susan O'Keeffe.

Amendment declared lost.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: I move amendment No. 13:

In page 10, subsection (3)(a), line 15, after “concerned” to insert the following:

“and in which the communities that live in them are linguistically similar”.

Amendment put and declared lost.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: I move amendment No. 14:

In page 10, subsection (4), line 23, to delete “or adjacent to”.

Amendment put and declared lost.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: I move amendment No. 15:

In page 10, subsection (4), line 24, after “concerned” to insert the following:

“and in which organisation Irish is the working language”.

Baineann an leasú beag seo leis na heagraíochtaí a bheidh ag plé leis na pleananna teanga sna limistéir pleanáil teanga. Táimid ag iarraidh aguisín beag atá réasúnta ciallmhar a dhéanamh leis an leasú seo. Níl aon dochar sa leasú seo — déanfaidh sé leas — atá ag plé leis an bunprionsabal a bhaineann l’éiteas an Achta. Sílim ón méid atá ráite ag an Aire Stáit go bhfuil sé ag iarraidh é sin a bhaint amach. De réir alt 7(4) den Bhille, a bhaineann leis na heagraíochtaí atá chun na pleananna teanga agus mar sin de a fhorbairt agus a chur i bhfeidhm, “féadfaidh eagraíocht a bheidh bunaithe i gceann de na limistéir Ghaeltachta lena mbaineann, nó tadhlaigh leis, iarratas a dhéanamh chun Údarás na Gaeilteachta chun bheith ina heagraíocht arna roghnú faoi fho-alt (6)”. Níl uainn ach “agus ar eagraíocht í arb í an Ghaeilge an teanga oibre inti” a chur leis sin. Tá ciall leis sin. Beidh an tAire ag roghnú comhlacht amháin i ngach ceann de na 19 limistéir ina mbeidh plean teanga a fhorbairt i gcomhar leis an údarás. Ba mhaith linn a chinntiú go mbeidh an Ghaeilge mar teanga oibre ag an gcomhlacht sin. Tá a fhios againn go bhfuil comhlachtaí atá lonnaithe sa Ghaeltacht ábalta seirbhísí áirithe a chur chun cinn. D’ardaigh an Seanadóir Ó Domhnaill ceist a bhaineann leis seo nuair a d’iarr sé ar an Aire Stáit soiléiriú a dhéanamh ar na critéir a chuirfidh sé chun cinn i dtaobh cén sórt comhlacht a bheidh ceadaithe cur isteach ar an gcóras seo. D’fhéadfadh sé tarlú — go teicniúil — nach í an Ghaeilge teanga oibre na comhlachta.

Baineann tábhacht breise leis an leasú seo i gcomhthéacs rudaí eile atá ag tarlú sa Ghaeltacht le bliain nó bliain go leith anuas. Tháinig deireadh tubaisteach le Meitheal Forbartha na Gaeilteachta, a bhí ag feidhmiú ar bhonn uile-Gaeilge le cúrsaí forbartha pobal a chur chun cinn. Bhí socrú le déanamh maidir le cé a chuireadh na cláracha a bhí á chur i bhfeidhm ag Meitheal Forbartha na Gaeilteachta — an clár Leader agus an clár LCDP — sna ceantir Gaeilteachta ó shin i leith. Thóg sé tamall, ach tá socrú déanta anois. Fáiltím roimh an socrú sin. Tá na cláracha sin á chur ar fáil ag eagrais atá tadhlaigh leis na ceantir Gaeilteachta, cosúil leis an rud atá luaite sa Bhille seo. I nGaeilteacht Conamara theas, mar shampla, tá seirbhísí clár Leader anois á sholáthar ag an gcomhlacht Forum, atá lonnaithe taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht. Is socrú sealadach réasúnta é sin, maith go leor, ach ní socrú fad-téarmach sásúil é. Má tá seirbhísí á sholáthar sa Ghaeltacht — seirbhísí pleanála teanga nó rud ar bith a bhaineann le cur chun cinn na teanga — ba chóir go mbeidís á sholáthar sa Ghaeltacht ag muintir na Gaeilteachta trí mheán na Gaeilge, más féidir, nó ag daoine le Gaeilge atá ina gcónaí sa Ghaeltacht. Ba cheart go gcuirfeadh pobal na Gaeilteachta na seirbhísí sin ar fáil trí mheán na Gaeilge.

Táimid ag breathnú ar an gcás anois nach bhfuil cuid mhaith de na comhlachtaí teaghlach atá ag plé leis na cláracha a bhí faoi Meitheal Forbartha na Gaeilteachta in ann a gcuid gnóthaí a dhéanamh trí mheán na Gaeilge. Glacaim leis go bhfuil duine nó beirt fostaithe anseo is ansiúd leis na seirbhísí seo a chur ar fáil trí Ghaeilge. Má táimid chun brí na straitéise agus brí mian an Rialtas ó thaobh na seirbhísí seo a chur ar fáil sa Ghaeltacht, sílim gur rud bunúsach é an méid atá léirithe agam. Da mbeadh sé leagtha síos mar bhunchritéir na gcomhlachtaí seo go mbeadh an Ghaeilge mar teanga oibre na n-eagraíochtaí, bheadh sé thar a bheith dearfach

[Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh.]

agus thabharfadh sé láidreachta don Aire agus d'Údarás na Gaeltachta nuair atá na comhlachtaí á roghnú acu.

Má táimid ag breathnú arís ar na limistéir pleanála teanga seo, tá sé soiléir dúinn nach bhfuil cuid de na ceantair seo láidir ó thaobh na Gaeilge de. D'fhéadfadh sé a tharlú i gceantar níos laige — mar shampla, i gcatagóir B nó C — go bhfaighfeadh comhlacht atá lonnaithe sa Ghaeltacht agus a bhfuil cúpla duine le Gaeilge iontach acu an Conradh leis an plean a fhorbairt, cé nach í an Ghaeilge an teanga oibre sa chomhlacht. An bhfuil comhlacht forbartha pobal ag feidhmiú go hiomlán trí Ghaeilge faoi láthair i gceantar an Eachréidh, mar shampla, atá luaite mar cheann de na ceantacha? Níl mé cinnte go bhfuil. Ceist a bheadh ansin. Tá sé tábhachtach go mbeadh an Ghaeilge mar theanga oibre ag comhlacht atá ag iarraidh an mian atá ag an Aire Stáit a chur i bhfeidhm? Ba chóir go mbeadh sé sin ag teacht tríd an Roinn, anuas tríd an údarás, tríd na comhlachtaí, isteach sa phobal agus *vice versa*. Ní dóigh liom go bhfuil dochar ar bith sa leasú seo. Sílim gur leasú chun feabhais é. Tá súil agam go mbeidh an Aire Stáit glacadh leis.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Aontaím leis an leasú seo. Tá ciall agus réasún leis. Baineann sé leis an eagraíocht a chuirfidh plean teanga le chéile agus faoi bhráid an údaráis le bheith ceadaithe. Labhraíomar inné mar gheall ar an bhfoclaíocht faoi Cuid 2 den Bhille, go háirithe an sainmhíniú atá sa reachtaíocht ar “eagraíocht” agus “comhlacht corpraithe”. Rinne muid moltaí i taca leis sin. Bhí muid ag iarraidh go mbeadh athrú ansin fá choinne é a bheith sonrach do choistí pobalbhunaithe sa Ghaeltacht. Níor ghlacadh leis sin. Tá an moladh seo fíorthábhachtach chun a chinntiú go gcuirfidh cibé eagraíocht a bheidh i gceist faoin reachtaíocht seo a gcuid gnó chun cinn trí mheán na Gaeilge. Cuireann sé iontas orm nach raibh a leithéid de riachtanas in alt 7(4) den Bhille nuair a bhí sé foilsithe agus sular tháinig sé go dtí an Teach seo. Ní fheictear dom cén fáth nach bhfuil sé sa Bhille cheana féin. Glacaim leis go mbeidh an Aire Stáit sásta glacadh leis an moladh seo. Tá súil agam go mbeidh. Luíonn sé le ciall gur chóir go mbeadh Gaeilge ag an eagraíocht a bheidh ag cur plean den chineál seo le chéile.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Aontaím ar fad——

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): I ask the Minister of State to give way to Senator Barrett.

Senator Sean D. Barrett: I hope I did not interrupt the Minister of State as he was about to say he agrees completely with this amendment. I agree completely with what the Senators have said. He will be aware that the fine digest that was prepared for us quotes Mr. Liam Ó Cuinneagáin as saying “ní féidir linn póilíní teanga a chur isteach i monarchana”. Perhaps the “póilíní teanga” could be installed in the body the Minister of State is about to speak about. His statement of agreement is very welcome. I agree completely with it. I look forward to hearing the rest of the sentence.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Aontaím ar fad leis na trí Seanadóirí——

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Go maith.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: ——gur chóir go mbeadh an Ghaeilge mar theanga oibre sna ceantair pleanála teanga. Tá sé praiticiúil agus loighciúil gur mar sin a bheidh. Tá sé de nós agus de thraidisiún fada ag Údarás na Gaeltachta bheith ag plé, ag cur agus ag cúiteamh i gcónaí leis na heagraíochtaí Gaeilge ar fud na Gaeltachta a gcuid oibre a dhéanamh i nGaeilge, mar a dhéanann an tÚdarás é féin. Aontaím leis sin. Tá sé soiléir in alt 17 den Bhille seo go gcaithfidh an tÚdarás a chinntiú “gurb í an Ghaeilge a úsáidfear a mhéid is féidir nuair a bheidh a

fheidhmeanna á gcomhlíonadh aige agus thar a cheann” ag dream ar bith. Silim go gclúdaíonn alt 17, a bhaineann leis na ndualgaí atá ar an údarás, an inní atá ar na Seanadóirí.

Tá mé ar aon intinn leo gur cheart go mbeadh an Ghaeilge mar teanga oibre agus teanga labhartha na n-eagraíochtaí seo. Tá mé lán-cinnté go gclúdaíonn an reachtaíocht an gné sin den ábhar seo. Mar sin, níl sé i gceist agam glacadh leis an leasú.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Bhí sé de cheart againn an tAire Stáit a chur i gcló níos túisce, mar bhí sé ag aontú linn nuair a tháinig sé ar ais. Tá an-iontas orm nach bhfuil sé sásta glacadh leis an leasú. Ní thugann an foclaíocht san alt a luaigh an Aire Stáit — “cinnteoidh an tÚdarás gurb í an Ghaeilge a úsáidfear a mhéid is féidir nuair a bheidh a fheidhmeanna á gcomhlíonadh aige agus thar a cheann” — an oiread sin misnigh dom i gcomhthéacs an track record atá ag cuid mhaith de na comhlachtaí atá ag feidhmiú sa Ghaeltacht agus a fhaigheann tacaíocht airgeadais ó Údarás na Gaeltachta. Tá comhlachtaí ann atá thar barr chun a gcuid gnóthaí a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge, ach tá cuid mhaith eile nach ndéanann iarracht an-mhór agus nach úsáideann an Ghaeilge mar theanga oibre, cé go bhfaigheann siad tacaíocht ón údarás. Tá difríocht idir “teanga oibre” agus “a mhéid is féidir”. Cad a tharlóidh má fhostaíonn an comhlacht duine nach bhfuil an Ghaeilge ar a dtail acu, mar shampla, nó má chineann an tAire — mar is féidir leis nó léi faoin reachtaíocht seo — nach bhfuil aon chomhlacht feiliúnach i gceantar Iorras Aithneach, mar shampla arís, leis an plean a fhorbairt agus b’fhearr an Conradh a bhronnadh ar Forum, atá lonnaithe i Leitir Fraic, mar atá déanta leis an clár Leader? Níl foireann le Gaeilge líofa ag Forum. Ní hí an Ghaeilge an teanga oibre atá ag oibríthe Forum. Dá mbronnfaí an Conradh seo orthu, d’fhéadfaidís a rá go bhfuil an Ghaeilge á úsáid “a mhéid is féidir” acu agus iad ag brath ar na daoine atá fostaithe acu. Nuair nach bhfuil foireann le Gaeilge acu, ní féidir leo mórán Gaeilge a úsáid. Is é sin an pointe ata á dhéanamh agam. B’fhéidir go gceapfaidh daoine áirithe go bhfuilimid ag dul síos an bóthar idir “déanfaidh” agus “féadfaidh” arís, ach tá sé i bhfad níos tábhachtaí gurb í an Ghaeilge an teanga oibre.

Tá an leasú seo ciallmhar. Ba cheart go mbeadh an Ghaeilge mar teanga oibre na comhlachta. Ciallóidh sé sin go mbeadh foireann le Gaeilge ag obair sa chomhlacht. Is é sin an difríocht idir an méid atá le rá ag an Rialtas agus an taithí atá againn. Chun a cheart a thabhairt d’Údarás na Gaeltachta, tuigim gur beag duine gan Gaeilge atá ag feidhmiú sna comharchumainn agus na comhlachtaí pobalbhunaithe sa Ghaeltacht. Má tá titim amach i gceantar áirithe — b’fhéidir nach bhfuil na comharchumainn ag tarraingt le chéile — agus níl an plean riachtanach á fháil ag an Aire, tá seans ann go mbeidh air nó uirthi comhlacht eile a roghnú. Más gá dul go dtí comhlachtaí i gceantair tadhlaigh, ar nós Forum i gConamara, Tuatha Chiarraí nó Donegal Local Development Company, is léir nach mbeidh foireann le Gaeilge acu go léir. Bheadh sé sin in éadan brí an Bhille seo agus an obair atá á dhéanamh. Is é sin an fáth go bhfuil an leasú seo á moladh agam. Ní dóigh liom go ndéanfaidh sé dochar. Sílim go bhfuil an beirt againn ag iarraidh an rud céanna a bhaint amach ar deireadh. Thabharfaidh an athrú seo deis breise don Aire Stáit a chinntiú go mbeidh daoine le Gaeilge fostaithe ag aon chomhlacht a chuirfidh isteach ar an scéim seo. Muna bhfuil éiteas Gaelach agus Gaeltachta sa chomhlacht a roghnófar chun próiseas a chur i bhfeidhm chun airgead a roinnt, saineolaí a fhostú, staidéar a dhéanamh agus plean a chur le chéile, caillimid leath den brí a bhaineann le ceantar Gaeltachta beo bríomhar ina bhfuil tuiscint ar na ceisteanna éagsúla atá ann ó thaobh oideachais, cúrsaí sóisialta, cúrsaí fostaíochta agus mar sin de. Is é sin an moladh atá á dhéanamh agam.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Sílim go bhfuil cur chuige réasúnta agus praiticiúil san alt atá sa Bhille faoi láthair. Is léir dom, ón eolas agus ón taithí atá agam ar an údarás, go ngníomhóidh sé leis na heagraíochtaí pobail ar fud na Gaeltachta agus go mbainfidh siad úsáid as an Ghaeilge

[Deputy Dinny McGinley.]

i gcónaí. Sílim, agus é sin curtha san áireamh, go gclúdaíonn an alt seo, mar atá sé, an chúis imní atá ag an dá Sheanadóir. Níl sé i gceist agam glacadh leis an leasú atá molta.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Nil mé sásta leis sin. Tá mé chun an leasú a bhrú.

Amendment put.

The Committee divided: Tá, 16; Níl, 29.

Tá

Barrett, Sean D.
Byrne, Thomas.
Cullinane, David.
Daly, Mark.
Leyden, Terry.
Mooney, Paschal.
Mullen, Rónán.
Norris, David.

O'Sullivan, Ned.
Ó Clochartaigh, Trevor.
Ó Domhnaill, Brian.
Power, Averil.
Reilly, Kathryn.
van Turnhout, Jillian.
White, Mary M.
Wilson, Diarmuid.

Níl

Bacik, Ivana.
Bradford, Paul.
Brennan, Terry.
Burke, Colm.
Clune, Deirdre.
Coghlan, Eamonn.
Coghlan, Paul.
Comiskey, Michael.
Conway, Martin.
Cummins, Maurice.
D'Arcy, Jim.
D'Arcy, Michael.
Gilroy, John.
Harte, Jimmy.
Hayden, Aileen.

Heffernan, James.
Higgins, Lorraine.
Keane, Cáit.
Kelly, John.
Landy, Denis.
Moloney, Marie.
Moran, Mary.
Mulcahy, Tony.
Mullins, Michael.
Noone, Catherine.
O'Keeffe, Susan.
O'Neill, Pat.
Sheahan, Tom.
Whelan, John.

Tellers: Tá, Senators Trevor Ó Clochartaigh and Brian Ó Domhnaill; Níl, Senators Paul Coghlan and Susan O'Keeffe.

Amendment declared lost.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: As amendments Nos. 16 and 31 are related, they may be discussed together.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: I move amendment No. 16:

In page 10, subsection (5), line 29, after “area” to insert the following:

“but only after An tÚdarás arranges to hold a public forum on the issue”.

Tá na leasuithe Uimh. 16 agus 31 gaolta agus baineann siad le rud amháin an-simplí. Faoi alt 7(5) sa Bhille, mura gcuireann eagraíocht isteach plean teanga i gceantar ar leith, is féidir leis an Aire an ceantar sin a bhaint amach as an Ghaeltacht. Ní fheictear dom go bhfuil sin ceart. Sin tar éis don údarás fógra a chur amach mura bhfuil aon iarratas déanta. Tá 19 ceantar ann agus tá go leor grúpaí iontacha díograsacha sna ceantair sin ach tá an Bille seo ag cur milleáin

iontach trom ar na grupaí sin plean teanga a ullmhú, a réiteach agus a chur i bhfeidhm. Níl a fhios agam cá háit a bhaighidh siad an t-airgead leis na pleananna seo a ullmhú.

Má ghlactar leis an plean teanga sa Spidéal, áit a raibh an dréacht ag cosaint €25,000, agus de réir ollamh san ollscoil in nGaillimh go gcosnóidh sé thart ar €650,000 an plean sin a chur i bhfeidhm thar tréimhse, cén choiste a bheidh in ann costais den chineál sin a iompar. Níl aon choiste i nDún na nGall a bheadh in ann costais mar sin a iompar, fiú an costas a bhaineann leis an dréachtú. Má tá plean teanga le cur le chéile, tá daoine proifisiúnta de dhíth leis an phlean a ullmhú, a phlé agus a chur i láthair. Tá próiseas comhairliúcháin i gceist leis an phobal sa cheantar. Ní mór spriocanna agus critéir a leagan amach sa phlean. Tá cuid mhór oibre i gceist leis an phlean a tharraingt le chéile ar dtús agus a chur i bhfeidhm thar tréimhse agus na spriocanna atá ann a bhaint amach. Tá sé ráite anseo mura chuireann eagrais isteach ar phlean teanga a dhéanamh, tá cead ag an Aire an ceantar a bhaint amach as an Ghaeltacht. Níl sin ceart. Tá me ag moladh líne breise a chur isteach “, ach sin amháin i ndiaidh don Údarás socrú a dhéanamh chun fóram poiblí a thionól maidir leis an tsaincheist”. Tá sé tábhachtach go bhfuil a fhios ag an phobal cad tá ag dul ar aghaidh roimh aon chinneadh a bheith déanta i dtaca le todhchaí cheantar Gaeltachta. Tá sé tábhachtach go mbeidh fóram, agus ba chóir do na fóraim phoiblí seo a bheith ann chun deis a thabhairt don phobal go ginearálta seo a phlé agus ba chóir don údarás na fóraim seo a reachtáil i ngach ceantar. Má tá an 19 ceantar le bheith ann, ba chóir don údarás dul amach agus na fóraim phoiblí seo a reachtáil roimh-ré, plé a dhéanamh agus ansin fógra a chur amach ag iarraidh coistí a bhunú tar éis an tacaíocht a bheith ar fáil.

Má tharlaíonn nach gcuireann aon eagrais isteach ar an obair seo, reachtálódh an t-údarás fóram poiblí an cás a phlé agus bheadh sé in ann tuairim an phobail a fháil ag an fhóram sin sula nglacfaidh an tAire aon chinneadh. Tá seo tábhachtach. Dúirt an tAire Stáit féin go gcaithfidh daoine a mhealladh agus a thabhairt linn. Seo dóigh amháin chun sin a dhéanamh, le fóram oscailte poiblí a bheith ann do gach duine, chan amháin do ghrúpaí nó coistí ach do gach duine sa cheantar.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Téann alt 7(5) go croí na ceiste maidir leis an gcur chuige atá ag an Aire Stáit. I gcás nach ndéanann aon eagraíocht iarratas faoi fho-alt (4), féadfaidh an tAire ordú a dhéanamh lena ndearbhaítear nach limistéar Gaeltachta a thuilleadh an limistéar lena mbaineann, is ábhar d'fhógra faoi fho-alt (3), agus lena ndearbhaítear an dáta nach limistéar Gaeltachta a bheidh ann dá éis. Tá an rud seo contúirteach. Táimid ag tabhairt an-chuid cumhachtaí don Aire. Níl mé ag caint faoin Aire Stáit féin, ach Aire ar bith a bheadh ann.

Cuir i gcás go bhfuil na comhlachtaí pobalbhunaithe nó na comharchumainn atá lonnaithe sna ceantair ag breathnú ar an obair atá an Rialtas ag iarraidh orthu a dhéanamh, go ndeir an Rialtas go bhfuil sé ar lorg eagraíochtaí forbartha pobail as ceantar den 19 ceantar chun an obair seo a chur chun críche, plean teanga a chur i bhfeidhm, agus mura n-éiríonn leis an bplean teanga sin, an toradh a bheadh air sin ná go dtógfaí an ceantar sin amach as an Ghaeltacht. Dá mbeinn i mo stiúrthóir ar an gcomharchumann nó ar an gcomhlacht pobalbhunaithe sin, chuirfinn ceist orm féin an fiú dom cur isteach ar an jab seo, cad tá le fáil as seo? An mbeimid in ann ár spriocanna féin a chur chun cinn, an mbeimid in ann an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn inár gceantar? An mbeidh na hacmhainní cuí ar fáil? Mura ndéanfaimid é, cén toradh a bheidh air? Tá an Rialtas ag cur an ualach ar fad anuas ar na comhlachtaí agus na comharchumainn phobalbhunaithe ach níl sé ag tabhairt na n-acmhainní cuí leis sin a chur i gcrích.

D'fhéadfadh i gceantair áirithe go ndéarfadh cuid de na comhlachtaí nach mbeidís chun cur isteach air mar an t-aon bhuntáiste a bheadh ann mar gheall air ná tuilleadh brú oibre sa chois ar an méid atá ann cheana féin. Ní bheidh buíochas dá laghad againn, fiú má dhéanfar plean foirfe mar níl na hacmhainní ann lena chur i bhfeidhm de réir mar is ceart.

[Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh.]

Má fhaigheann comhlacht sa Cheathrú Rua an conradh leis an jab seo a dhéanamh, agus cuireann sé plean an-chuimsitheach le chéile. B'fhéidir go n-aontódh fiú an t-údarás leis an gcomhlacht go dteastódh €500,000 chun é a chur i bhfeidhm. Thiocfadh an freagra ar ais ón Roinn nach mbeadh na hacmhainní cuí ar fáil leis sin a dhéanamh, mar gheall ar gach atá ag tarlú sa domhan mórtimpeall orainn. Cé ar a bhfuil ar an milleán sa chás sin? Bhí an plean foirfe ach ní raibh na hacmhainní ar fáil. D'fhéadfadh an tAire sa chás sin an ceantar a bhaint as an Ghaeltacht. Dá mbeinn i mo stiúrthóir ar an gcomhlacht, chuirfinn ceist orm féin mura n-éiríonn linn an plean a chur i bhfeidhm, fiú ar na hacmhainní teoranta, is orainn a chuirfear an milleán má bhaintear ceantar na Ceathrún Ruaidh as an Ghaeltacht. D'fhéadfadh go mbeadh comhlachtaí áirithe ann atá ag plé le forbairt teanga-bhunaithe sna ceantair a déarfadh nach mbacfaidh siad leis seo agus, leis an méid atáimid ag cloisteáil faoin nglacadh nach bhfuil ag na pobail leis an mBille mar atá sé faoi láthair, nach mbeidh siad ag iarraidh cur isteach ar an phlean mar ní bheidh buíochas dá laghad le fáil dá bharr.

I láthair na huaire, tá fadhb againn. Tá an ceantar Gaeltachta ina líne ar an léarscáil agus glacaim leis go bhfuil fadhb ansin. An réiteach a bhí le déanamh ná féachaint ar na critéir a bhain leis na ceantair teanga agus na háiteanna nach bhfuil ina nGaeltachtaí atá ag feidhmiú a bhaint as an gceantar Gaeltachta. Níl sin á dhéanamh san Acht.

Tá sé tábhachtach go pléifear seo leis an bpobal. Tá ciall leis an moladh atá á dhéanamh. Ní aontaím leis an bhealach atá an tAire Stáit ag tabhairt faoi ach is léir nach bhfuil sé ag dul aon leasú a ghlacadh ar aon chuid den Bhille, fiú má tá siad ciallmhar. Tá an moladh ag an Seana-dóir Ó Domhnaill ciallmhar.

Téann seo ar ais chuig an cheist a chuir mé níos túisce. Sa staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíocht, na slata tomhais a bheadh ann ná go bhfuil Gaeilge á labhairt sna scoileanna, go bhfuil na seirbhísí eaglaise trí Ghaeilge, go bhfuil na comhlachtaí ag feidhmiú trí Ghaeilge agus mar sin de sa cheantar. An critéar atá an tAire Stáit ag úsáid le ceantar a bhaint as an Ghaeltacht ná nár chuir aon chomhlacht isteach ar an gconradh. Níl sé sin maith go leor chun ceantar a bhaint as an Ghaeltacht ach sin an chumhacht atáimid ag tabhairt don Aire. Ní dóibh liom gurb iad na critéir gur ceart dúinn a leagan síos do na glúine atá ag teacht inár ndiaidh ó thaobh cad is Gaeltacht ann agus cad nach Gaeltacht ann. Tá an Bille fabhtach agus bheinn ag iarraidh ar an Aire Stáit athbhreithniú a dhéanamh air.

Sin cad tá sé ag rá, go bhféadfadh an tAire ordú a dhéanamh lena ndearbhaítear nach limistéar Gaeltachta a thuilleadh an limistéar lena mbaineann, i gcás nach ndéanadh aon eagraíocht faoi alt 7(4). Cuirim i gcás in Uibh Ráthach nach bhfuil aon chomhlacht pobalbhunaithe ann. Bhí mé ag caint leis an Seanadóir Coghlan agus tá seo ag tabhairt cumhachta don Aire Stáit, ar scríbe pinn, ceantar Uibh Ráthaigh a bhaint as ceantar Gaeltachta ní de bharr nach bhfuil a dhóthain oibre á deanamh ar an talamh ag eagrais phobail, ní de bharr múinteoirí nach bhfuil ag déanamh míle dichill ó thaobh an Ghaeilge a labhairt sna scoileanna, ach mar gheall nach bhfuil eagraíocht forbartha pobail ann a chuir isteach ar an jab, joab atá an tAire Stáit ag déanamh dodhéanta mar níl aon chinnteacht ann go mbeidh acmhainní ar fáil an jab sin a dhéanamh. Sílim go bhfuil athmhachnamh iomlán le déanamh faoin alt seo. Dá mbeimid in aon réimse eile den tsaol — dá mbeimid ag caint faoi sholáthar seirbhísí sláinte nó fiacloireachta, seachas seirbhísí pleanála teanga — an mbeadh an Rialtas ag lorg iarratais ó chomhlachtaí pobalbhunaithe chun iad a chur ar bun i gConamara, ach gan aon acmhainní breise a chur ar fáil? Is iomaí comhlacht a chinneadh nárbh fhiú dóibh a leithéid a dhéanamh taobh istigh de na hacmhainní atá acu cheana féin, os rud é go dtarraingeodh sé tuilleadh oibre agus achraínn orthu. Bheadh siad buartha go gcuirfidís an pobal trína chéile agus go mbeadh daoine ag rá nach bhfuil dóthain á dhéanamh acu as na n-íocaíochtaí a bhfaigheann siad. Sa chás sin, déarfadh oifigigh na Roinne nach orthu atá an milleán nach bhfuil an Ghaeilge ag

teacht chun cinn, ach ar an gcomhlacht nach bhfuil ag cur an plean i bhfeidhm. Caithfear athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar an bhfabht mór bunásach seo sa Bhille. Molaim go ndéanfar athmhachnamh iomlán ar an gcuid seo den Bhille idir an Chéim seo agus an Tuarascáil.

Senator Sean D. Barrett: I suggest that Údarás na Gaeltachta should arrange a public forum on the issue. Such consultation is needed. The issue of language rights has been ignored in this Bill. No elected member of Údarás na Gaeltachta has been heard in the Oireachtas. No regulatory impact assessment has been presented. The 27,904 people who voted in the last Údarás na Gaeltachta election are being ignored. Elections represent the ultimate form of consultation. I ask the Minister of State to accept this amendment, which attempts to deal with the appalling democratic deficit in this Bill.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: D'éist mé leis an méid a bhí le rá ag na Seanadóirí. Ba mhaith liom a rá gurb é croílár na straitéise seo ná spreagadh a thabhairt dos na pobail cur isteach ar na pleananna teanga. Tabharfar gach spreagadh agus gach seans dóibh cur isteach orthu. Muna bhfuil fonn ar éinne in aon cheann de na pobail seo cur isteach ar na pleananna teanga, b'fhéidir go gheobhaidh siad cabhair ón taobh amuigh. Beidh comhairle, cuidiú agus tacaíocht le fáil ón údarás sna ceantair Gaeltachta chun gach deis a thabhairt do dhaoine cur isteach ar phlean teanga, nó chun iad a spreagadh chun plean a chur i láthair. Mar Aire Stáit, níl sé ar intinn agam an tua a luascadh agus an Ghaeltacht a scoilt mar sin. Tá sé ráite go gcaithfidh an Ghaeltacht bheith teanga-lárnaithe as seo amach. Tuigimid go léir go mbeidh an Ghaeltacht a bheidh againn amach anseo mar scáthán ar an teanga atá á labhairt ag an am sin. Nílimid anseo chun éinne a bhrú. Nílimid anseo leis an tua. Tabharfaimid gach uile deis agus gach uile tacaíocht do mhuintir na Gaeltachta. Caithfidh an spreagadh chun plean teanga a chur i láthair teacht ón bpobal féin.

Chomh fada agus is eol dom agus mé ag amharc ar an ábhar seo — tá súil agam go bhfuil an ceart agam — beidh gach ceantar sásta a bplean teanga féin a chur le chéile. Is leor sin. Is é seo an rud a bhfuil le déanamh. Má dhéanann siad é sin, beidh se go breá. Má deireann ceantacha atá sa Ghaeltacht i láthair na huaire “níl suim againn sa phróiseas seo agus nílimid chun é a dhéanamh”, is cinnte go mbainfidh impleachtaí leis sin. Táimid chun gach uile seans a thabhairt dóibh. Ní shílím gur cheart go mbeadh sé sa reachtaíocht gur gá go mbeidh fóram eile poiblí eile ann. Cén fáth nach mbeidh fóram poiblí ann má oireann sé? Níl aon rud sa Bhille a deireann nach féidir fóram poiblí a bheith ann. Ní gá dúinn é a chur sa reachtaíocht go caithfidh fóram poiblí a bheith ann. Tá fóram poiblí maidir leis an teanga ag dul ar aghaidh i nDún na nGall inniu. Bhí fóram poiblí eile i nGaillimh inné. Beidh fóraim phoiblí i gCúige Mumhan agus i gCúige Laighean i gceann cúpla lá eile. Tá an ábhar seo á phlé lá i ndiaidh lae ar Raidió na Gaeltachta. Is féidir díospóireacht ar Bille na Gaeltachta a fheiceáil ar TG4 aon oíche sa tseachtain. Baineann an rud céanna le *Gaelscéal*, *Foinse* nó aon irisleabhar. Tá an oiread sin cainte déanta againn, agus 3.30 tráthnóna Déardaoin taobh thiar dúinn, go bhfuilimid tar éis an Bille seo a phlé for ten long hours. Beimid anseo an tseachtain seo chugainn chun ceithre huaire eile a chaitheamh ar an ábhar seo. Muna leor é sin, rachfaidh an reachtaíocht go dtí an Dáil le haghaidh díospóireacht lá i ndiaidh lae ansin. Is deas an rud é go bhfuilimid ábalta é a phlé. Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil leis na Seanadóirí atá sásta teacht anseo chun a gcuid tuairimí a chur in iúl. Níl easpa díospóireachta, easpa plé nó easpa fóram sa chás seo.

Tá iarracht á dhéanamh a chinntiú go mbeidh sé sa Bhille go gcaithfidh fóram a bheith ann. Caithfidh mé a rá nach bhfuil sé sa Bhille nach mbeidh fóram ann. Tá an cheist fós oscailte. Níl mé chun aon rud drastic a dhéanamh gan gach rogha agus seans a thabhairt don phobal. Má táimid dáiríre, caithfaimid díriú isteach ar deacrachtaí agus na laigí a léirigh na saineolaithe agus an suirbhé teangeolaíochta. Roinnt blianta ón lá inniu, beidh a fhios againn cén áit ina

[Deputy Dinny McGinley.]

bhfuil an Ghaeltacht. Ag an am sin, beidh an Ghaeltacht a bheidh ann mar léiriú agus mar scáthán ar labhairt na teanga, lá i ndiaidh lae, i measc an phobail. Sílim go bhfuil na forálacha sa Bhille mar atá sé éifeachtach go leor chun na Seanadóirí a chur ar a suaimhneas i dtaobh aon inní atá acu.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: D'éist mé leis an Aire Stáit. Bhí go leor le rá aige, ach níl a fhios agam an bhfuil gach rud a dúirt sé cruinn. Luaigh sé fóram poiblí a bhí ar siúl i gConamara inné agus fóram poiblí atá ar siúl i dTír Chonaill inniu. Dé réir mar a thuigim, ní fóraim phoiblí iad ach cruinnithe a d'eagraigh Údarás na Gaeltachta le bainisteoirí agus stiúrthoirí na comhlachtaí pobalbhunaithe agus na comharchumainn. Ní ionann sin agus fóram poiblí. Níor fógraíodh go poiblí na cruinnithe sin. Ní dóigh liom go bhfuair na hionadaithe tofa as Gaillimh Thiar cuireadh go dtí an cruinniú a tharla i nGaillimh inné. Bheadh sé níos poiblí dá mbeadh cuireadh faighte againn. Dá mba rud é go mbeadh an reachtaíocht á phlé anseo nuair atá an fóram poiblí ar siúl — más fóram poiblí é — ní bheadh aon chiall leis.

Dúirt an Aire Stáit níos túisce go bhfuil próiseas fada plé ar an mBille déanta roimhe seo. Foilsíodh an reachtaíocht seo coicís ó shin. Cé go raibh go leor plé ar an staidéar cuimsitheach, an straitéis agus mar sin de, ní ionann iad sin agus an Bille seo. Tá an t-uafás ar bith sa straitéis nach bhfuil sa Bhille. Mar a luaigh mé níos túisce, tá go leor sa staidéar cuimsitheach nach bhfuil sa Bhille. Ba chóir go mbeadh an reachtaíocht seo foilsithe go poiblí sé mhí ó shin ionas go mbeadh deis againn plé poiblí a dhéanamh le pobal na Gaeltachta, a bheidh an-tionchar aige seo orthu. Ba cheart go mbeadh sé sin tarlaithe roimh an Chéim seo. Tá an próiseas lochtach ar fad. Tá an tAire Stáit ag iarraidh tabhairt le fios go bhfuil plé iomlán ar an mBille seo déanta, ach níl sé sin fíor. Tá an Rialtas fós ag iarraidh an Chéim seo a bhrú chun cinn agus gilitín a chur leis an plé atá á dhéanamh againn inniu.

Mar focal scoir ar an leasú seo, ba mhaith liom a rá gur oibrigh mé mar bhainisteoir ar cheann de na heagraíochtaí pobalbhunaithe. Chaith mé tréimshe freisin ar an mbord de cheann de na chomharchumainn atá ag plé le gnóthaí Gaeltachta. Bhéinn an-drogallach a leithéid de ról a thógaint sa chás seo. Tá freagrachtaí corporáideacha ag baint le bheith i do stiúrthóir ar chomharchumann nó ar chomhlacht pobalbhunaithe. Caithfidh an stiúrthóir duty of care a thaispeáint do na fostaithe agus rialacha áirithe ó thaobh airgead, srl., a leanúint. Caithfidh sé nó sí a chuid oibre a dhéanamh de réir na hacmhainní atá ar fáil. Tá dúshlán an-mhór á chur os comhair na heagraíochtaí seo. Chuala muid figiúirí níos túisce faoin ngearradh siar atá déanta ar bhuiséad an údaráis san earnáil seo le cúig bliana anuas, faoin Rialtas seo agus an Rialtas roimhe. Tá a fhios agam, ó bheith ag caint le bainisteoirí comharchumainn——

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Ní bhaineann an leasú seo le buiséad an údaráis. Baineann sé le fóram a chur ar fáil. Dúirt an tAire Stáit go mb'fhéidir go gcuirfí fóram ar fáil.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Baineann sé le cumas na neagras a bheidh bunaithe i gceann de na limistéir Gaeltachta a dhéanfaidh iarratas ar seo. Tá na comharchumainn maoithe go díreach ag an údarás. Tá an buiséad sin gearradh siar. Tá mise ag déanamh an pointe nach bhfuil ar a gcumas sin an plean atá ag an Aire Stáit a chur i bhfeidhm. Dá mbeinn mar stiúrthóir, mholfaínn gan iarratas a dhéanamh ar an airgead breise seo. Is é bun agus barr an scéil ná go bhfuil gunna á chur le cloigne na gcomharchumann ag rá, "Tá an deontas reachtála bunaithe ar a bheith páirteach anseo". Mura bhfuil siad sásta an plean teanga a chur i bhfeidhm, ní bhfaighidh siad an deontas reachtála in aghaidh na bliana. Caithfidh siad an obair bhreise an dhéanamh má tá siad ag súil an deontas reachtála a choinneáil. Sin atá ag tarlú ar an talamh go praiticiúil, sin atá an Rialtas ag déanamh leis na comharchumainn Ghaeltachta, bímis iomlán fírinneach faoi sin.

Sa chás sin, mar stiúrthóir ar chomhlacht den chineál sin, d'iarrfainn an mbeadh sé ciallmhar cur isteach air seo agus glacadh leis an deontas reáchtála mar tá an Rialtas ag iarraidh orm m'fhoireann oibre a chur faoi bhrú, na hacmhainní a bheinn ag caitheamh ar áiseanna oifige nó soláthairtí pobail a athrú uaidh sin le haghaidh an plean teanga a chur i bhfeidhm. Mura mbeinn sásta sin a dhéanamh, tá forálacha anseo a deir gur féidir stádas na háite mar cheantar Ghaeltachta agus gach a mbaineann leis sin a chailleadh. Sin atáimid ag rá anseo. Tá ceisteanna tábhachtacha dlí ag baint leis an leasú seo.

Tógfaidh mé an ceantar go bhfuil mé féin i mo chónaí ann. Tá trí eagrais pobalbhunaithe a fheictear dom a d'fhéadfadh cur isteach ar an bpost seo: Comharchumann Mhic Dara ar An Cheathrú Rua, tá Comhairle Ceantar na n-Oileán lonnaithe i dTír an Fhia agus tá Comhar Chuigeál Teo. Seans go bhfuil tuilleadh ann ach d'fhéadfadh aon cheann acu siúd cur isteach ar an gconradh áirithe seo. An bhfuil an tAire Stáit ag rá liom mura bhfuil aon duine acu sásta dul ar aghaidh mar gheall go gceapann siad nach bhfuil na hacmhainní cuí ar fáil, go bhféadfadh le hAire ar bith a rá go mbeadh sé chun an ceantar sin, mar gheall nach bhfuil na comhlachtaí pobalbhunaithe ag comhoibriú agus nach bhfuil siad sásta an rud a dhéanamh ar an deontas reáchtála atá siad ag fáil, a bhaint amach as an Ghaeltacht. Ní ceart ná cóir sin gan dul amach chuig an bpobal agus a dtuairimí a fháil faoin rud ar fad. B'fhéidir fiú go ndéarfadh an pobal nach mbeadh an comhlacht ag feidhmiú mar is ceart ar aon nós. Chonaic muid é sin i gcomhthéacs MFG. Ní raibh sin ag feidhmiú mar is ceart ar an talamh ach bhí sé mar dheá ag feidhmiú mar chomhlacht pobalbhunaithe ag freastal ar mhuintir na Gaeltachta. Ní raibh an comhlacht á dhéanamh. D'fhéadfadh cuid de na heagrais eile faoina a bhfuil an tAire Stáit ag labhairt an rud céanna a dhéanamh.

Senator Terry Brennan: Beimid anseo go dtí mí na Nollag, nílím ag dul ar aghaidh ró-thapaigh. Tá seanfhocal sa Laidin, *festina lente*, more haste, less speed.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Is fearr rud a dhéanamh i gceart.

Senator Terry Brennan: Tá an tAire Stáit san áit cheart. Rugadh agus tógadh sa Ghaeltacht é. Tá a chroí sa Ghaeltacht agus táim cinnte go bhfuil sé ag déanamh a dhíchill do gach duine a chónaíonn sna Gaeltachtaí agus na daoine a chónaíonn sa Ghalltacht.

Dúirt mé seo sa Teach seo cúpla uair agus déarfaidh mé arís é. Bhí mé ag labhairt le príomhmhúinteoir scoile cúpla bliain ó shin agus dúirt sé go raibh ár dteanga ag fáil bháis agus nach raibh sé ag déanamh faic chun sin a athrú. Bhí mé ar buille. Is é mo thuairim féin go bhfuil an Ghaeilge ag fáil bháis sna Gaeltachtaí. Tá brón orm sin a rá. Nuair a bhí mé féin ag freastal ar scoil, bhí an Ghaeilge go flúirseach ag gach duine sa scoil. Ní raibh aon sruthú ann sa scoil. Thóg an máistir gach páiste, lag agus flúirseach, suas le chéile, measctha le chéile. Bhí an-suim aige ina theanga dhúchais. Caithfimid tús a dhéanamh sna scoileanna náisiúnta.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Tá an-mheas agam ar an Seanadóir agus ar a chuid Gaeilge ach níl sé ag labhairt ar an leasú.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Níor labhair an Seanadóir Brennan go fóill agus thug mé slat leathan don Seanadóir Ó Clochartaigh agus don Seanadóir Ó Domhnaill. Tá mé chun beagáinín slaite a thabhairt don Seanadóir Brennan.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Ní bhaineann seo leis an leasú.

Senator Terry Brennan: Bhí mé sa suíochan sin cúpla lá ó shin agus sin a rinne mé le gach duine a bhí ag labhairt ón taobh seo agus ón taobh eile.

Acting Chairman (Senator Cáit Keane): Tá slat leathan anseo.

Senator Terry Brennan: Bhí an-suim ag mo mhúinteoir ina theanga dhúchais. Caithfimid tús a dhéanamh sna scoileanna náisiúnta ar fud na tíre. Dúirt an Seanadóir Ó Clochartaigh ar maidin, “mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí”. Tá a lán le déanamh againn go léir, tuismitheoirí, múinteoirí agus páistí, chun daoine a spreagadh an teanga a labhairt chomh minic agus is féidir. Is é an tAire Stáit an fear ceart san áit cheart chun an teanga a chur chun cinn sna Gaeltachtaí agus taobh amuigh.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Tugaim aitheantas don Seanadóir Brennan as labhairt i nGaeilge. Fair play dó, níl sé chomh furasta sin nuair nach as ceantar Ghaeltachta é. Tá a fhios agam go mbíonn sé i nDún na nGall anois is arís agus tá fáilte roimhe ansin i gcónaí.

Is trua nach bhfuil an tAire Stáit sásta glacadh leis an leasú. Ní fheictear dom cén fáth nach dtiocfadh leis glacadh leis. Mar a dúirt an Seanadóir Barrett, tá democratic deficit sa Bhille seo agus dá mbeadh an dualgas ar an údarás dul ar aghaidh leis na cruinnithe poiblí a reáchtáil, ar a laghad bheadh sé ar eolas ag gach duine go mbeidh ar an údarás dul síos an bóthar sin. Tá a fhios againn uilig gur beag foireann atá ag an údarás. Níl rud ar bith sa Bhille chun acmhainní breise a thabhairt dó chun duine le taithí agus scileanna sa phleanáil teanga a earcú. Ní fheictear dom cén dóigh a bheadh an t-údarás in ann an Bille seo a chur i bhfeidhm gan na hacmhainní cuí agus ar a laghad 20 duine breise a fhostú chun na spriocanna seo a chur le chéile agus a bhaint amach.

Dúirt an tAire Stáit nach bhfuil sé sásta glacadh leis an leasú agus b'fhéidir go mbeadh na fóraim phoiblí á reáchtáil agus b'fhéidir nach mbeadh. Seans go gcuirfidh sé fearthainn amárach agus seans nach gcuirfidh, sin atá le rá aige. Ní thuigim cad chuige nach bhfuil sé sásta glacadh leis na focail atá anseo. Thabharfadh sé cosaint don Bhille, chuideodh sé leis an Aire Stáit agus leis an údarás, agus bheadh glór ag an phobal a dtuairim a chur in iúl i bhfóram oscailte poiblí.

Tá a fhios agam go bhfuil na cruinnithe seo á reáchtáil, tá cruinniú inniu i nGaoth Dobhair. Ní bhfuair mé féin cuireadh chuig an fhóram sin agus ní raibh eolas ar bith agam faoi go dtí maidin inniu. Tá a fhios agam nach bhfuair na daoine atá ina gcónaí sa Ghaeltacht cuireadh. Fuair roinnt coistí cuireadh go dtí an fóram ach tá an chuma ann go bhfuil an Bille á bhrú fríd na Tithe. Tá a fhios againn cén fáth go bhfuil gilitín anseo tráthnóna, mar go bhfuil deireadh á chur leis an daonlathas a bhaineann leis an údarás. Tá an Rialtas ag iarraidh go rithfear an Bille sa Dáil roimh sos an tsamhraidh. Tá tréimhse comhaltaí an údaráis thart ag deireadh mhí Mheán an Fhómhair.

Tá dóigh eile déileáil leis seo; an Bille a chur siar go dtí mí Mheán an Fhómhair, plé a dhéanamh leis na pobail eágsúla i rith an tsamhraidh agus Bille leathanaigh amháin a thabhairt isteach chun síniú ama a thabhairt do bhord an údaráis. Ní bhainfeadh aon chostas leis sin go dtí deireadh na bliana. D'fhéadfadh an tAire Stáit bord idirmhéanach a chur isteach fá choinne tréimhse trí mhí. Bheadh sé in ann feidhmeannaigh na Roinne, nó oifigigh de chuid eagrais ar nós Conradh na Gaeilge agus Guth na Gaeltachta, a chur ar bhord an údaráis go dtí deireadh na bliana. Bheadh sé ar ár gcumas neart ama a ghlacadh chun an reachtaíocht seo a phlé sa Teach seo, sa Teach eile agus ag cruinnithe poiblí ar fud na Gaeltachta. Bheadh sé go hiontach dá mbeadh an Aire Stáit agus a chuid feidhmeannaigh in ann camchuairt a dhéanamh ar fóraim pobail a reáchtálfar ar fud na Gaeltachta. Tá a fhios agam go mbeadh an pobal i ngach Gaeltacht sa tír sásta freastal ar chruinnithe den chineál sin. Ba cheart go mbeadh inchur acu sula mbeidh an reachtaíocht ceadaithe nó pasáilte ag an Oireachtas. Ní fiú mórán cruinnithe poiblí a reáchtáil inniu, inné nó an tseachtain seo chugainn nuair atá a fhios ag gach éinne go bhfuil an reachtaíocht seo ag dul tríd. Tá an cumadh air nach bhfuil sé ar intinn ag an Aire Stáit glacadh l'aon cheann de na leasuithe atá molta againn. I ndáiríre, is cur amú ama é aon chruinniú a reáchtálfar anois. Ní bheidh le déanamh againn ach insint le daoine go bhfuil an Bille ag dul ar aghaidh agus nach féidir leo aon inchur a dhéanamh ag na cruinnithe sin. Ní fiú dóibh pointí a chur chun tosaigh mar nach bhfuil an Rialtas sásta glacadh l'aon cheann dóibh. Is léir go bhfuil an reachtaíocht seo ag dul ar aghaidh de réir mar atá sé scríofa. Níl mé sásta leis sin. Is

é sin an fáth go bhfuil an leasú seo curtha faoi bhráid an tSeanaid. Muna bhfuil an tAire Stáit toilteanach glacadh leis an leasú seo, nó fiú a rá go bhfuil sé sásta breathnú air agus teacht ar ais an tseachtain seo chugainn, beidh me ag brú an leasú. B'fhéidir gur féidir leis an Aire Stáit breathnú ar an leasú thar an deireadh seachtaine, smaoiniamh air agus a chuid tuairimí a nochtú ar an Tuarascáil an tseachtain seo chugainn. B'fhéidir go ndéanfaimid athrú ag an bpointe sin.

Senator Jim D'Arcy: Cé go bhfuil cúram iontach tábhachtach ag Údarás na Gaeltachta ó thaobh na hoibre seo, ní dóigh liom go bhfuil aon gá leis an leasú seo, a bhaineann leis an obair atá le déanamh ag muintir na gceantracha Gaeltachta, nó na limistéir teanga. Ní raibh mé in ann bheith i láthair don díospóireacht seo ar fad, ar an drochuair, os rud é go raibh mé ag cruinniú den Chomhchoiste um Feidhmiú Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta. Ba mhaith liom mo chomhghairdeas a ghabháil leo siúd a labhair as an obair atá déanta acu ar an reachtaíocht seo. Cé gur mór an trua é nach mbeimid ábalta na leasuithe uilig a phlé, caithfidh mé a rá go bhfuil gach gné den reachtaíocht luaite i rith na díospóireachta. Is dócha go mbeidh raic agus ruaille buaille againn i gceann nóiméad no dhó. Caithfidh an Freasúra é sin a dhéanamh. Tá gach rud luaite acu. Aontaím leis an Aire Stáit i dtaobh an leasú seo. Ní bheidh mé ag tacú leis an leasú.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Caithfidh buíochas a ghlacadh leis an Seanadóir D'Arcy as an moladh atá tugtha aige don phlé atá déanta againn. Aontaím go raibh díospóireacht an-mhaith againn ar Bille na Gaeltachta 2012 go dtí seo. Níl deireadh leis an bplé fós. D'fhéadfadh an Ceannaire rún a chur os comhair an Tí a thabharfadh deis dúinn leanúint leis an díospóireacht. Geallaim leis an Seanadóir D'Arcy go bhfuil na Seanadóirí ar an taobh seo den Teach breá sásta leanúint ar aghaidh inniu, amárach nó lá ar bith is gá an tseachtain seo chugainn chun na leasuithe breise a phlé. Tá an-tionchar ag na ceisteanna tromchúiseacha seo ar saol agus saothar na Gaeltachta. Is é sin an fáth go bhfuil na ceisteanna seo á dtarraingt anuas againn. Is ábhar díoma é nach raibh an tAire Stáit sásta glacadh le leasú ar bith, fiú na leasuithe beaga fánacha, go dtí seo. Tá an buncheist a bhaineann leis an daonlathas fíor-thabachtach sa chomhthéacs seo.

Caithfidh mé a rá, tar éis an méid díospóireachta atá déanta againn, go bhfuil cineál deachtóireacht ar bun ag an Aire Stáit ó thaobh cúrsaí Gaeilge agus Gaeltachta de. Níl a fhios agam an bhfuil na smaointí atá leagtha amach againn i rith na díospóireachta á dtógáil ar bord ag an Aire Stáit, i ndáiríre píre. Le linn an próisis seo, muna bhfuil an tAire Stáit sásta glacadh leis go mbeidh fóram pobail faoi scáth Údarás na Gaeltachta ann, an ghlacfaidh sé le tuairimí an pobail ar an gceist seo? Is léir go bhfuil agenda faoi leith ag an Rialtas maidir leis an nGaeilge. Is é an bealach seo an t-aon bealach a bhfuil an Rialtas sásta a leanúint. Téann sé sin i gcoinne an bunphrionsabal a bhí ann maidir le cearta sibhialta na Gaeltachta, mar shampla nuair a bunaíodh Raidió na Gaeltachta, Údarás na Gaeltachta agus TG4, srl. Tháinig an feachtais aníos ón bpobal. Tá feachtas ar bun ó foilsíodh an Bille seo ag iarraidh gach duinne againne a chur ar an eolas nach bhfuil pobal na Gaeilge nó na Gaeltachta sásta leis an mBille. Tá an-iontas orm nach bhfuil an tAire Stáit sásta é sin a thógáil ar bord. Ní hé gur cluiche polaitiúil é seo. Táimid ag caint faoi thodhchaí ár ngasúir, ár gclann agus clann á gclainne. Táimid ag caint faoi thodhchaí ár dteanga agus ár gceantracha. Cuireann sé an-ímní orm go bhfuil an tAire Stáit chomh diongbháilte maidir leis na leasuithe atá curtha chun cinn againn agus na hargóintí atá déanta ag Seanadóirí ón taobh seo den Teach.

Glacaim leis go bhfuil dea-mhéin ann. Níl mé ag iarraidh cur isteach ar an Seanadóir Brennan. Tá ard-mheas agam ar an gcaoi ina úsáideann sé an Ghaeilge sa Teach seo. Tá sé sin fíor-thábhachtach. Caithfidh a bheith ceannrórdaíoch agus misniúil. Mar a dúirt mé níos túisce, caithfidh an saineolas sa staidéar cuimsitheach a thógáil ar bord. Thóg sé tamall fada an staidéar sin a chur le chéile. Bhí plé iomlán ann. Tá cuid mhaith saineolais caite i dtraipisí, áfach. Ba cheart an méid ama atá againn chun an reachtaíocht a phlé ar an gCéim seo a

[Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh.]

shíneadh, ionas go mbeidh deis againn teacht ar ais chuig na moltaí eile, a bhaineann le cumhachtaí Údarás na Gaeltachta, an bord, an comhlíonadh agus an maoiniú, srl. Cén dochar a dhéanadh coicís eile le seo a fháil i gceart? Dúirt an tAire Stáit níos túisce sa díospóireacht go bhfuilimid 56 bliain ag fanacht leis seo. Ba chóir dúinn é a dhéanamh i gceart an uair seo. Dá mbeadh an tAire Stáit oscailte agus sásta glacadh le cuid de na moltaí ata á dhéanamh againn, b'fhéidir go mbeimid uilig in ann tacaíocht a thabhairt do Bhille na Gaeltachta. B'fhéidir go mbeimid uilig bródúil as. Ní shin atá ag teacht as an méid plé atá déanta againn thar go leor uaireanta an chloig.

Go dtí seo, níor ghlac an tAire Stáit l'aon cheann de na tuairimí atá léirithe againn. Tugann sé ár ndúshlán, agus muide a dhúshlán féin. Tá sé ag éisteacht linn, ach ní ghlacaim go bhfuil sé ag tógáil ar bord aon chuid den saineolas ana moltaí seo. Níl mé ag rá gurb é ár saineolas atá i gceist. Tháinig na leasuithe atá á chur chun cinn againn chugainn ó eagrais eile Gaeilge agus Gaeltachta. Tá saineolas acu, os rud é go bhfuil siad ag obair ar an talamh, agus tá siad ag caint linn ó lá go lá. Ní cheart go mbeadh an tAire Stáit cosúil leis na hAirí eile sa Rialtas, a fhanann suas anseo i mBaile Átha Cliath — i dTeach Laighin — gan bheith i dteagmháil leis an méid atá ag tarlú ar an talamh. Ní bhainfidh a leithéid de cur chuige amach na spriocanna sa straitéis 20 bliain. Ní bheidh sé ar leas na Gaeilge. Tá sé fíor-thábhachtach go ndéanfaidh an tAire Stáit athmhachnamh ar an ábhar seo. Ba cheart síneadh ama a thabhairt dúinn, seachas deireadh a chur le Chéim an Choiste. Tá mé ag moladh go dtabharfar seans dúinn teacht ar ais agus níos mó ama a chaitheamh ar na leasuithe ar fad atá le plé.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Ní shílím go bhfuil mé ag cailliúint teagmhála leis na ceantair Gaeltachta. Tá ceantar an-leathan Gaeltachta i mo dháilcheantar féin. Bhí mé i gceantar an Seanadóir Ó Clochartaigh i gConamara ar a laghad deich n-uaire — b'fhéidir 20 uair — ó ceapadh mé. Bhí mé sna Gaeltachtaí ar fad — An Rinn, Béal Átha an Ghaorthaigh agus Cúil Aodha i gCúige Mumhan agus Gaeltacht Contae na Mí ina measc — níos mó na uair amháin. Tá mé ag caint le muintir na Gaeltachta lá i ndiaidh lae. Sílim go dtuigim an dearcadh atá acu.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: An bhfuil siad ag rá leis an leis an Aire Stáit go bhfuil siad ag tacú leis an mBille?

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Ba mhaith liom díriú isteach ar an dá leasú seo, a bhaineann le bhfóraim poiblí a eagrú i gceantracha má dhiúltaíonn siad ar phlean teanga a chur isteach. Muna bhfuil siad ag iarraidh bheith páirteach, tar éis gach seans a thabhairt dóibh, an bhfuil sé i gceist a rá leo ag na fóraim seo go bhfuil siad ag dul amach as an Ghaeltacht? Níl aon rud sa Bhille a deireann nach mbeidh fóram poiblí ann. Tá go leor fóraim againn. Tá siad tosnaíthe cheana féin. Caithfidh mé a ra go bhfuil mé thar a bheith sásta leis an eolas atá ag teacht ar ais ó na cruinnithe a bhí againn go dtí seo. Tá na comharchumainn agus na heagraíochtaí lena bhfuilimid ag plé, ar a bheidh an t-ualach agus an cúram na pleananna seo a dhéanamh, an-dearfach faoin mhéid atá sa Bhille agus na freagraí atá á thabhairt dóibh. Tá sé soiléir dóibh go bhfuil dúshlán mór os a comhair amach agus jab mór le déanamh acu ar mhaithe leis an teanga.

Maidir le hacmhainní, táthar ag cur acmhainní ar fáil agus ar mhaithe leis an teanga agus leis an straitéis, caithfear tosaíocht a thabhairt do chur i bhfeidhm na straitéise agus na bpleananna leis na hacmhainní teoranta atá againn.

Mar a dúirt mé, tá mé iontach dóchasach ón eolas atá ag teacht ar ais go bhfuil na daoine ag éisteacht. Táimid ag déanamh ár ndíchill an t-eolas a thabhairt dóibh. Mar sin féin, ní dhéanfar aon rud i nganfhiós; beidh gach rud oscailte agus beidh seans ag gach duine. Níl mé

ag rá nach mbeidh fóram poiblí ann ach ní shlíim gur gá é a chur isteach sa Bhille. Mar sin, ní bheidh mé ag glacadh leis na leasuithe.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Tá sé scannalach, náireach amach is amach that the guillotine is being used on this Bill. We only got to amendment No. 16 of 160 amendments, 10% of the amendments. Democracy is being denied to people and we cannot even discuss the other amendments. Tá sé náireach agus scannalach go bhfuil Bille mar seo á bhrú fríd an Teach seo. Níl sé maith go leor agus nílím sásta ar an taobh seo den Teach. Is mór an náire go bhfuil an Rialtas ag iarraidh guth a bhaint ó phobal na nGaeilachtaí gan fiú bheith sásta éisteacht linn. We are willing to sit all night if we get the opportunity. It is democracy denied.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: As it is now 4 p.m., I am now required to put the following question in accordance with an order of the Seanad of this day: "That amendment No. 16 is hereby negated, that the Government amendments undisposed are hereby made to the Bill, each of the sections undisposed or, as appropriately, each of the sections, as amended, is hereby agreed to, the Schedule is hereby agreed to and the Title is hereby agreed to, and that the Bill, as amended, is hereby reported."

Question put.

The committee divided by electronic means.

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: Faoi Bhuan-Ordu 71(3)(b), iarraim go ndéanfar an vótáil arís ar shlí seachas trí mheán leictreonach.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Tá, 27; Níl, 15.

Tá

Bacik, Ivana.
Bradford, Paul.
Brennan, Terry.
Burke, Colm.
Clune, Deirdre.
Coghlan, Eamonn.
Coghlan, Paul.
Comiskey, Michael.
Conway, Martin.
Cummins, Maurice.
D'Arcy, Jim.
Gilroy, John.
Harte, Jimmy.
Hayden, Aileen.

Higgins, Lorraine.
Keane, Cáit.
Kelly, John.
Landy, Denis.
Moloney, Marie.
Moran, Mary.
Mulcahy, Tony.
Mullins, Michael.
Noone, Catherine.
O'Keeffe, Susan.
O'Neill, Pat.
Sheahan, Tom.
Whelan, John.

Níl

Barrett, Sean D.
Byrne, Thomas.
Crown, John.
Cullinane, David.
Daly, Mark.
Leyden, Terry.
Mooney, Paschal.
Mullen, Rónán.

Ó Clochartaigh, Trevor.
Ó Domhnaill, Brian.
O'Sullivan, Ned.
Power, Averil.
Reilly, Kathryn.
White, Mary M.
Wilson, Diarmuid.

Tellers: Tá, Senators Paul Coghlan and Susan O'Keeffe; Níl, Senators Trevor Ó Clochartaigh and Brian Ó Domhnaill.

Question declared carried.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: When is it proposed to sit again?

Senator Maurice Cummins: At 2.30 p.m. next Tuesday.

An Leas-Chathaoirleach: Is that agreed?

Senator Trevor Ó Clochartaigh: No.

The Seanad divided by electronic means.

Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill: Under Standing Order 62(3)(b) I request that the division be taken again other than by electronic means.

Question put: “That the Seanad do now adjourn until 2.30 p.m. next Tuesday.”

The Seanad divided: Tá, 24; Níl, 14.

Tá

Bacik, Ivana.
Bradford, Paul.
Brennan, Terry.
Burke, Colm.
Clune, Deirdre.
Coghlan, Eamonn.
Coghlan, Paul.
Comiskey, Michael.
Conway, Martin.
Cummins, Maurice.
D’Arcy, Jim.
Harte, Jimmy.

Hayden, Aideen.
Higgins, Lorraine.
Keane, Cáit.
Landy, Denis.
Moran, Mary.
Mulcahy, Tony.
Mullins, Michael.
Noone, Catherine.
O’Keeffe, Susan.
O’Neill, Pat.
Sheahan, Tom.
Whelan, John.

Níl

Barrett, Sean D.
Crown, John.
Cullinane, David.
Daly, Mark.
Leyden, Terry.
Mooney, Paschal.
Mullen, Rónán.

O’Sullivan, Ned.
Ó Clochartaigh, Trevor.
Ó Domhnaill, Brian.
Power, Averil.
Reilly, Kathryn.
White, Mary M.
Wilson, Diarmuid.

Tellers: Tá, Senators Paul Coghlan and Susan O’Keeffe; Níl, Senators Trevor Ó Clochartaigh and Brian Ó Domhnaill.

Question declared carried.

Adjournment Matters

Early Childhood Education

Senator Mary M. White: I welcome the Minister of State, Deputy McEntee, and compliment him on the great job he is doing as Minister of State with responsibility for horticulture and organic foods. Senator Leyden spoke to the Minister of State today and passed on compliments

from Mr. Stephen Cope of Lir Chocolates for the Minister of State's understanding of the food industry.

The early childhood care and education programme provides one free preschool year at three hours per day to each child aged between 3 years and 3 months, and four years and six months. The programme was introduced in 2010 by the Fianna Fáil Government. From next September the Government proposes to take away the option which allowed the programme to be provided over 50 weeks. This option suits many working parents. Many women work three days per week, not necessarily by choice but because they are the only positions they can get. Such women are able to use the programme during those three days.

The Minister is inferring that the three hour session comprises the only educational content of the day if a child is in full day care. That is not correct as many teachers, such as those in the community crèche in Athboy, are highly qualified. These teachers also educate through play during the long day so the Minister is incorrect to state that education only happens during the three-hour session. This is a retrograde step and I am disappointed the Minister, Deputy Fitzgerald, allowed this to happen. It is against working mothers. We have to continue to promote gender equality so the women who want to participate in the economy are allowed to do so.

A report published two years ago noted that our child care costs were the highest in Europe. This is a serious matter and one frequently hears how expensive child care is. We have to give women the freedom to participate in the economy.

I produced a document on a new approach to child care. I gave the Government full marks for those areas it had improved. In a previous document I referred to the extension of preschool education to all three year olds. This was subsequently done and there is no doubt that families in Meath exerted pressure for this development. One could almost say that this initiative to provide free child care was driven by the parents from Meath.

Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Shane McEntee): I thank the Senator for raising this issue and for her compliments earlier. I will return them because I know the kind of businesswomen she is. Moreover, when she gets up to speak on a matter it is because she is deeply concerned. I take on board the Senator's comments and when someone believes in something so strongly, it is crucial to continue to fight for it.

Senator Mary M. White: Exactly.

Deputy Shane McEntee: Although my own children have gone far beyond this stage, I know where the Senator is coming from. I will bring back the message to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Deputy Fitzgerald, and will discuss it with her. Members must excuse my spectacles but they were the only pair I could find.

I will be taking this Adjournment matter on behalf of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Deputy Frances Fitzgerald. The early childhood care and education, ECCE, programme, which provides one free preschool year to each eligible child, is implemented by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The decision to introduce this programme in 2010 was a major step forward and marked a very significant milestone in the provision of early childhood care and education in this country. The programme is open to all community and commercial child care providers and children aged between three years and two months and four years and seven months on 1 September each year can enrol in a participating child care service and avail of the preschool provision. Nearly all preschool services in the country are participating in the programme and approximately 65,000 children, which constitutes approximately 95% of the eligible cohort of children, are availing of the free preschool year.

[Deputy Shane McEntee.]

When the programme was introduced in 2010, a number of transitional measures were included to make it more acceptable to the child care sector and to ensure that each eligible child had access to the programme. One of these measures related to the number of weeks over which the free preschool year could be provided. At that time, approximately 30% of children in the relevant age cohort were in full day care, which generally was provided over a 50-week period. In order to facilitate full day care services in the early years of the programme, services were permitted to choose between providing a 38-week or a 50-week model. Those services that chose the 50-week model were required to provide the free preschool provision for two and a quarter hours each day, five days each week over 50 weeks. However, it should be noted that the majority of children availed of the free preschool provision in sessional services for three hours a day, five days a week, over a 38-week period between September and June.

It was always intended, once the ECCE programme had bedded down, to introduce a standard 38-week model. This is the optimal model in terms of ensuring a high-quality early years experience for preschool children. The Síolta programme, which provides clear practice guidelines on all aspects of delivering high-quality early education and Aistear, the national curriculum framework for early childhood education, were developed to support this objective. The early childhood care and education programme is designed to be delivered across 38 weeks. The curriculum cannot be quality assured across a 50-week period when children spend less time each day availing of it. Consensus from research is that only high-quality early education experiences in preschool will make a sustained difference to children's lives. The focus of the Minister, Deputy Fitzgerald, therefore, is on introducing changes that will bring about an improvement in the quality of the early childhood care and education services provided in this country. We need to consolidate the preschool year by ensuring that it is a quality experience for young children. For this reason, from September 2012, all services participating in the early childhood care and education programme will be required to provide the programme on the basis of three hours per day, five days per week, over 38 weeks. The capitation fee payable by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs will not change, as the child will spend the same number of hours in the programme.

The success of the preschool year to date attests to the huge importance of investing in the early years sector. One of the aims, despite the current economic situation, is to ascertain how to move forward and further support and develop early years provision. The Minister, Deputy Fitzgerald, is pleased to have been able to maintain the preschool year as a universal and free programme for qualifying children. She is confident the new early years strategy currently being developed by her Department will provide a framework to enhance the early years experience of all children and establish a positive foundation for engagement with the school environment and beyond.

Senator Mary M. White: I intend to bore down deeply into this issue and have made an appointment in Navan to meet Ms Fiona Healy, the Meath County Childcare Committee co-ordinator. Thereafter, I will meet Ms Gráinne Black, the boss-woman in the Athboy child care centre. I intend to pursue this matter and go into greater depth on it to understand precisely what are the issues as what is happening is complicated. Go raibh míle maith ag an Aire Stáit and I wish him continued success.

Deputy Shane McEntee: Having heard the Senator's remarks, I know she is serious about this issue and will follow it up.

I note the Minister of State, Deputy O'Dowd, is under extreme pressure of time. If possible, can the matter to which he will respond be taken next?

Acting Chairman (Senator Martin Conway): Yes, if it is acceptable to Senators Moran and Reilly that Senator Colm Burke's matter be taken first. Is that agreed? Agreed.

Flood Relief

Acting Chairman (Senator Martin Conway): I welcome the Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Deputy O'Dowd, to the House.

Senator Colm Burke: I wish to raise the issue of the recent flooding in Cork city, particularly in Blackpool, north central Cork, which is an old part of the city, Park Court in Ballyvolane and Meadow Brook, Riverstown, which is in the county area. In the first instance, I thank the local authorities for the manner in which they responded to the emergencies that arose. In particular, I thank Cork city and county councils for the manner in which they have approached this problem. However, there is a problem in that some of the areas affected, particularly in Blackpool and Park Court, were unable to get insurance for flood damage and I note extensive damage again occurred in this case. Work had been carried out previously by Cork City Council, under the guidance of the Department and the Office of Public Works, in which culverts were put in place. However, it now appears as though they are inadequate to deal with the increase in the flow of water as a result of the bad weather conditions. This matter must be dealt with immediately to ensure there is no recurrence of what has happened. Small businesses have suffered substantial damage and householders in Park Court ended up with more than five feet of water in their houses. I have shown some of the photographs of the area to the Minister of State and as they demonstrate, the flooding was extremely serious. It is important that the Government respond in a proactive way, working with the local authorities, to try to come to a solution to the problems that exist.

An issue also has arisen in respect of insurance cover, both up to today's date and into the future, for all these areas. For instance, Meadow Brook in Glanmire will not be insurable for flood damage in the future and the question arises as to how this problem will be dealt with. There are a number of issues, the first being that there already was no insurance cover for small businesses and households in the Blackpool and Park Court areas and second, that no insurance cover will be available in the future. The question now arises as to how these problems will be dealt with to prevent a recurrence of the flooding. I visited a number of the affected houses in Park Court and in Meadow Brook in Glanmire in which the water had risen up to the level of the kitchen worktops. It is a fairly frightening experience for everyone involved to have had floods of up to five feet of water.

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Fergus O'Dowd): I thank Senator Colm Burke for raising this matter and my colleague, the Minister of State, Deputy McEntee for facilitating this arrangement.

On behalf of the Government, I express my sympathy to those affected by the flooding in Cork last week. While, thankfully, no lives were lost, the flooding has had a significant impact on homes and businesses in various areas of Cork.

I commend the tremendous work of the council staff, An Garda Síochána, the HSE, Civil Defence, Irish Red Cross and all others who responded so professionally and speedily when their communities were in danger.

As flood waters receded, the immediate priority of the various agencies and bodies working on the response was to achieve a return of critical utilities and road systems to communities as

[Deputy Fergus O'Dowd.]

quickly as possible. This required the restoration of electricity supply by the ESB to 11,000 homes, which had been disrupted by water damage to two substations, and the reopening of roads rendered impassable in places, particularly the N25, the N27 and the N71. Cork City Council and Cork County Council immediately activated their clean-up response crews. From early afternoon on 28 June, in the worst affected areas such as Blackpool and Ballyvolane, the councils provided assistance to residents with the clean up of property as waters receded. Civil Defence crews assisted people affected, particularly in the Ballyvolane area of the city.

The Department of Social Protection is actively involved, under the supplementary welfare allowance scheme, in assisting those families and individuals affected by the flooding. The scheme in question provides for exceptional needs payments to help meet essential, once-off, exceptional expenditure which people could not be expected to meet from their weekly incomes. Furthermore, there is provision for assistance in the form of urgent needs payments. In certain circumstances, these payments can be made to persons who would not normally be entitled to supplementary welfare allowance. The Department also has provisions for humanitarian assistance, designed to provide hardship alleviation assistance, as opposed to compensation, to people affected by an emergency event, such as flooding, and is based on a means test. Humanitarian assistance is not intended to compensate for all losses and does not cover risks that are covered by insurance policies or cover business or commercial losses. The decision to provide humanitarian assistance is a matter for the Government upon submission from the Minister for Social Protection.

The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport has confirmed that he will facilitate any revision by Cork County Council to its restoration improvement programme for 2012 to accommodate rehabilitation works on the roads damaged by the recent floods and the deferral to 2013 of less critical works. The Office of Public works is carrying out a catchment flood risk assessment study of the south-west river basin district area which includes County Cork. This will produce a prioritised list of measures to address areas of significant flood risk and assign responsibility for their implementation. The study will also incorporate the recommendations of a pilot study already completed by the OPW on the River Lee catchment. I understand that the OPW has been in ongoing discussions with the Irish Insurance Federation regarding flooding insurance issues, particularly where insurance cover has not been provided in areas where flood defence or mitigation works have been carried out.

The Minister for Finance and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform are considering ways in which we can assist the Red Cross in the provision of humanitarian assistance. They have also asked the financial institutions to help, if at all possible, the small number of businesses which have been affected, particularly those with no insurance. Local authority budgets cannot provide for all of the costs that can arise. The costs incurred by Cork County Council, Cork City Council and Clonakilty Town Council during and following the flooding last week are being assessed at present, and the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government will be considering the position in this regard with relevant Government colleagues as quickly as possible. I can also assure the Senator that the ongoing work with local communities in the clean-up and with those individuals and families who have been particularly affected will continue.

Senator Colm Burke: I thank the Minister of State for his reply. I raised a concern last week that insurance companies are tending to drag out the payment of any compensation to householders and businesses. I suggested that as a minimum, every insurance company should pay out a sum of €3,000 within 14 days from the date of receiving a claim form, in order to

tide people over. It is a very small amount but it is the minimum amount of damage that would have been caused to any property.

In my own job as a solicitor, I have come across situations where claims drag on for 12 to 18 months. People are on very tight budgets and they have suffered huge damage. All of the families affected in Meadowbrook in Glanmire and in Park Court in Ballyvolane are now renting alternative properties at the moment, in order to allow remedial work to be carried out in their houses. They have had to pay one month's deposit up front and one month's rent in advance. Representations should be made to the Irish Insurance Federation on that matter immediately.

Deputy Fergus O'Dowd: I thank the Senator for bringing that issue to my attention. I will ensure that the Minister is made aware of it immediately. The quicker all claims are settled, the better. What can be done must be done quickly.

School Accommodation

Senator Kathryn Reilly: I thank the Minister of State for coming into the House and taking this matter on the Adjournment on behalf of the Minister for Education and Skills. This is the second time I have raised the issue at St. Mary's national school in Virginia, County Cavan. When the Minister announced details of his infrastructure plan for 2012 last December, the school was omitted. When he announced his five year infrastructure plan in April, which outlines the major projects needed to cater for demographic growth, the school was again omitted. I would like to focus on the school's concerns about this issue and in particular, the use of the GIS system by the Department.

The major growth experienced in Virginia and surrounding areas has resulted in an influx of families and an increased demand for school accommodation. The most recent census figures indicate that there has been a 31.6% growth rate in the population of Virginia between 2006 and 2011. This is largely due to its location along the commuter belt and its close proximity to Dublin. In March the school enrolled its 80th student since September and enrolment now stands at 380 students, but the board of management and community do not believe that this is reflected in the school building programme for 2012.

School enrolment has doubled in the last few years and as a result, there has been massive expenditure on temporary accommodation. We are now at the stage where some of the prefabs need to be replaced with additional accommodation. The project was included in the 2011 school building programme and was at an early architectural planning stage, but it seems to have been stuck there for a long time. Now we want to move this project and get it to the next stage. Due to population growth, pressure is coming on primary school accommodation earlier than in the secondary school sector. As well as that, 77% of the fifth and sixth class pupils in St. Mary's national school were born outside of the parish, so there has been a large influx of primary school students to the area. Fifty two local authority houses have been built and they are on the verge of being allocated. From my dealings in Cavan and in the area, I know that many young families will be moving into those houses. In a county ravaged by emigration, it is good to see that there is population growth, but we need to make sure that the facilities and the services are up to date to deal with it.

The geographical information system, or GIS, used by the Department has its strengths, but we have concerns about it that we would like to be borne in mind when decisions are made on replacing the prefabs. We believe that the figures fail to take into account when one family moves from one location to another. The last time I raised this issue, child benefit was mentioned as an example. However, the child benefit payment does not require a change of address, so the GIS capacity and facility is only relevant if the bank details change. There is no bank at

[Senator Kathryn Reilly.]

all Virginia at the moment. Most people do not change their bank due to online banking facilities. We need to be careful about this and due to the influx of people into Virginia, the community is being affected by the lack of movement onto the next stage of planning.

To recap, the school was originally built for six teachers but it now has 20 teachers and nine additional support staff. It is an intolerable situation for the community, the pupils and staff. There is a high level of frustration about the delay and I urge the Minister of State to bring this back to his colleague, the Minister for Education and Skills, to try to expedite the project and highlight once again the discrepancies in the use of the geographical information system. I hope this project will move forward because the school has been waiting eight years for new accommodation to be built. If it is omitted, as it already has been from the current five year programme, it will be at least 2020 before the new accommodation is built. With such large population growth this is not a feasible option for the town.

Deputy Shane McEntee: I thank the Senator for raising this matter. I come from an area not too far from Virginia and I remember when it was a six-teacher school. I hope the community will not have to wait as long as the 25 years they did in Laragh down the road. The Senator is correct to raise the matter which is very important. Not alone has there been an influx of people to Virginia, being on the edge of the M3, but it is a very strong agricultural area with many medium to small farmers and I have no doubt they, as well as the people in the town, will have children. If the Senator has any further information I suggest she keeps pushing the matter. The same situation arises in the neighbouring area of Mullagh. The principal there has been in touch with me. The people there were a little disappointed. I suggest the Senator keeps raising the issue because those who lobby hardest get results.

I thank the Senator for raising the question relating to St. Mary's national school, Virginia, County Cavan. The Department of Education and Skills introduced a geographical information system, GIS, in 2008 and this technology is used to assist in planning school requirements for the future. The GIS contains information on all schools in the country, geo-coded to their location. The information is then linked to the relevant demographic information for these areas. Typically the demographic information will be from the Central Statistics Office census data, the general register of births, the Department of Social Protection, An Post's geo-directory and information supplied by local authorities through development plans. The system allows the Department to view, understand, question, interpret and visualise data in many ways that reveal relationships, patterns and trends. The external sources of demographic data are further enhanced by the Department's own enrolment data, and all sources are checked against each other to ensure they provide as accurate an overall picture as possible for future enrolment projections.

To meet the needs of our growing population of school-going children, the Department of Education and Skills must establish new schools as well as extending or replacing a number of existing schools, particularly in those areas where it has been identified that most future demographic growth will be concentrated. To ensure that every child has access to a school place, the delivery of projects to meet future demographic demands nationally will be the focus for capital investment in schools over the coming years. The five year construction programme outlines when 275 selected major projects will progress to construction over the next five years as part of a €2 billion capital investment programme. These projects will account for most of the capital funding available from now until 2016.

The Virginia feeder area has five primary schools. Enrolments at primary level have increased over the past decade from 590 pupils in 2001 to 2002 to 1,142 in 2011 to 2012. However, based on an analysis of the above information sources, the Department of Education

and Skills has projected that future enrolments in the Virginia feeder area will remain relatively stable to 2018. In fact it is anticipated there will be a slight decrease in enrolments for the catchment area up to 2018. The current enrolment at St. Mary's national school, Virginia, is 380 pupils, increased from 350 in 2007. While enrolment levels have grown significantly at the school since 2000, they have increased by less than 10% over the past five years. This project is at an early stage of architectural planning and will continue to progress to complete the detailed design, secure planning permission and prepare tender documents.

All school building projects not included in the five year construction programme, including St. Mary's, will continue to be progressed, where possible, to final planning stages in anticipation of the possibility of further funds being available to the Department of Education and Skills in future years. However, it is not possible to progress this project to tender and construction at this time. I thank the Senator for raising this matter.

Senator Kathryn Reilly: I thank the Minister of State and I ask him to bring back to his colleagues the point with regard to young families moving into the 50 new houses which have been allocated. I also have an issue with the projection of the slight decrease in enrolments. I firmly believe any decrease in enrolments will not be because of a lack of demand for places in the national school; it will be because parents will not want to send their children to a school with 11 prefabs which are cold and in dire need of replacement.

Deputy Shane McEntee: I will bring the message back. The Minister, Deputy Quinn, is doing an excellent job on the removal of prefabs throughout the country, which is a major step forward. I heard what the Senator stated with regard to local authority housing. Along with the agricultural community this will mean more children.

School Transport

Senator Mary Moran: I thank the Minister of State for coming to the Chamber to comment on the ongoing school transport problems experienced by a young lady from my constituency whose details I have submitted. She is 14 years old and has a history of monosomy 21, developmental delay and seizures and she is underweight. She attends a special school where she has settled in very well. Due to her medical condition she wears a back brace. At present the school bus collects her at 7.30 a.m. and she must spend an hour and 15 minutes on it before it arrives at school at 8.45 a.m. As a result the child is exhausted before she even starts school. This excessive journey time has affected her concentration and is hindering her opportunity to learn. Her parents have medical reports which support the opinion the present travel arrangements expose their daughter to additional risks of seizure. When school finishes at 2.45 p.m. the long journey is repeated. Therefore the travel time every day for this young lady is two and a half hours.

This is an unnecessarily long day, particularly for a child who wears a back brace which undoubtedly adds to her discomfort. There is a very simple and cost-effective solution to the issue. Another bus travels 2.6 km from the child's house and leaves later in the morning, which would give her and her family valuable extra time. It travels directly to the school and arrives there in less than 30 minutes. The child's parents have been trying to have their daughter transferred to this bus but so far have been unsuccessful. I spoke to the Bus Éireann inspector who reports he has no objection to the proposal. I appeal for some sensitivity in dealing with school transport for children with special needs. Last year I experienced a similar situation with my child and fully appreciate the frustration this family experiences. For parents to have an extra half an hour to help their child in the morning when that child has special needs is like an extra six hours to somebody else. Allowing this young lady to travel on the other bus would

[Senator Mary Moran.]

give the family substantially more time with their daughter in the morning to prepare for school and would not entail the pressure and strain in place at present.

Deputy Shane McEntee: I thank the Senator and congratulate her for raising a matter on behalf on an individual. They are the people who need most help. If my reply does not deal with the issue I will further it to improve the situation.

I stress that school transport is a very significant operation managed by Bus Éireann on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills and covering more than 82 million kilometres annually. Approximately 113,000 children, including more than 8,000 children with special educational needs, are transported in approximately 4,000 vehicles on a daily basis to primary and post-primary schools throughout the country.

Under the terms of the Department's school transport scheme for children with special educational needs, children are eligible for school transport where they are attending the nearest recognised school that is or can be resourced to meet their special educational needs. Eligibility is determined following consultation with the National Council for Special Education through its network of special education needs organisers. The child referred to by the Senator is not attending her nearest school and is, therefore, not eligible for school transport. She is availing of transport on a concessionary basis. Under the terms of the scheme, routes cannot be extended nor can additional cost be incurred in facilitating children availing of concessionary transport.

However, Bus Éireann has advised that, following consultations with the school, parent and bus contractor, a later pick-up time on the morning service has been agreed. This arrangement commenced in May and Bus Éireann is continuing to monitor the situation.

Senator Mary Moran: I am disappointed with this response. I had raised the issue before with the Minister for Education and Skills, Deputy Quinn, and submitted it to the Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills, Deputy Cannon, as it was a school transport issue. It is important issues involving special educational needs are examined sensitively. I will pursue the matter further.

Deputy Shane McEntee: Over the years I have found Bus Éireann to be very helpful and co-operative in this area. I suggest the Senator brings it up with Bus Éireann.

Senator Mary Moran: I have spoken with the inspector involved who is more than happy to take the child on the alternative bus.

Deputy Shane McEntee: Perhaps if the Senator went back to the inspector, I will broker a deal if I can. It is worth following as I have found Bus Éireann to be helpful in difficult circumstances.

Senator Mary Moran: I agree. I have found its officials are more than willing to help.

Deputy Shane McEntee: If the Senator wants to keep in contact with me on this matter, I will do my bit. We have from now until 1 September. Sometimes a break comes when one keeps at it. The point is not to give in.

The Seanad adjourned at 5.25 p.m. until 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 10 July 2012.