

*(Supplementary Order Paper)*

33

**DÁIL ÉIREANN**

*Dé Céadaoin, 22 Aibreán, 2009*  
*Wednesday, 22nd April, 2009*

2.30 p.m.

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**GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA**  
**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

*Fógra i dtaobh leasú ar Thairscint : Notice of Amendment to Motion*

**63.** “That Dáil Éireann:

- deplores the mean-spirited decision of the Government to cancel payment of the long standing Christmas bonus paid to most social welfare recipients;
- notes that this represents an effective 2% cut in social welfare payments over the full year;
- recognises that those on social welfare have come to depend on the extra payment to meet the additional costs associated with Christmas;
- expresses its serious concern that the decision will drive families dependent on social welfare into the hands of moneylenders or high-interest loan providers;
- calls on the Government to reverse the decision and make the payment at Christmas 2009 as usual; and
- believes that the €156m revenue required for the payment this year could be raised through further restriction on interest relief on rental property, including restriction of relief on commercial properties.” — *Róisín Shortall, Eamon Gilmore, Joan Burton, Emmet Stagg, Thomas P. Broughan, Joe Costello, Michael D. Higgins, Brendan Howlin, Ciarán Lynch, Kathleen Lynch, Liz McManus, Brian O'Shea, Jan O'Sullivan, Willie Penrose, Ruairí Quinn, Pat Rabbitte, Seán Sherlock, Joanna Tuffy, Mary Upton, Jack Wall.*

*Leasú:*

*Amendment:*

*1.* To delete all words after “Dáil Éireann” and substitute the following:

- “— acknowledges that in the context of very tough decisions having to be made across the whole range of Government expenditure, the provision of €21.3 billion for social welfare services in 2009 – 20% more than the amount spent in 2008 – is a clear demonstration of the Government’s commitment to protecting the vulnerable and providing income support to the increasing numbers of people who are losing their jobs;

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- notes that both taxes and borrowing had to be increased in the Budget to pay for rising welfare expenditure in 2009;
- further notes that over the past decade there have been very significant increases in welfare payments with Child Benefit increasing from €44 to €166 per month; State contributory pension increasing from €113 to more than €230 per week and the weekly rate of jobseeker's allowance being raised from €93 to €204 per week;
- notes that payment of a 100% bonus in 2009 would cost in the region of €223 million;
- acknowledges that in deciding on where to achieve savings in welfare expenditure, there were no easy options and that everything had to be considered – including a cut in the weekly rates of payments to all welfare recipients which the Government avoided;
- notes that the October Budget provided for increases of between 3% and 3.8% in the basic payment rates and that the inflation forecast has changed substantially since then, with a 4% drop in the Consumer Price Index now expected in 2009; and
- appreciates that the decision not to pay a Christmas bonus in 2009 will be difficult for people but believes that savings in other areas of welfare expenditure could have caused greater hardship;

acknowledges that the Government will:

- reconsider the payment of the Christmas bonus as soon as we are out of the current economic situation;
- prioritise control activities to reduce the incidences of social welfare fraud to effect savings; and
- continue to publicise the supports that are available through the Money Advice and Budgeting Service and to encourage people to contact them early before their debt problems accumulate.”— *An tAire Gnóthaí Sóisialacha agus Teaghlaigh*.