

Maher warns on incomes

The salary increase of 16 per cent conceded by the Government to public sector employees was an irresponsible act and a costly error that would inflict irreparable damage on the economy and the job prospects of the unemployed, Minister for Finance, Mr. Charles Haughey, said in a statement. He added: "As a people we must face the economic realities and tackle them as mature men and women. Trade union leaders and Government Ministers must realise the hour of reckoning for this country is drawing close if we continue to live beyond our means. At present 75 pence of every £1 collected under the PAYE tax system from Irish workers go to pay the interest on Government borrowings."

Mr. Maher said Britain had reduced inflation to 12 per cent and would have an average wage increase of 9 per cent for 1982. "We have imported practices in industrial relations from Britain that are not helpful but we could study their latest achievements with benefit to our people," he said. The auction of election goodies by the two major political parties during the last three General Election campaigns proved to be a major contributory factor to our present serious economic crisis. "The practice of putting the political parties' fortunes before the country by past and present leaders of the Government and Opposition has now to be paid for by the present generation through high unemployment and deep economic depression."

Twinning project wins support

By LEADER REPORTER

LIMERICK County Council have agreed in principle to further investigate the possibility of a twinning project between Limerick and Erie County, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

Mr. Michael McKeating, the director of budget and management and commissioner of finance of Erie County, has recently stated that the county executive are very interested in the project, and that a committee of local civic leaders has been set up to co-ordinate the establishment of a twinning relationship.

A five-member sub-committee has been appointed to draft a sister county agreement which will be submitted to Limerick County Council. The next step would be for the council and county legislature in Erie to approve and sign the agreement.

This could be done through the mail if necessary, but it has been suggested that it would be more satisfactory if it were to take place either in Erie or in Limerick.

DEPUTY Desmond O'Malley was recently reappointed to his front bench position as **Fianna Fail** spokesman for Industry, Commerce and Tourism. It was a recognition by party leader **Charlie Haughey** of the **East Limerick** deputy's undoubted ability and success in this ministry in the last government. This week **Deputy O'Malley** spoke, exclusively to the **Limerick Leader** on a whole range of national and local issues, including the recent General Election, the Third Bridge, the itinerant problem and corporation housing.

Speaking out this week: Des O'Malley

DES O'Malley is quite frank in his disappointment at the failure of **Fianna Fail** to win the third seat in the **Limerick East** constituency at the last election — an election which saw his own first preference vote (though still very high) fall below that of **Tom O'Donnell**.

"I was disappointed but I think it reflected the national situation. We did not do as well as we hoped and I don't think Limerick was out of line in that respect — I suppose it was proportional," he states.

The organisation of election effort at local level clearly disappointed him. "It was pretty poor but we have taken steps since to try and make sure that it's strengthened a good deal for the next time. We have a number of committees set up who are looking at various aspects of things where it was weak the last time. They will make their recommendations and generally re-organise."

Weakest

Mr. O'Malley feels that the city was the weakest link in the chain, with the rural areas stronger except for the old parish.

There was a deal of consternation locally when the name of hurling star **Eamon Cregan** was put forward for the election ticket. In retrospect, how does **Deputy O'Malley** view the decision to put him on the ticket?

"Well in retrospect it's easy to say it wasn't a wise move because he didn't do very well. At the time I didn't think it was a very good move because in a sense I was fearful of a certain amount of reaction," he said. "I had some doubts about the wisdom of the decision to add a candidate in the circumstances."

Mr. O'Malley came in for quite an amount of fire two years ago when he criticised **Limerick City Council** in an interview with the **Limerick Leader**. Did he believe that the council could offer any candidates for the party ticket at the last election?

"What I said about the council I really said as a whole and there are some individual councillors who are quite competent. I think the weakness of the council was the way in which it acts when it meets as a body."

Deputy O'Malley said that he had no idea who **Fianna Fail**'s candidates might be at the next election because of the fact that nobody knew when the election was going to take place. "For that reason somebody who might be suitable now might not be in two or three years," he said.

Jim Kemmy

Deputy O'Malley was critical of the performance of Independent **Deputy Jim Kemmy** in the recent election. "Well, if you like, I'm amused because he was elected as the allegedly most out and out socialist in the country but as a matter of fact he is quite the opposite of that," commented **Deputy O'Malley**.

Deputy Kemmy had voted for every single item he was asked to, including things one would not expect a socialist to vote for, including the closure of **Tam sugar factory**, which was closed by one vote.

"I find it difficult to see how the views he expressed before he was elected are in any way compatible to what he is doing now," he said.

"Would **Deputy Kemmy** hold the 'Labour vote' in Limerick at the next election?"

"The Labour Party seems to be unusually weak in Limerick city and that would seem to increase his chances of holding the seat but on the other hand I think that a great many of the people who voted for him and supported him in all good faith on the basis that he was a socialist must be very annoyed at the u-turn he has made."

Deputy O'Malley is obviously unhappy at the present situation where independent members are holding the balance of power. He describes it as very small minority opinion trying to dictate national policy which, from a democratic point of view, was unsatisfactory.

Industry

Deputy O'Malley is regarded by many as the saviour of industry in the Mid-West and during his terms of office as Minister for Industry, Commerce and Energy the region saw unparalleled industrial growth.

He views the scene at present as being "reasonably good" due to the efforts of the past four years to lay rest to the ghost of **Ferenga** and build up industry and services on all fronts.

"I would be a bit concerned about what the position might be in two or three years time because the kind of new things that should be happening don't seem to be happening. Everything that was going a couple of years ago should be a continuing process, but it doesn't seem to be doing that," he says.

There was a huge outcry after the last election at the failure of the Coalition to appoint at least one Minister from the region. Is the Mid-West getting the same priority from this Government?

"I don't think it is. It had a pretty big say in the last Government, as you know, and it has now — it has to lose out as a result. I don't think it's a very difficult situation, losing out for some years because these things take so long to carry through."



Mr. Haughey and Mr. O'Malley in Limerick

While the jobs scene in the Mid-West is by all accounts in a healthy state there have been comments in recent times about the lack of infrastructure and back-up services for industry in the region.

Deputy O'Malley agrees that the infrastructure is inadequate but believes that it has improved a good deal. "Whether that improvement will continue or not remains to be seen. I don't see very much sign of it now," he says.

Estuary

The most important single development which he would like to see at the moment would be the uniting of the **Foynes** and **Limerick Harbour Commissioners**. "It is still very disappointing that we haven't got a single or unified estuarial authority and no matter what it is it means that the estuary — our most major asset in this region — is being developed in two different ways. It should be the tremendous natural attractions there."

"There is a long history of mutual suspicion and at times both sides have been guilty of excessive suspicion of one another and that's over a period of ten years."

"I would appeal to both of them to put aside these parochial and local attitudes and come together for the benefit of the whole region."

One of the disturbing things about the present situation, according to **Deputy O'Malley** is that the **Kerry** interests on the estuary seem to want to go their own way.

"I don't think it's ever going to come to anything and I certainly hope it doesn't because it will be very damaging to everybody including Kerry, but it would never have been talked about only for the disagreements between **Foynes** and **Limerick** over the years."

One area where he sees scope for expansion is the electronics industry but he believes that there is a date far more rapidly than that in conventional industry," he commented.

On the broader issue of industry, **Deputy O'Malley** criticises what he describes as "weak marketing," particularly foreign marketing for exports.

Local issues

The wider problems of government and national statehood seem far more pressing when examined against the multiplicity of problems which face Limerick city.

However **Des O'Malley** — shrewd politician that he is — realises that the people that elect a minister to the Dail are often far more interested in his knowledge of local problems than his handling of the nation's problems.

To this end he keeps constantly up to date with local issues and has been briefed on new developments in the city and county.

The Limerick itinerant problem flared into public sight again recently when Senator **Pat Kennedy** declared his opposition to a halting site on the **Bajot Estate** in very strong terms. How does **Desmond O'Malley** view the problem?

"Limerick over the years made very genuine efforts to solve the problem and I don't think the city got much thanks for its efforts. While I agree we have to face the problem it is a very difficult one. It's particularly difficult in corporation housing, have been seriously discommoded by itinerants who, as we know, have wrecked houses

and so on. I would like to see every other local authority making the same efforts as Limerick Corporation because I think Limerick has probably got more than its fair share of the problem as a result of the efforts it has made."

Deputy O'Malley said that he would like to see halting sites spread around the rural areas to alleviate the problem in the city.

Traffic

On the issue of the **Third Bridge**, **Deputy O'Malley** says that is not the solution to all the traffic problems of the city. "If you have to make a journey across Limerick city without crossing the river it's almost as slow as if you had to cross the river. I think the bridge should be built as soon as possible but it won't solve the problems alone."

One solution to our long-standing traffic problem might be the creation of two lanes in each direction on **St. Patrick's Street** and at times, perhaps three in one direction. "I think it would move much quicker and alleviate the problem to some extent," he said.

Residents of **St. Mary's Parish** are heading for a showdown with the Corporation and the City Council over the proposed **Ring Road** through the **Kings Island** area.

Deputy O'Malley — this week

added his voice to the critics of the **Ring Road** saying that the **Kings Island** area was a historic one that would be cherished in any other European country. "Whatever way that road goes it is likely to do a fairly considerable amount of damage," he commented.

"One of the things that strikes me about it is that I wonder is it appropriate to build a four or six-lane highway that is capable of great volume of traffic through an area like that when in any case it is going to get bottlenecked on **Thomond Bridge** which can't take a big volume of traffic," he observed.

He believes that the better long-term solution would be to try and move the traffic out of the city altogether with a much smaller road going through the **Parish**.

Limerick had three new deputies — one Independent, one **Finn Gael** and one **Fianna Fail** — at the last election. How does **Deputy O'Malley** view their performance?

"I think they do their job adequately," he answered, in a typically clipped reply.

City council

Des O'Malley makes no secret of the fact that he finds local politics frustrating and his comments on the Limerick City Council some years ago drew a stream of vitriol on his head from offended city fathers.

Two years later, however, he is still unrepentant and goes even further in his comment.

"I feel there is a tremendous amount that could be done with this city that just isn't being done. This is the aspect I find most frustrating. I have said before and I have said before that I would never again go back on Limerick Corporation, certainly as things are constituted at the moment, because you just can do nothing there and it has been the most frustrating of all my activities."

Deputy O'Malley stated that there were enormous problems in the city and he rejected the commonly-put explanation "not enough money" as the answer to all questions. "If we had a different approach to certain things a lot of our problems would be solved. The most serious single one is housing and the Limerick Corporation seem to do remarkably little in this regard. They are not building and in relation to repairs to houses."

The repair situation of the corporation housing in this city is

the worst of all urban authorities without exception," he declared.

Limerick was getting proportionately the same funding as other authorities but the returns were far from proportionate, he said.

Southill

"The whole policy seems to be to bring in the **NBA** and let them build large estates on the outskirts. One of the long-term will have a detrimental effect — we have already seen the short-term detrimental effect."

What the Corporation should be doing was rebuilding housing in the derelict areas of the city, he believes.

"The best thing to do about something like **Southill** where there are enormous social problems is to ensure that it never happens again but I am afraid that it is going to happen again and this is a depressing thing."

And in possibly the most outspoken statement on corporation housing policy in recent years, **Deputy O'Malley** said: "God knows, anybody who knows anything about Limerick must know that things like **Southill** that were built the way they were and where they were are socially a disaster. A lot of people who would never be in conflict with the law are in constant conflict with the law, like young people."

Deputy O'Malley proposed that small cluster groups of houses should be built in the city's derelict areas.

The appearance of the city is also a subject which comes in for criticism from **Deputy O'Malley** who believes that far more can be done in terms of revitalising the derelict and old buildings by following the example set by **Shannon Development** who recently embarked on an urban renewal campaign in Limerick.

"If other cities like **American** ones had half of what we have, my God, they would make a tremendous use of it."

Pressures

Political life inevitably brings its pressures to bear on those in the forefront of the fighting as it were, and **Des O'Malley** is no exception. The constant pressure of front bench work has seriously affected his family life and he says himself that he wonders at times if he is justified in doing it if others will find it difficult because of his decision.

"There are others affected by it who don't have the freedom of choice that I have and sometimes I wonder if I am justified or right in making a choice that affects others as much as it affects me," he states quite openly.

As for his political future, he refuses to hazard a guess, and wisely so, given the uncertain state of things at the moment. The issue of the **Fianna Fail** leadership is one he will not be drawn on but he must by any criterion be a contender for party leader at some time in the future.

For now he is content with having a brief rest while the political crossfire flies around him.

No kissing

"To get ahead now and again in the national interest as much as your own interest because I had to continue operating at a very high level of activity for the next few years following June '81 — I would, nearly have been worn out by the end of it," he said.

Deputy O'Malley has little time for the "handshaking" baby-kissing antics of other politicians and his frankness can be disarming at times, to say the least.

However, his work record and ability — summed up by politicians of all parties — speak for itself and is a louder voice by far than a hundred patronising speeches or huggable babies.

Seen at the Leader social



At the Limerick Leader dinner dance at the Two Mile Inn (from left): **Tom and Mary Clifford**, **Lisnagry**; **Liam and Margaret Clifford**, **Annacotty**; **Leonard and Laura O'Brien**, **Bridgetown**; **Martin and Norma Naughton**, **Lisnagry**; **Louis and Patricia McMahon**, **Gallows Hill**.

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2. Licences will be issued for equipment using frequency modulation (FM) with a maximum of 40 channels and a maximum transmitter output power of 4 watts, which complies with the relevant technical specification issued by the Department. The manufacturer, assembler or importer of personal radio equipment is responsible for ensuring that the equipment conforms with the specification. Equipment that complies with the specification shall be identified by a mark stamped or engraved on the front panel of the equipment in such a way that even with the equipment built-in, the mark is immediately visible and identifiable and it shall be unremovable and indelible.

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