

The Taxpayers' News

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

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Is it worth fighting for?

Trying to get certain items of expenditure at an estimate meeting of the Kerry County Council resulted in a pugilistic encounter in that august chamber.

Was it worth it or necessary? When the rate in Kerry was 18/1 in the £ in 1944, deputations went before the Council asking that the rates be kept to a certain level. Now in 1958 when the rates are 2½ times higher there are no objections from Kerry. In other counties, the different organisations made various suggestions from installing no extra lights in towns and villages to revising the Health Act.

The only deputation that came before the Kerry County Council were from Causeway; they asked to have a road improved and claimed they were satisfied to pay the high rates. So, it looks as if Kerry, even though it is the highest rated county in the twenty-six, has some very satis-

tried to realise that you have people in Kerry (more so than in other counties) that are unable to pay their rates. Little children are living in hovels. We have a very low output in public works owing to mismanagement by officials. We are dumping money in unproductive works. Generations to come will curse the Kerry County Council for piling loan charges on them. The money that is extracted by way of high rates should be used for improving houses and land and would give greater employment eventually than the Co. Council are giving. People that have no confidence in a county are not inclined to lay out money, thus creating a slump.

The answer to "Is It Worth Fighting For" is this: Under the present set up in the Kerry Co. Council an independent councillor has to fight or get out.

THE HIGH RATES

THE ROADS ESTIMATE

Our Nineteen Million Pounds Civil Service

Put it on a part-time basis, and save the nation

The cost of our Civil Service was stated officially in the Dail recently to amount to nineteen million pounds per annum. This huge sum for our small country is not merely out of proportion—it is staggering.

Radically, it simply means that this country, with such a highly-paid Civil Service, is following on the heels of the wealthiest countries in the world. We are trying to main-

tain a whole-time, luxury, Civil Service machine that creates a relatively small number of soft, secure, and maximum-paid jobs for a relatively small number of persons, at such a phenomenal cost.

On principle, there can be no objection to our taxpayers paying out such a vast annual sum for such a privileged class. We presume that most of the money we pay our Civil Servants circulates in Ireland—mainly in the city of Dublin. However, it would be interesting to know if all the higher-paid officers, such as those receiving four or five thousand pounds per annum, invest all their savings in—
We ex-

produced the best brains we have had in this country—in the men and women who organised the setting-up of the First Dail.

CASTLE HACKS

After the glorious epoch of 1916-21, how much did Ireland again go back to a privileged, and fabulously-paid Civil Service to run its affairs. Why was it ever believed or accepted by our Free State government that, instead of the volunteer, part-time system, operated so effectively and beneficially, by the First Dail, we should revert to such a costly, cumbersome Civil Service on the British pattern? Was it not one of the declared

What portion of the 45/10d

Here are some of the details that have not been got from the Kerry County Council or officials in this year's estimates:— The salaries and travelling expenses of officials and county councillors; the cost of road material leaving the quarries; who estimated £130 for installing four wash-basins or £25 for a farm-gate in an institution; how extern patients are costing 2/6 in the £ under the Health Act, as it is being administered with one official having complete control over it. Water schemes can cost £300 per house. Nobody seems to know when any particular scheme is going to go ahead. Certain institutions that can cost up to £46 per patient per year for fuel bill. How is the £282,000 that is owing for housing divided up.

These are but a few of the many items with which a councillor anxious to do his job as a public representative should be familiar. If one is unfortunate enough to be an independent councillor not joined up with any of the two big parties his lot is not an enviable one. An estimate meeting is used in other counties to freshen up old councillors' memories and give the newcomers a chance to become familiar with the different estimates that will be discussed during the year. In Kerry there are only two or three councillors that have a full grasp of all the estimates; or others are either too thick or too lazy to bother about them. They can carry on alright by voting with their party, anyhow.

Now, a councillor who has the interests of his voters at heart and believes that he is legally and morally bound to get any necessary information would not be doing his duty if he did not insist on getting these figures, even if it involved him in a fight. The bullywork of anybody on a County Council will react against him in time. Dictatorship was a failure all over the world and the dictators in the Kerry County Council will not keep pulling the wool over people's eyes always either. It might be a good idea if they

Limerick rate for 1938-39 is 32/- in the £. Kerry rate for same period is 45/10.

Ratepayers in Kerry will wonder why there is such a difference between the rates in adjoining counties or should there be any difference. Are the people in Limerick getting less social services than Kerry? Is Limerick drawing more Government grants than Kerry? The answer is no.

One shilling to the £ rates will bring in £14,000 in Kerry and £24,000 in Limerick; but while not agreeing with all the actions of the Limerick County Council, they are able to tar three times the mileage of roads each year in comparison with Kerry. Kerry is getting, and always has got, very substantial tourist grants.

CAUSE AND REMEDY

In the roads estimate it is very easy to see what is wrong in Kerry—officialdom gone wild. There are big administrative costs—ninety per cent. of the quarries are producing stone that outside of the haulage costs is the dearest in Ireland. Ratepayers in Kerry are looking on at stone being drawn up to 50 miles (in some cases haulage works out at 9/- per yard), for years. Would it not be time to have a stop put to it? We recently had an example where the Killarney Urban Council decided to buy stone for surface dressing from a private concern in Cork because it was cheaper than what could be got from the local council quarry that was equipped four years ago with very expensive machinery. As pointed out already in *The Taxpayers' News*, this quarry at Glenflesk is of very doubtful quality. If, as the writer suggests, it is costing 8/- per yd. extra to produce, how much is it costing the ratepayers every

alone and in hauling the finished product afterwards.

It is not much comfort to the householder with say £10 valuation or £7 extra rates in the year to read about all the road equipment that the Kerry County Council own if it cannot give him better and cheaper roads; but if that householder through his organisation voiced his protest whenever he saw public money misused, then the rates would come down.

Would the Kerry County Council advertise for road materials again and admit their mistakes (all broad minded men do). The road contractor will give 50 weeks of the year employment at good wages and will supply road material in some cases at half of their present cost.



At the Cattle Traders' Dance in Killarney, the camera caught Mr. Jack Mitchell, the well known cattle dealer, of Deerpark Castleland, in a happy mood.

...ect them to know the Irish language, or do we? But it should also be a reasonable condition of their employment in an Irish Civil Service that they would invest their surplus money in Irish securities, so as to benefit, not foreign, but Irish industry.

AWFUL TRAGEDY

Be that as it may, the awful tragedy of allocating this huge, gigantic slice of our national earnings to this small section of our people, is, to use a Churchillian phrase, that we expend so much on so few. If this nineteen million pounds were divided out and scattered so as to benefit, not a few thousand, but, say, a hundred thousand of our people, what a boon it could be to Ireland, in present times, of emigration, shortage of jobs, etc.

Have we forgotten that, when the first Irish State was set up here in 1918, practically all the essential State Services were run by Volunteers. The Courts, the Police Force, the Army, and the various Departments of the first Republican Dail, were all run by volunteer, part-time officers, who did their job much better and more efficiently than has ever been done since, under our top-heavy, present-day Government Services and Departments, and under our expensive judiciary, police force and army, not forgetting our educational system. Under the educational system operated by the First Dail, one thing is certain anyhow, that the Irish language was much more alive and spoken then than it has been ever since, despite all the money allocated to it. Furthermore, it

Was it not one of the declared objects of our struggle for freedom to get rid of, lock, stock and barrel, the "Castle hacks," to wit, the British Civil Service foisted on Ireland and headquartered in the Castle and the Viceregal Lodge? We wanted to get rid of that costly and alien set-up, mainly because we could not afford the luxury of them. Why, then, in heaven's name, did we immediately instal a civil service of our own on the self-same, if not far more expensive and cumbersome pattern as the British, for which we professed such hatred? If the Castle hacks reaped the fat of the land in those days, are not our Civil Servants — especially in the higher grades, reaping the self-same fat and substance today? Are they not sucking our economic life-blood just as truly and as surely as their predecessors—but only on a much more colossal scale?

THE CIVIL SERVICE RUNS THE COUNTRY

Make no mistake about it, it is mainly this alien and foolishly imposed Civil Service that has made a travesty of our Irish independence. This country simply cannot afford such a huge sum as nineteen million pounds per annum, paid out to a mere handful of State servants. We cannot blame the British for this. When they occupied Ireland they were the most prosperous nation on earth and could afford to pay their hacks the fattest salaries—even if they never had to plunder Ireland, as they did. Neither can we blame our Civil Ser-

(Continued on Page Sixteen)