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General Election 1973.

TACISEACH'S RADIC BRCADCAST

Monday, February 12th, 1973.

When I decided to advise the President to dissolve Dáil Éireann and to call a General Election, I did so because I felt it was right in the national interest to do so now, if a protracted period of political uncertainty and instability were to be avoided.

A Government which did not have a good working majority in Dáil Éireann could not possibly hope to deal effectively with the crucial issues which will face both the country and the Government in the period immediately ahead. These issues will be vital issues and, as I have said at the beginning of this campaign, the decisions to be taken regarding them could irrevocably change the whole course of our future history.

Few would deny that if the country did not have in recent years a strong and effective Government such vital issues as the situation in Northern Ireland, Ireland's E. E. C. entry, and the law and order issue, could not have been met in the calm, responsible and resolute manner in which they have been handled.

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In relation to the tragic situation in Northern Ireland I put it to you that we have pursued, and are pursuing, the only policy which makes sound commonsense - the only sane policy which can bring about a true reconciliation of the communities and a lasting peace with justice for all.

The Government which you will elect at this election - the Government which will take office on March 14th next - in its consideration and appraisal of the coming British White Paper on Northern Ireland, will need the firm and unequivocal support of the people if it is to deal effectively with the new situation as it develops. Any other kind of Government - a weak and divided Government - not knowing which direction it should take, or which course it should follow, could only have for our country the most tragic consequences.

Thanks to your splendid support at the polls in the E. E. C. Referendum, Ireland has now taken her rightful place amongst the European Economic Communities. That E. E. C. Referendum campaign was, as you know, spearheaded by the Fianna Fáil Government.

In this great new era of opportunity and challenge which E. E. C. membership has opened up for us - again, I put it to you - does it make sense

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that the Labour Party which threw all they had into the campaign against Ireland's E. E. C. membership should now be given a role in utilising to the best national advantage that which they have already done their best to obstruct. Are these the men upon whom you can safely rely "to maximise Ireland's influence within the E. E. C. as they are now promising to do? That, I feel certain, is a risk which you will not run. That, I feel equally certain, is a risk which Ireland can ill-afford to take.

Having decided at the very beginning of this election campaign that neither of them stood a chance of forming a Government on their own, Fine Gael and Labour have agreed on a package which, as they see it, will hopefully tide them over until the votes are counted. This hasty alliance they are calling a "National Coalition". Their first choice of brand-name was to be "The People's Coalition" but this smacked more of dictatorship than democracy, hence the switch to "National". To most people this word "National" signifies something which is common to the whole nation and whatever this Coalition pre-fab is, that is one thing it most certainly is not.

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The so-called Coalition "Statement of Intent" is no more than a string of platitudinous phrases and extravagant promises and the only intent it has is to lure as many people as possible into voting for something which Fine Gael and Labour, separately or jointly, can never give them.

At the 1969 general election my Government received a clear and decisive mandate from the people. We are happy to go before the people again in this election and to render an account of our stewardship to them.

Only a united Government vigorously and resolutely pursuing policies decisively endorsed by the people, especially in the crucial areas about which I have been speaking to you, can provide the steady and firm leadership which will be so essential for our country in the critical months and years ahead.

I confidently ask you for a renewal of the clear and decisive mandate which you gave to Fianna Fáil in 1969. By voting for Fianna Fáil on February 28th you will be voting for continued stability and further progress.

Rath agus sonas Dé oraibh uilig.