

MEETING ON

"BORDER REGION DEVELOPMENT"

Organised by

MONAGHAN URBAN COUNCIL

at

WESTERNA HOTEL, MONAGHAN

on

15 MAY 1973

BORDER REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by

LIAM CONNELLAN

DIRECTOR GENERAL, CONFEDERATION OF IRISH INDUSTRY



have then to be agreed by our own Government, which will have the main responsibility for directing funds. The Confederation has recommended to the Government that a new Department of Regional Development should have responsibility for coordinating these plans.

Much of the development of the border counties will be provided by industrial employment. Industries, however, will only be set up and develop when there are net economic advantages. Monaghan has 23% of its population in industry, the Republic has 28% and the Community has 43%. How can industry be stimulated and developed?

I suggest there are five major criteria worth considering:

1. Transport and Communications
2. Training and Retraining of people
3. Freeing of Trade
4. Development of Industrial Structure
5. Industrial Incentives

a) Transport and Communications

A fast, cheap and efficient transport system is essential. We thus need an adequate road system to the major ports and centres of population, particularly Derry, Dublin and Belfast. Good telephone communications to all parts of the Community are also necessary. It does little to foster business if your customers have to spend hours trying to contact you by phone. Transport and Communications are clear areas for coordination between

+ industries are growing  
10% —

because of  
a) agriculture  
b) exports  
c) tourism  
Industry needs  
& prosperous  
agriculture

authorities on each side of the Border. There must also be harmonisation of transport vehicle tax and legislation to <sup>licences</sup> ensure fair competition.

b) Training and Retraining

The new European Social Fund places great emphasis on adult training and retraining, particularly when people have to move jobs, whether this is from agriculture to industry, or from the textile industry to the engineering industry. The Social Fund will provide £1 for £1 matching for state expenditure in this field. Plans are again necessary. Can the people in the Border counties say how many people they want to retrain, and for what? What industries are growing, what industries declining, and what industries can be encouraged to start up?

*National Newspaper Service*

c) Development of the Industrial Structure

It has been demonstrated that like industries tend to develop well close to one another. What are the industries in the Border counties at present? Are they short on services? Can they cooperate with one another?

*For example -  
LEDU  
+ Engineering industries*

The European Commission is developing a scheme known as Community Industrial Development Contracts. This provides loans @ 3% up to £400,000 for joint development projects carried out by firms

in two Community states. This loan is repayable only when the project is successful. Are there two firms in the Border counties which could cooperate to gain assistance from this fund?

There are probably 500 small manufacturing units within a 50 mile radius of Monaghan town. How many are buying and selling jointly? This can be done without loss of autonomy and often makes very sound commercial sense.

*Memorize Bureau*  
The EEC Commission is so concerned about developing a unified industrial structure that it has set up a Business Cooperation Centre last month. It must surely make sense at least in the Border counties.

d) Freeing of Trade

Tariff barriers are practically gone on industrial goods moving into the Republic from the north. From July 1973 they will average about 8%. This must create trading opportunities for both sides.

Commissioner Spinelli has called for EEC action on a draft directive to open up public contracts by the end of this year. States and public authorities tend to discriminate in favour of home suppliers. This will no longer be possible for larger contracts.

e) Industrial Incentives

Above the industrial financial incentives already available in Ireland, it is probable that two further incentives can now be added. A grant of £650 per job provided in industry for a farmer leaving agriculture; a supplementary grant from the European Farm Fund for investment in food processing plants in agricultural areas.

CONCLUSION

It is unlikely that there will be a scarcity of funds to develop industry, and the infrastructure to serve it in the years immediately ahead. It would be a pity if the opportunities are lost because of lack of imagination, ideas, or work in preparing plans which will use the resources available.

1968/10%

↓

Industry is growing + 8% ——— *market*

---

① Agriculture