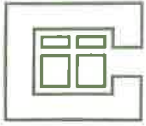


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# PRESS RELEASE

## The Confederation of Irish Industry

Speech by Mr Liam Connellan, Director General, Confederation of Irish Industry, on "Young People in Industry" at Carlow Vocational School, on Wednesday, 14 November 1979 at 8 p.m.

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### INTRODUCTION

About half the additional jobs created in the economy this year, and likely to be created over the next few years, will be in industry.

At present, about one third of the people employed in the economy are working in industry.

Industry is the foundation on which the continuous development of the Irish economy must be built. There is a major gap at present between the value of goods imported to the Irish economy, and our capacity to export. More goods must be produced to pay for essential imports. This means that the rate of growth in the output of industry must be accelerated.

Industry in Ireland must compete in a free trade environment against the most highly developed economies in the world. It must out-perform these economies in quality, innovation, technology and commitment, so that it can obtain an increasing share of international trade. To do this it needs the best brains in the economy, and people who have both knowledge and skill.

### WHAT IS INDUSTRY?

Industry is concerned essentially with changing the form of materials into another product. Thus, wheat is changed into flour; flour is changed into bread; wool is changed into yarn;

yarn is changed into cloth; cloth is converted into clothing; iron ore is converted into iron; iron is changed into steel; steel is changed into machines, motor cars and domestic appliances.

Manufacturing industry is concerned with the processing of agricultural products when they have left the farm, and with the processing of a very wide range of imported materials so that additional value - usually 50% - is added to the basic materials. This process of importing materials from other countries in order to convert them into specialised products is carried out in all developed economies. The competitive edge of one economy over another is gained by its particular skill in converting basic materials into products with a greater efficiency than that achieved by other countries, and, also, in creating products which are more attractive - such as Waterford Glass - than other countries can produce.

It is essential that our products are marketed with a high degree of effort and a keen awareness of the requirements of customers in many countries. There is no point in having the best product in the world if no one knows about it. A dynamic marketing effort is an essential component of every successful firm.

#### FIRST JOBS OF SCHOOL-LEAVERS

Table 1. shows the first jobs taken by students who left the Secondary and Vocational Schools in 1978. Almost half the boys and almost one quarter of girls entered industry. Because of the rate at which industry is developing and the rate at which new projects from abroad are coming, these proportions are likely to increase over the next few years. I expect that, within three years, 60% of boys and one third of girls, leaving secondary and vocational schools, will enter industry directly.

The trend towards increased mechanisation in office employment is likely to reduce the proportion of job opportunities in offices for girls.

It is, therefore, vitally important that students are prepared for and understand the work and opportunities offered by industry.

The Confederation of Irish Industry has recently published a booklet "Your Future in Industry" for secondary and vocational school students in order to provide a better understanding of what work in industry is like.

#### SCHOOL SUBJECTS

Let us look now at the subjects taken by students in second level schools. First of all, at Intermediate Certificate or Group Certificate level, most of the boys and about half of the girls take science; almost half the boys, but only 1% of girls take metalwork or woodwork; over half the boys, but only 1% of girls take mechanical drawing; nearly half the boys and about two thirds of girls take commerce, economics or business studies; and, finally, almost two thirds of boys and over 80% of girls study French.

These proportions are quite good in most subjects with the exception of the very small number of girls who take mechanical drawing.

At Leaving Certificate level, the situation changes considerably. Again, most boys and over two thirds of girls take science; only 11% of boys and a negligible proportion of girls take workshop practice; one fifth of boys and practically no girls take mechanical drawing; about two thirds of both boys and girls take a commerce subject; slightly less than half the boys and two thirds of girls take French.

The proportion of boys and girls taking science subjects is healthy. The proportion taking workshop practice and mechanical drawing for both boys and girls appears to be too low, since these subjects make a major contribution to generating interest in developing an engineering craft or academic qualification.

#### OPPORTUNITIES IN CARLOW REGION

At present, there are many opportunities for industrial employment within a thirty mile radius of Carlow - not just in Carlow itself but also in towns such as Athy, Kilkenny, Newbridge and Clonmel. The unemployment rate in the area is one of the lowest in the country. At the same time, major new industries are setting up and expanding in Carlow itself and in neighbouring towns. These industries are among the most modern in the world. They have access to the most up-to-date technology and are supplying the whole European market from this region of Ireland. Technology is changing each year and creating opportunities for people with initiative, who are prepared to keep up with developments. Carlow is extremely fortunate in having a Regional Technical College at which young people can continue their studies, through full time studies or in the evening.

Table 3 indicates qualifications and skills for which there is now a national shortage. These skills are in scarce supply, not only in Ireland, but also throughout Western Europe. Any student with an aptitude for these disciplines should be encouraged to take them up, since they are likely to prove rewarding in every sense.

END

TABLE 1

FIRST JOB TAKEN BY SECOND LEVEL SCHOOL-LEAVERS

1978

OCCUPATION	BOYS	GIRLS
INDUSTRY/APPRENTICESHIP	47%	22%
OFFICE & SERVICE JOBS	24%	56%
NURSING	1%	11%
FARMING	12%	1%
OTHER	16%	10%
	100%	100%

TABLE 2

SUBJECTS TAKEN IN SECOND LEVEL SCHOOLS

GROUP	INTERMEDIATE/GROUP CERTIFICATES		LEAVING CERTIFICATE	
	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS
SCIENCE	92%	56%	96%	63%
WORKSHOP METALWORK	34%	-	)	-
WOODWORK	50%	1%	) 11%	
MECHANICAL DRAWING	54%	1%	22%	-
COMMERCE/ECONOMICS/ ACCOUNTANCY/BUSINESS STUDIES	41%	67%	69%	65%
FRENCH	62%	81%	46%	67%

TABLE No. 3

SKILLS IN SHORT SUPPLY 1978

Mechanical/Production Engineers	200
Electrical/Electronic Engineers	250
Chemical Technologists	45
Computer Programmers	not available
Systems Analysts	not available
Electronic Technicians	200
Mechanical/Electrical Draughtsman	50
Toolmakers	50
Maintenance and Turner Fitters	250
Brick/Blocklayers	400
Industrial Pipefitters	150
Plasterers	100
Welders	100
Sewing Machinists	400