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Confederation of Irish Industry

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PRESS RELEASE

Speech by Liam Connellan, Director General, Confederation of Irish Industry, at Presentation of Diplomas in Business Studies in the College of Commerce, Rathmines, on Friday, 24th January 1986 at 3.00p.m.

INCREASED INDUSTRIAL DEMAND FOR PEOPLE HAVING BUSINESS STUDIES QUALIFICATIONS

Last year industry recruited almost 1,000 newly qualified third-level award holders - an increase of 30% on the previous year. Almost one-quarter of these recruits had Business Studies qualifications and the growth in demand at 56% was far greater than it was for any other discipline.

The increase in demand for experienced executives having Business Studies qualifications as measured by newspaper advertisements for vacancies, was also very great. For example, the demand for executives having accounting and finance qualifications increased by 38% and the demand for marketing executives increased by 13%.

It is remarkable that demand for Business Studies graduates should have increased so rapidly during a year when total employment in the economy fell.

BUSINESS
STUDIES
GRADUATES

INDUSTRIAL SPECIALISATION

This increased demand should be related to the changes which are taking place in the economy and the needs of the industrial sector. As an open trading economy Ireland must compete with the best in the world. This means that its staff, including its executive staff, must also match the best in the world.

STAFF
QUALITY

Irish industry exports two-thirds of its output and this proportion is likely to increase further. We are part of a large open European market comprising 320 million people. The European Community market has the greatest purchasing power in the world. Its consumers are sophisticated and demand a very great range of high quality products. Its industries are world leaders in many spheres. Ireland accounts for only a very small part of that larger European market. Despite this, Irish firms must carve out their own specialist niches where Irish products are recognised as world leaders. During recent decades industry has become more specialised as tariff barriers were removed, and exports accounted for a greater proportion of Irish manufacturing output. Today five products account for 50% of all Irish exports. These are computers, chemicals, meat, dairy products, and electrical machinery. Thus, although Ireland accounts for only 1% of the population of the European Community, we account for more than four per cent of the output of beef, dairy products, mini-computers and specialised organic chemicals.

INDUSTRIAL
SPECIALISATION

GROWING IMPORTANCE OF EUROPEAN MARKET

Last year for the first year in our history Ireland
exported more products to EEC Member States on the
European mainland than to the United Kingdom. This
process of change in the pattern of our trade can continue
but it requires that we place a much greater emphasis on
training in modern Continental languages, particularly
German, French and Spanish. There is a growing
requirement that more of our industrial executives are
fluent in modern Continental languages. I would encourage
every one who obtained a Certificate, or Diploma today to
ensure that he or she is proficient in at least one modern
Continental language. It is easier to develop this
proficiency at the start of your business career.

CONTINENTAL
LANGUAGES

INDUSTRY MUST HAVE CONDITIONS TO GROW FASTER

The output of Irish industry has expanded twice as
fast as that of the rest of the European Community
annually over the last 25 years. This performance has
continued despite the impact of two major international
recessions, and the abolition of tariff barriers since we
joined the EEC. However, our industrial sector is still
only half the size to meet the employment needs of the
economy. The primary focus of our economic effort must,
therefore, be to create conditions which enable
manufacturing output to be doubled as quickly as possible.

INDUSTRIAL
GROWTH

One of these conditions must be to increase the
number of highly qualified staff in manufacturing

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industry, particularly in areas such as technology, marketing, and finance.

The remarkable growth in demand for Business Studies graduates is a welcome development which I have every confidence will be sustained. There is need to attract even greater numbers of highly qualified people to the manufacturing sector. Many firms, particularly in the longer-established industries, would like to recruit Business Studies graduates, but frequently do not have the financial capacity to do so.

BUSINESS
STUDIES
GRADUATES

I welcome the initiative taken by the Youth Employment Agency and the Irish Goods Council under the Marketplace Scheme to encourage the recruitment of 80 young third-level award holders in small Irish firms by providing an incentive of up to 50% towards the cost of the first year's salary. This Scheme has been very successful, and most of the young recruits were retained permanently by the firms after the first year. I would like to see this approach extended. The cost to the State is less than the cost of unemployment, but the approach is much more constructive and developmental. It is an investment in "brain power" which can stimulate the more rapid development of industry, and the creation of many thousands of additional jobs.

MARKETPLACE-

I have no doubt that the demand for highly qualified staff in industry will continue to grow rapidly. Three

years ago Irish industry recruited less than 700 newly qualified third-level award holders; two years ago this number increased to almost 800, and last year to almost 1,000. Industry needs more young people qualified in engineering, science, finance, marketing, and general business studies to stimulate innovation and expansion. The task of Irish industry is to compete profitably with the best in the world. I wish all those qualifying today every success in contributing to that effort and improving the living standards and job prospects, not only for themselves, but also for their fellow citizens.

GRADUATE
RECRUITMENT

END