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National
Economic and
Social Council

An Chomhairle
Náisiúnta Eacnamíoch
agus Sóisialach

Social Planning in Ireland:
Its Purpose
and Organisational
Requirements

No. 68

November, 1982

NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The main task of the National Economic and Social Council shall be to provide a forum for discussion of the principles relating to the efficient development of the national economy and the achievement of social justice, and to advise the Government, through the Taoiseach on their application. The Council shall have regard, *inter alia*, to:

- (i) the realisation of the highest possible levels of employment at adequate reward
- (ii) the attainment of the highest sustainable rate of economic growth
- (iii) the fair and equitable distribution of the income and wealth of the nation,
- (iv) reasonable price stability and long-term equilibrium in the balance of payments,
- (v) the balanced development of all regions in the country, and
- (vi) the social implications of economic growth, including the need to protect the environment.

2. The Council may consider such matters either on its own initiative or at the request of the Government.

3. Members of the Government shall be entitled to attend the Council's meetings. The Council may at any time present its views to the Government, on matters within its terms of reference. Any reports which the Council may produce shall be submitted to the Government and, together with any comments which the Government may then make thereon, shall be laid before each House of the Oireachtas and published.

4. The membership of the Council shall comprise a Chairman appointed by the Government in consultation with the interests represented on the Council,

Ten persons nominated by agricultural organisations,

Ten persons nominated by the Confederation of Irish Industry and the Irish Employers' Confederation,

Ten persons nominated by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions,

Ten other persons appointed by the Government, and

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6. The Council shall have its own Secretariat subject to the approval of the Taoiseach in regard to numbers, remuneration and conditions of service.

7. The Council shall regulate its own procedure.

Social Planning in Ireland: Its Purpose and Organisational Requirements

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PART I

THE COUNCIL'S COMMENTS ON SOCIAL PLANNING IN IRELAND: ITS PURPOSE AND ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

INTRODUCTION¹

1. The definition of social policy adopted by the Council in furtherance of its terms of reference is that suggested by Professor Donnison in his Report, *An Approach to Social Policy*:

"social policies are those actions (of Government) which deliberately or accidentally affect the distribution of resources, status, opportunities and life chances among social groups and categories of people within the country, and thus help shape the general character and equity of its social relations".²

2. The Council, having focused attention on specific social policy issues such as education, health, housing, income distribution, taxation and social welfare, undertook a more general consideration of these policies in reports on universality and selectivity. Two reports were commissioned: one a background study — *Universality and Selectivity: Strategies in Social Policy*³ by Mr. M. Reddin; the other a more detailed description of Irish social services, *Universality and Selectivity; Social Services in Ireland*⁴ by Ms E. Fitzgerald. Mr. Reddin's report argued that it was not possible to take a position on universal or selective strategies in the social services without a full evaluation of their method of funding as well as their pattern of use by different groups. The detailed analysis of the operation of the social services prepared by Ms E. Fitzgerald clearly supported the theoretical arguments in Mr. Reddin's study.

3. In Report No. 61, *Irish Social Policies: Priorities for Future Development*, the Council outlined three principles which it considered should guide the development of social policy: firstly the distributive con-

¹ Following discussions by the Social Policy Committee and by the Council these comments were drafted by James Raftery in the Council's Secretariat. The final form was agreed in October 1982.

² NESC Report No. 8, *An Approach to Social Policy*, p. 30.

³ NESC Report No. 36.

⁴ NESC Report No. 38.

sequences of existing and proposed policy developments should be taken into account by policy makers; secondly, the interaction of the social, fiscal and occupational welfare systems should be considered; and thirdly, the manner in which the services are provided should encourage recipients to participate in normal economic and social life as equal citizens.

4. On this basis, the Council⁵ suggested that social policy should pursue certain aims:

- the reduction of inequalities of income and wealth by transferring resources to those in need and by equitably distributing the burden of such support;
- the elimination of inequalities of opportunity, which arise from inherited social and economic differences;
- the provision of employment for those seeking work;
- the provision of access for all, irrespective of income, to certain basic services;
- the development of services which make provision for particular disadvantaged groups in the community; and
- the development of full and responsible citizenship.

In order to move towards a more fully informed and more rational basis for decision-making on social policy development, the Council commissioned a study of the organisational structures necessary for effective social planning by the Government. This study was to identify the problems associated with social planning in Ireland and to draw on the experience of other countries in making recommendations on the structures appropriate to social planning in Ireland. The study was undertaken by Mr John Roche of the Research Division of the Institute of Public Administration with the assistance of Mr Seamus O Cinneide also of the Institute. The report is published as Part II of this report.

5. In the following paragraphs, the Council, drawing in part from the consultant's report, outlines its views on current planning arrangements and makes recommendations on the type of planning process it considers appropriate.

6. Current Planning Arrangements

While planning at departmental level is the obligation of individual departments, the Department of Finance has responsibility under statute to promote the planning process within departments and to

⁵NESC Report No. 61, *Irish Social Policies: Priorities for Future Development*, Paragraph 2.11.

coordinate the planning work of departments. The discharge of this responsibility involves dialogue with the Government to clarify the major policy objectives and delineate the likely constraints in both the short and medium term which may limit the Government's room for manoeuvre. The Department of Finance also has the task of ensuring that other departments' existing and planned policies are consistent with the Government's economic social and regional objectives and take account of the constraints that exist. The Department continually checks the consistency and complementarity of the various departments' programmes. Interdepartmental planning is usually pursued through the continuous close contacts between officers of the Department of Finance and other departments, although major issues may involve the setting up of formal working parties.

7. Although many issues are resolved by decisions of the Minister or by joint decisions of the Ministers involved, there is a formal procedure — the cabinet procedure regulations — for ensuring that issues which need to be decided by Government are only submitted to it after full formal consultation with all interested departments. It is on the basis of the generally invisible activities described above that the visible planning work is carried out. This consists of three main categories: the annual budget statement by the Minister for Finance with its attendant publications e.g. the Estimate Volume and the Public Capital Programme; specific medium-term planning papers which have been published at intervals over the last twenty years or so, and major sectoral planning documents, generally in the form of Green or White Papers.

8. The preparation of the latest Government National Economic Plan has involved some new developments.⁶ Preparation of this plan proceeded, at the direction of the Government, under the aegis of a steering committee chaired by the Secretary of the Department of the Taoiseach and including representatives of the relevant Government Departments, the Central Bank, the Economic and Social Research Institute and independent economic expertise: the analytical support work was provided by the Department of Finance. This steering committee reported to a Government committee which was chaired by the Taoiseach and which included the main economic and social ministers.

9. The present system of government accounting is designed largely to ensure regularity and accountability in relation to the spending of public funds. It provides only limited information of a kind which would make clear the total cost of providing the various services and

⁶*The Way Forward*, National Economic Plan 1983-87, October 1982.

which could facilitate assessment as to whether resources are being allocated effectively.⁷ Procedures for Dáil consideration of public expenditure are also deficient. The Council has drawn attention to the inadequacy of the annual Budget debate for consideration of the overall level and benefits of public expenditure.⁸ The Council has noted that "within present procedures . . . there is the opportunity for only rather remote scrutiny of individual public expenditures by the Dáil."⁹

10. Successive governments have stated their commitment to restructuring departments along Aireacht/Executive unit lines and establishing staff support systems for finance, planning, organisation and personnel.¹⁰ The provision of these staff units is seen as a means of improving the analysis of public expenditure programmes, including the provision of information on both the costs and the benefits of individual programmes. The public service reorganisation programme is aimed at strengthening the capacity of departments for research and development for planning, and for efficient, cost conscious management. Although the programme of restructuring has been underway for some time, progress in establishing the staff support units has been slow and in general planning arrangements appear weak. Only the Department of Health produces expenditure data by programme. Until recently there have been planning units in only two Departments: Health and Transport.¹¹ Planning unit personnel have on occasion been temporarily allocated to non-planning work. While some of the Heads of planning units are on the Management Advisory Committees of their departments, others are not.¹²

11. The 1973 Household Budget Survey¹³ showed state taxation and

⁷This has been noted by NESC, in Report No. 21, *Report on Public Expenditure*, Pars. 4.13 to 4.17 as well as the *Public Sector Advisory Committee*, Report for the year ended 31 October 1980, and the White Paper, *A Better Way to plan the Nation's Finances* (1981).

⁸NESC Report No. 21, paragraph 4.19.

⁹*Ibid*, Par. 4.16.

¹⁰As recommended by the *Report of the Public Sector Organisation Review Group* (1969).

¹¹Planning units exist in the Department of Industry and Energy, Trade, Commerce and Tourism, and Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture. The Department of Social Welfare has recently set up a planning unit. There are heads of planning units appointed in the Departments of Labour and the Environment (the latter is currently engaged on other duties).

¹²The Heads of the Planning Units in the Departments of Labour and Social Welfare are on the Management Advisory Committee. The Head of the Planning Unit in the Department of Health is not on the Management Advisory Committee.

¹³*Redistributive Effects of State Taxes and Benefits on Household Incomes in 1973*, CSO, January 1980, P.X 1.

social welfare schemes effecting a redistribution of income from high income to less-well-off households in general. This redistribution was due primarily to social welfare payments. The total of the taxes included in the survey were slightly regressive and non-cash benefits were stable over all direct income levels for each household type.¹⁴ The Council has drawn attention to the regressive transfers involved in the work of the various social departments. Expenditure on education benefits disproportionately the higher income groups because of their relatively greater participation at the higher levels of education, while the many children from lower income families who drop out before school leaving age are not helped by equivalent programmes.¹⁵ With regard to housing policy it is clear that the existing system of subsidies does not concentrate benefits on those most in need.¹⁶ The proportion of public capital expenditure devoted to public housing has been declining at the expense of subsidies to owner-occupiers.¹⁷ Some forms of health expenditure entail a regressive subsidy of the higher income groups.¹⁸ These criticisms are not intended to take away from the considerable successes in recent years in the field of social policy such as the more-than-doubling of the numbers of secondary school students between 1965/6 and 1980/1 and the fact that almost 30% of the current housing stock has been built since 1972. What the criticisms illustrate is that at departmental level there is clearly a need for improved information on the objectives, effectiveness and distributional effects of policies. There is also a need for improved planning structures which could enable programmes to be more clearly geared towards achieving the objectives of social policy.

12. The Council has also drawn attention to the need for policy co-ordination across departments. The most notable example concerns the tax and social welfare codes. In order to consider the interaction of the three systems of welfare, (social, fiscal and occupational) some form of overall interdepartmental planning is necessary. The Council has pre-

¹⁴B. Nolan, *Redistribution of Household Income in Ireland by Taxes and Benefits* (Economic and Social Review) October 1981, p. 84.

¹⁵NESC Report No. 61, *Irish Social Policies: Priorities for Future Development*, Paragraph 5.8; Rottman, Hannan *et al.*, *The Distribution of Income in the Republic of Ireland: A Study of Social Class and Family Cycle Inequalities*, ESRI Paper No. 109, 1982; A.D. Tussing, *Irish Educational Expenditures: Past, Present and Future*, ESRI Paper, 1978.

¹⁶NESC Report No. 61, paragraph 5.9.

¹⁷NESC Report No. 62, *Economic and Social Policy 1981: Aims and Recommendations*, paragraph 3.17.

¹⁸NESC Report No. 61, paragraph 5.12.

viously noted¹⁹ the value a central mechanism could have in assessing proposals from different functional areas in terms of their social priority.

13. At a national level, the Council has argued that the absence of an accepted strategy for economic and social development has been a major cause of the growth of public expenditure:

“Without an overall strategy, there are no consistent criteria that can be used to weight proposed increases in different expenditures against each other – no over-riding objectives to which departmental objectives can be subordinated or against which they can be policed. Without a strategy, the pattern of public expenditure emerges by a process of accretion – it is built up like a mosaic that when completed contains neither picture nor message.”²⁰

In addition to recommending the adoption of a strategy for economic and social development, the Council recommended that projections in the growth of public expenditure and tax revenues be produced covering up to five years ahead. The Council has also recommended action to improve the effectiveness of public expenditure, particularly through the specification of objectives of expenditure programmes and their translation into operational terms by departments in such a way that each programme can be evaluated.²¹

14. The Council believes there is a need for much more effective planning at departmental, interdepartmental and national levels. Taking Donnison’s definition of social policy – as those Government policies which “deliberately or accidentally affect the distribution resources, status, opportunities and life chances among social groups” – the Council accepts that although such policies deal mainly with the work of the “social” Departments (Social Welfare, Health, Education and Housing), as well as taxation, there are essential social policy aspects and implications in the work of virtually all departments. It follows from this view of social policy that social planning must be closely integrated with economic and physical planning.

15. Social planning offers, at a technical level, a means of systematically specifying the social objectives of programmes and evaluating different methods of achieving these objectives. An effective planning system would help the Government to ensure that the process of setting

¹⁹NESC Report No. 61, *Irish Social Policies: Priorities for Future Development*, paragraph 5.6.

²⁰NESC Report No. 21, *Report on Public Expenditure*, paragraph 6.8.

²¹*Ibid.*, paragraphs 6.13 to 6.24.

priorities among objectives is rationally ordered and, given the other functions of planning envisaged here, would promote consensus in support of such ordering. Such a system could ensure that the full implications of various policies are examined and their multifarious consequences outlined and widely understood. To be effective, a planning system must provide for continuous monitoring and assessing of programmes to ensure their objectives are being achieved. It must also ensure that programmes are coordinated and their overall thrust rendered more effective.

16. Social planning should not be seen solely in technical terms. Clearly the ordering of objectives in the political system needs to be informed by good technical information and comprehensive analysis. Any plan, however, which proposes reordering objectives, and hence taxation and expenditure programmes, is likely to encounter opposition. If it is to be accepted and implemented, it will require a considerable degree of support and consensus. The electorate and the various client and interest groups should be informed and consulted so that the full implications of different choices are clarified. In this way the possibility of agreement on difficult decisions can be maximised. At a time of considerable imbalance between public expenditure and general taxation levels, it is all the more urgent to secure as broad a consensus as possible for the difficult choices which have to be made. If tight budgetary constraints are to continue for the foreseeable future, then the goal of a more equitable and efficient social policy can only be achieved through a redirection rather than an expansion of both expenditure and taxation. This in turn underlines the need for widespread public support and appreciation of the issues involved.

What Kind of Planning?

17. There are a number of different approaches to planning. Irish economic planning, as outlined in the three Programmes²² can be characterised as “indicative”. The method of indicative planning involves the provision of information procedures by the State to eliminate or contain the impact of particular types of uncertainty affecting the operations of the free market. This form of planning aims more at assisting free agents to improve their allocative decisions than on direct management of the economy per se.²³ As the *Third*

²²*Programme for Economic Expansion (1958), Second Programme for Economic Expansion (1963 and 1964) and Third Programme for Economic and Social Development (1969).*

²³Katsiouni, O., *Planning in a Small Economy: The Republic of Ireland, JSSISI 1977/78*, p. 219-220.

"The programme does not aim to impose a particular pattern of development on the private sector. The response to market forces will determine where there will be growth and what forms it will take. The object of state measures will be to strengthen that response and to remove impediments in its way" (Economic and Social Development 1969-72, p. 230).

The reliance of indicative planning on the free market limits its relevance to social planning since the agents involved in social policies, whether clients or providers of services, seldom operate as independent economic units. The Government substantially controls the provision of social services, many of which have been developed to counter the inequities arising in the market.

18. Strategic planning may be regarded as the main alternative to indicative planning and has its origins in corporate business planning:

"Strategic planning is the continuous process of making present entrepreneurial (risk-taking) decisions systematically and with the greatest knowledge of their futurity; organising systematically the efforts needed to carry out these decisions; and measuring the results of these decisions against the expectations through organised systematic feedback" (emphasis in original, P. Drucker, *Management*, p. 125, Heineman 1974).

There are a number of differences between strategic planning at corporate and national levels. A corporation will typically have clear agreement on its objectives. By contrast national planners operate in an environment where there is likely to be disagreement over policy objectives. Priorities will differ between relatively autonomous groups, few of whom can be authoritatively controlled. Consequently, to be effective, the national planning process must include procedures for widely informing and consulting the public, and for clarifying policy options in order to facilitate the emergence of consensus over objectives. Democratic government can implement strategic plans only with the support of the majority of its citizens. The more difficult the decisions to be made between competing claims, the more necessary this support becomes.

19. National strategic planning would necessarily involve the selection of a small number of central objectives. Programmes would be designed and coordinated to achieve these objectives and resources would be

²⁴Cited in Katsiouni, *op. cit.*

allocated accordingly.²⁵ Targets would be set with a time scale and progress would be carefully measured so that changes could be made as necessary. Because of the close interrelationships between economic, social and physical planning, not least in connection with funding, these aspects would need to be integrated in the strategic national planning process.

20. National planning in Ireland moved in the direction of strategic planning in the late 1970s. *The Programme for National Development 1978-81* set out strategic goals of faster growth, lower inflation, increased employment and reduced Exchequer borrowing. The social policy implications of these goals, and social policy generally, received little attention. According to information received from the Department of Finance, the policy changes necessary to realise the goals set out in the *Programme for National Development 1978-81* were identified, and multi-annual public expenditure estimates and sectoral outputs were related to overall macro-economic projections in order to test consistency and examine constraints. The goals set out in the *Programme for National Development 1978-81* were not approached. To the extent that this was due to difficulties in gaining public support and avoiding interest group opposition, the case for increased information and consultation is emphasised.

21. The Council, has previously noted the need for consultation:

"... active responses from all interested parties to Government planning documents and public policy proposals are necessary for the effective development of the planning process and for effective formulation of policy. An active response from interested parties will facilitate the efforts of Government to secure a sufficient degree of public consensus for the adoption of the strategic plans".²⁶

22. In order to clarify how strategic planning in the area of social policy might work in practice, the following examples may be useful. First, if one of the objectives chosen is equalisation of educational opportunity, then specific policies must be devised to counter the relatively high drop-out rates by children from lower socio-economic groups at early stages of post primary schooling. Some 15% of pupils have already left

²⁵Procedures would have to be established which continually reviewed progress towards the chosen targets and which provided feedback indicating which policies needed to be made more effective.

²⁶NESC Report No. 44, *Comments on Development for Full Employment*, paragraph 1.2.

school before the statutory school leaving age.²⁷ Their levels of literacy and numeracy are abnormally low.²⁸ They generally come from the most deprived backgrounds²⁹ and experience significantly higher levels of unemployment than others.³⁰

Children from semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers families have considerably lower participation rates at the higher levels of secondary education and extraordinarily low rates at third level.³¹ A coordinated approach, not only by educational authorities, but also by the full panoply of services which affect these families would be required to remedy these inequalities.

Second, if the objective is to direct housing policy and in particular housing subsidies to those most in need,³² then policy must be addressed to reversing the regressive thrust of housing policy in recent years. In particular action would need to be taken on the following:

- (a) the trend of increasing Exchequer assistance for owner occupiers.³³
- (b) the regressive impact of mortgage interest relief to owner occupiers,³⁴ i.e. those on higher incomes receive the highest levels of subsidy.
- (c) the possibility that the subsidies to new-house purchasers may have increased the prices of houses with little benefit to the purchaser.³⁵
- (d) the average level of subsidy to local authority tenants has declined in real terms.³⁶
- (e) no decisions have been taken on issues relating to the control of the price of building land.³⁷

²⁷ Derived from Statistical Reports of the Department of Education 1979/80, see also School Leavers Surveys from the Department of Labour.

²⁸ T.D. Swann, *Reading Standards in Irish Schools* (Education Co. of Ireland 1978).

²⁹ J. Rudd, *Geographical and Educational Characteristics of Second Level School Leavers, 1974/75*, Paper read to ESRI, 1975.

³⁰ National Manpower Service, *School Leavers Survey 1979*.

³¹ *The Distribution of Income in the Republic of Ireland: A Study in Social Class and Family Cycle Inequalities*, D. Rottman et al, ESRI Paper 109, 1982.

³² NESR Report No. 62, *Economic and Social Policy 1981: Aims and Recommendations*, paragraph 3.17 recommends this policy.

³³ NESR Report No. 62, paragraph 3.7.

³⁴ *Ibid*, paragraph 3.13.

³⁵ *Ibid*, paragraph 3.15.

³⁶ *Ibid*, paragraph 3.18.

³⁷ *Ibid*, paragraph 3.16.

These two examples highlight the need for greatly improved information and analysis on the workings of policies and their relationship to objectives. The need for inter-departmental coordination is also evident, as is the need for continuous monitoring of policy. The case for thorough consultation with client and interest groups is evident particularly since these policies would involve the redirection of resources over a long time period. Increased political commitment to the central policies is also necessary if they are to be made operational and implemented. Strategic planning with built-in consultative procedures could provide a way of winning the required societal consensus and commitment.

23. The Council considers that strategic planning provides a means of making progress towards the central objectives of social policy. The Council believes that any proposed planning arrangements,* insofar as they relate to social planning, must deal with five key issues (broadly as suggested by the consultant):

- determination of social objectives and establishment of priorities among them;
- coordination of specific social policies both within and across departments and as they affect particular target groups;
- comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the social policy implications of specific policies;
- improvement of both the quality and the quantity of information on the social effects of all policies;
- participation by interest groups, clients and the public in the planning process both at national and local levels.

The recommendations which follow are designed to address these issues at departmental, interdepartmental and national levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Departmental Level

24. The Council stresses the need for better planning arrangements at departmental level. The Council supports the policy of establishing staff support units but is concerned at their slow and uneven development. Accounting procedures, showing expenditure by programme,

*The terms of reference for this study as well as constraints of time prevent detailed consideration of the institutional arrangements for economic and physical planning. However, since the Council is in favour of a single plan which would integrate the social, economic and physical aspects of planning, some reference to the economic and physical planning arrangements is necessary to ensure an effective process of social planning within the overall planning system.

should be introduced, with finance units playing a significant role in this development. Although accurate data on costs of services is a prerequisite to planning, it does not of itself ensure planning. Planning units are required to provide a framework for the ordering of priorities, the setting of targets, and the choosing of the most effective and cost efficient programmes. In this way existing programmes could be assessed for their costs and effectiveness, emerging needs could be more effectively identified, and redundant schemes more easily eliminated. The functions of the finance and planning units need to be clarified and they must be integrated into the top management of each department. Finally these units should be staffed with personnel who are qualified with the requisite skills.³⁸

Interdepartmental Level

25. The Council considers that there is an urgent need for much more effective evaluation and coordination of social policies across departments. The Council consequently recommends the establishment of a permanent Interdepartmental Co-ordinating Committee for Social Policy to carry out these functions. The Council believes that the functions of the Interdepartmental Co-ordinating Committee should be as proposed by the consultant:

- to co-ordinate the preparation of the strategic social policies;
- to submit a report on the proposed social strategies;
- to submit an annual programme for social policy development;
- to prepare an annual programme of policy analysis.

National Level

26. The Council recommends that a planning system be established to produce a single strategic national plan with social, economic and physical dimensions. This system should remain in existence between plans. Plans should be produced on a regular quadrennial or quinquennial basis. This planning system should integrate arrangements for wide consultation and political participation in the preparation of the plan. Provision should be made for monitoring the implementation of the policies contained in the plan.

27. The Council recommends that a Central Planning Unit be established to manage the national strategic planning process, to oversee and validate

³⁸In the White Paper, *A Better Way to Plan the Nation's Finances*, it was stated:

"In the past, the lack of staff with appropriate skills has often placed a major restriction on the capacity of Government Departments to carry out detailed investigation of on-going expenditure proposals or to subject new expenditure proposals to detailed modern evaluation procedures". (Para. 4.4).

the production of social, economic and physical planning policies, and to integrate these into an overall national plan.

In relation to social planning it is envisaged that the Central Planning Unit would:

- (1) ensure effective planning systems are set up in each of the 'social' Departments,
- (2) validate, in conjunction with the Interdepartmental Co-ordinating Committee for Social Policy, the technical competence of each "social" Departments plans,
- (3) examine the programmes of the other Departments from a social policy perspective with particular attention to their redistributive effects, including their method of financing;
- (4) integrate, in conjunction with the Interdepartmental Co-ordinating Committee, the social policies of the various departments, and order priorities amongst programmes;
- (5) develop consultation procedures which would include the social partners and the Oireachtas Committee on Social Policy (Paragraph 31).

28. The Council believes that the Central Planning Unit should be a highly competent organisation, closely tied to the government's decision making process and should possess sufficient influence, prestige and expertise to affect individual departments' planning behaviour. The Council favours a small unit staffed partly by permanent civil servants, including officers from a number of Departments, and partly by qualified professional persons from outside the civil service, hired on a contract basis. The unit should work closely with departments' planning units to encourage and co-ordinate departmental plans.

29. The Council believes that the institutional arrangements for social planning recommended here will be to no avail unless, paralleling them, there is a definite programme of personnel development which, with strong commitment from the Government, will ensure that officials, with both the requisite skills for social planning and a full knowledge of the nature and purpose of social policy, are assigned to the Central Planning Unit and to the individual Departments.³⁹

³⁹At present some four or five analysts are selected from Departments and they are trained each year by the Analysis Unit in the Department of Finance in conjunction with an MA course in Trinity College. The trainees return to their Departments to work as analysts. It is the view of the Council that the training required to fulfil the tasks outlined for the Central Planning Unit would need to be at a considerably more advanced level. Members of the Unit would need the necessary applied training — in applied economics, sociology, social administration and politics — training of a sufficient standard which, in some cases, can only be acquired at a few international centres.

30. The Council considers that a planning cycle of a four to five year duration would be most desirable. By its nature strategic planning requires a long time span. A continuous cycle of planning is necessary for progress to be monitored. A quadrennial or quinquennial plan could help to link the planning and political cycles as well as provide time for monitoring and evaluating policies. The Council would envisage the possibility of any new government making changes in the national plan on taking office.

31. Since strategic national planning will require both political commitment and widespread consensus, the Council accepts the consultant's recommendation that:

- the plan be produced in two phases; an options and a decision phase,
- that the report of each stage be debated in the Dail,
- that the social partners be consulted by having at least the Options Report referred to NESC for comments.

32. The production of the plan in two stages, with an Options and a Final Report, should allow a high degree of consultation to take place. In order to encourage political awareness and commitment to the plan, it is important that both the Options and the Final Report be discussed in the Oireachtas. This would be in contrast with past practice. The Council also favours the establishing of an Oireachtas Committee on Social Policy as a means of facilitating both political debate on and support for social planning.* A degree of consensus across political parties could be achieved through the work of this Committee.

33. Consultation with the social partners and the other main interest groups is necessary to obtaining wider social commitment to the plan. The major interest groups are represented on NESC, which has served a limited consultative role to date in commenting on issues of concern. Hence, reference of at least the Options Report to NESC for comment could provide a means of incorporating the views of these groups into the plan. Consideration should also be given to including interest groups not represented on the Council in the consultation process.

34. The Council does not favour the establishment of an Advisory Council for Social Statistics as recommended by the consultant. The Council has already made a number of recommendations on the pro-

*Eight Oireachtas Committees existed in the last-but-one Dail, including those on Public Accounts, Secondary Legislation and Semi-State Bodies. A new Public Expenditure Committee was proposed in *A Better Way to Plan the Nation's Finances*.

vision of social statistics.⁴⁰ These related to full access to data, regular departmental publication of bulletins covering the main social statistics series, as well as a guide to unpublished statistics. Other recommendations included the centralised computerisation of the main social statistics with co-ordination by a senior official of the Central Statistics Office. The Council wishes to reiterate these points rather than propose a new body.

35. The Council further endorses the recommendation that a Social Report be published every two years. The Council has already recommended the publication of such a report and has produced a prototype report.⁴¹

Location of Central Strategic Planning Unit

36. The Council believes that the proposed Central Planning Unit should be located within the administrative structure of government in order to have both influence and access to information. It should be free from the day-to-day administration of its parent department in order to be able to focus on the broad strategic options for economic and social development. It should also have sufficient influence, trained personnel, and autonomy to ensure effective inter-departmental co-ordination. A high degree of trust and support will be required between the Central Planning Unit, individual departments, their planning units and the Interdepartmental Co-ordinating Committee on Social Policy, if resources are to be reallocated across programmes and departments on the basis of a common policy evaluation framework.

37. Council debated at length the question of where the unit should be located but was unable to reach agreement. Against this background the Council recommends that the Government decision on this issue be taken after an intensive study of the complex, administrative, personnel and planning issues raised in these pages. The Council recommends that a small interdepartmental working party, coordinated by the Department of the Public Service, be instituted as a matter of urgency to carry out this study. Council stresses, however, that a Central Planning Unit should be established and that wherever it is located, it should have the autonomy, power and expertise to effectively manage the strategic national planning process.

⁴⁰NESC Report No. 17, *Statistics for Social Policy*.

⁴¹NESC Report No. 25, *Towards a Social Report*.

PART II

**SOCIAL PLANNING IN IRELAND:
ITS PURPOSE AND ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

by
J.D. Roche

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Introduction

The terms of reference given to the author by the National Economic and Social Council set two main tasks:

- (1) to develop a concept of social planning relevant to Ireland and
- (2) to make recommendations for institutional arrangements for affective social planning.

In fulfilling these tasks government departments and agencies and interested parties were consulted on how they perceived social planning and on what arrangements were needed to make social planning, as they perceived it, effective. The experience of social planning in the Netherlands, Norway and France was examined. These countries were chosen because of the diversity of their approaches and the accessibility of information on them.

Opinion within Ireland is dealt with in Chapter 1. Although there have been demands for social planning since national economic planning commenced in the late 1950s, an examination of the literature reveals no clear idea of what is meant, encompassed or implied by social planning. From the literature and consultations with administrators and representatives of social interests, three complementary aspects of social planning were identified:

- social planning as the planned development of specific social policies. This corresponds with planning at departmental level.
- social planning as coordinated planning of social policies. This corresponds with planning at interdepartmental level.
- social planning in relation to overall social objectives. This corresponds with overall national planning.

There was general agreement on the need for planning at each of these levels. Five key issues emerged from the consultations and the literature, via. the determination of social objectives, the coordination of "social"

policies, the analysis/evaluation of "social" policy, the improvement of social information and participation in the planning process.

Social Planning in the Netherlands, Norway and France

Experience of social planning abroad is examined in Chapter 2 (the Netherlands), Chapter 3 (Norway) and Chapter 4 (France). A description and analysis is given of the approach to planning at national level, of the planning structure and process and of the scope and meaning of social planning in each country. The treatment of key issues in social planning is examined. Each of the planning systems have been moulded by the political, social and administrative circumstances of each country.

In the Netherlands the planning system has three main features

- (1) a large number of advisory bodies to facilitate participation in the preparation of policy,
- (2) the production and publication of planning information by independent planning offices, and
- (3) co-ordination structures at political and administrative levels for policy development.

The Dutch have adopted what is termed facet planning. Separate planning offices and policy coordination structures have been established for the main facets of public policy: economic, social and physical. Integration of policies is the function of the Government and political process. There is no national plan.

The features of Norwegian Planning are the close integration of social and economic aspects, the adoption of a strategic approach to planning and the dovetailing of the planning and political cycles. Planning is seen as the Government's business. It is tightly controlled politically. A national plan for economic and social development is produced every four years. It is prepared by a central planning unit within the administration, in cooperation with the various ministries. Traditionally, the unit has been attached to the Ministry of Finance, but in 1980 it was placed under a separate planning ministry.

The term of office for each parliament is fixed at four years. The plan is published by the outgoing government before the election. It is intended to be its programme, if returned to power. Advisory councils are a normal feature for consultation on policy development between ministries and interest groups. There is no formal structure for co-ordination of policy development as in the Netherlands. Informal networks are important in Norway.

In France a national plan for economic and social development is produced every five years. It is prepared by a planning unit that is independent of the civil service. The plan is developed by an open and participative planning process which is representative of a wide range of interest groups, independent experts, administrators and planners. The planning and political cycles are not linked. Parliamentary approval is required not only for the plan, but also for the guidelines (options) that shape its preparation. Although the social dimensions of the plan have been increasing in importance, the emphasis in the plan has tended to be primarily economic. There is no formal structure for co-ordination of policy development as in the Netherlands, although there are many interministry committees at the political and the administrative level.

The purpose and requirements of social planning

In Chapter 5 it is argued that the meaning of social planning can be defined only by considering its basic purpose. This, it is further argued, involves considering the highest aim of government, which in a democracy, is held to be the creation of a better society. The implications of this aim is that social planning is not a separate kind of public planning. It requires the integration of specific social values into all public policies.

Social planning is considered to be needed for political as well as technical reasons. The political reasons relate to the difficulty of the political system in fulfilling the traditional role of identifying preferences and reconciling conflicts of interest. Social planning is seen as politically desirable in that it can provide means of influencing social change. Conflicting aspirations, the decline of traditional authority and the growing interdependence of policies also make social planning politically necessary.

The technical case for planning is that it can help ensure priorities are better ordered, that greater coherence in policies is secured and greater control over the distributive effects of policies is exercised.

The problems encountered in the social planning process are classified into three categories:

- political, which relate to the problem of gaining consensus on social values and objectives and to the problem of ad hoc adjustments to public policy induced by the normal pressures of democratic policies.
- institutional, arising from the vertical divisions of responsibilities between departments which inhibit integrated approaches, and
- informational, arising from lack of relevant data and deficiencies in analytical techniques.

The goal of a better society needs to be translated into a set of social objectives towards which all public policies would be directed. Strategic planning at the national level is advocated as a means of identifying and directing action towards those objectives. The distinctive feature of strategic planning is that it seeks to identify a set of objectives whose achievement is deemed essential to the accomplishment of some critical goal. It implies a selective approach to objectives, concentrating on those which are deemed to be decisive. This type of planning requires the production of a strategic plan and the establishment of a central planning unit to manage the planning process. A strategic national plan for Social Development would contain an analysis of national problems and trends. It would establish the over-riding social objectives and would involve the integration of strategic policies in the economic, physical, cultural and institutional spheres. The plan would also set out key targets to be achieved during the course of the plan.

Recommendations

We make nine recommendations for the development of social planning arrangements at national level.

Strategic planning

1. A Strategic National Plan for Social Development should be prepared and published every four years.
2. A Strategic Planning Directorate should be set up to manage the strategic planning process.

Co-ordination of development of "social" policies

3. A Permanent Cabinet Sub-Committee and a Permanent Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee should be established to coordinate the preparation of strategic "social" policies in pursuit of strategic social objectives.

Policy analysis

4. A regular programme of policy analysis should be undertaken in relation to "social" policies.

Planning information

5. A permanent Advisory Council for Social Statistics should be established.
6. A Social Report should be published every two years.

Participation

7. The Strategic National Plan for Social Development should be debated and approved by parliament.
8. The National Economic and Social Council should be con-

sulted by the Government on the Strategic National Plan for Social Development.

9. Participation by target groups in the development of social policies that concern them should be promoted through the establishment of Advisory Councils.

The recommendations propose the establishment of four new planning organs: a Strategic Planning Directorate, a Cabinet Sub-Committee and an Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee for the co-ordination of strategic "social" policies and an Advisory Council for Social Statistics.

It is proposed that the Strategic Planning Directorate be attached to the Department of the Taoiseach, although primary responsibility for co-ordinating strategic economic policies would lie with the Department of Finance and primary responsibility for co-ordinating physical planning policies with the Department of the Environment. In addition to managing the strategic planning process the Strategic Planning Directorate would service the co-ordination committees. Besides dealing with the development of "social" policies these committees would also consider the social implications of other policies.

It is assumed in the report that the policy of installing planning units in departments will be implemented.

A multi-disciplinary approach is advocated in relation to policy analysis and the staffing of the Strategic Planning Directorate.

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Mr. Séamus Ó Cinnéide, who was formerly a Program Manager in the Institute and is at present Director of Community Development in Maynooth College, conducted the research for Chapter 1, Part I of this report. He also assisted in the preparation of the report as did an editorial committee, comprising Mr. James O'Donnell, Deputy Assistant Director of the Institute, chairman, and Dr. Laraine Joyce and Dr. Peter Humphreys of the Research Division. The views expressed in the report, however, are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Committee nor of the Institute.

The Institute wishes to express its thanks to the officials of government departments and other persons in Ireland who consented to be interviewed or who made submissions in relation to the study. The studies of the arrangements for social planning abroad would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of many people in the countries studied. To all the people who kindly consented to be interviewed or who provided documents the Institute is deeply grateful. It is indebted in particular to the following for help not only in these respects but also in making arrangements for contacts and interviews: in the Netherlands to Dr. A.P.N. Nauta and Drs. T.H. Roes of the Social and Cultural Planning Office; in Norway to Mr. Arne Dolven, of the Secretariat for Long-Term Planning; and in France to Mme. Paule Gentot of the National Planning Commission (Commissariat Général du Plan) and M. Antoine Lion of the Ministry of Health and Social Security. Needless to say none of these individuals bears any responsibility for the information presented regarding the planning systems in the countries studied.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The study of the institutional and organisational requirements for social planning in Ireland presented in this report was commissioned by the National Economic and Social Council.¹

2. The terms of reference of the study are:

- (i) to identify, in consultation with the relevant government departments and agencies and with other interested parties, (a) what is meant, encompassed and implied by "social planning", and (b) the problems connected with social planning in Ireland
- (ii) to examine the perceived problems, scope, structure and processes of social planning in selected countries with an established tradition or extensive experience of such planning
- (iii) to make recommendations on the structures and processes appropriate for social planning in Ireland.

3. The terms of reference made it necessary to consult with relevant government departments, agencies and other interested parties on what was meant, implied and encompassed by social planning and on problems connected with social planning in Ireland. This did not mean carrying out a sample survey to obtain views in a representative manner nor did it mean seeking a consensus view of the issues involved, which in any event would have been impossible to achieve.

4. In pursuance of the terms of reference we sought on a confidential basis the views of the government departments and the organisations listed in Appendix A. The secretaries of the departments concerned were written to personally and discussions were held with nominated

¹At the time it was commissioned a new department, the Department of Economic Planning and Development, was in existence and had statutory responsibility for economic, social and regional planning. The study was envisaged as a contribution to making social planning effective. Shortly after the study commenced the Department was abolished and its functions reverted to the Department of Finance.

senior officials of the departments. Three departments made written submissions; the remainder dealt with the matter by discussion. In selecting "relevant departments" it was decided to confine consultations to the departments primarily responsible for the development and implementation of social policy and to the departments engaged in coordinating economic and social policies. With regard to the twelve organisations listed in Appendix A, discussions were held with representatives of five of them, four of the organisations indicated they had no views or declined to give views and three failed to respond. In order to supplement the views obtained an extensive review of the literature on public planning was undertaken.

5. Concerning item (ii) of the terms of reference, if by social planning is meant something more than economic planning, then the assumption that other countries (apart from the centrally planned socialist economies) have established traditions or long experience of social planning is mistaken. Several European countries have had systems of economic planning for a long time. However systematic planning of social development or systematic planning of social policies is a more recent phenomenon which has grown from economic planning. While the major reforms that the development of the "Welfare State" entailed were "planned" intervention by the State, the interventions were not the result of systematic planning. Nowhere until comparatively recently was the impact of these measures seriously evaluated.

6. Economic planning in European democracies developed after World War II, out of the need for reconstruction, under the stimulus of the Marshall Plan. It was stimulated also by a desire to avoid a return to the pre-war slump. Keynesian economics, which by then had become generally accepted, decreed active management of the economy by the State. After reconstruction was achieved the objective of economic planning became sustained economic growth as a means of ensuring full employment and rising living standards – basically social aims, of course. Interest in "social" planning developed in the 1960s. By then the advanced economies had more or less achieved full employment. With economic growth seemingly assured, attention shifted from the problem of creating wealth, through sustaining the level of production, to that of the use of wealth and its contribution to the quality of life in its variety of meanings. Thus, ministers of the OECD countries meeting in 1970 could stress that economic growth was not an end in itself but rather an instrument for creating better conditions of life. They concluded that increased attention must be given to the qualitative aspects of growth and to the formulation of policies with respect to the broad economic and social choices involved in the allocation of growing resources.

7. Concern with the quality of life and with the effectiveness of policies gave rise to an interest in the measurement of social well-being. This provided an impetus to the idea of social accounting or reporting and the development of social indicators, i.e. statistical measures which monitor the levels and changes over time in fundamental social concerns. Since the early 1970s the OECD has been working on the development of social indicators. It has identified the fundamental social concerns as Health, Individual Development through Learning, Employment and Quality of Working Life, Personal Economic Situation, Physical Environment, Personal Safety and Administration of Justice, Social Opportunity and Participation, and Time and Leisure (OECD, 1976a). The growth of interest in social accounting arose from a desire to match the advances in national economic accounting since the war. It was recognised that the net national product did not necessarily measure net national well-being. Not only did economic growth involve social costs, but these costs and the benefits of economic growth were not distributed equitably. Thus the 1960s also saw the re-discovery of poverty in the advanced economies, which uncovered the fact that economic growth and social policies were failing to benefit those most in need.

8. As a result there was, as the OECD has noted, a new questioning of national aims. "The increasing costs and doubtful consequences of many distributional policies, the negative features of economic growth and the growing concern with aspects of life unrelated to either the amount or distribution of goods and services (such as participation and self-fulfilment) brought into question the emphasis on economic growth as a goal in itself. This led to two parallel and complementary developments: on the one hand the concept of material wealth was broadened to include scarce resources like fresh water, clean air, silence, ecological balance and open space, which are being depleted or destroyed as a result of growth in those goods and services traditionally considered; on the other hand, economic growth and hence economic objectives generally, were explicitly re-endorsed as a *means* to a more fundamental goal – growth is not an end in itself but rather an instrument for creating better conditions of life". (OECD (1976a) p. 10).

9. There were also more pragmatic reasons for a growth of interest in social planning. Rising expectations caused by increasing prosperity led to more articulated and sustained demands on government to meet more unfilled needs and to promote greater justice in society. In response the State's social role increased and with it the volume and com-

priority of the work at government level. Planning was seen, therefore, as a coping mechanism for resolving the conflicting pressures and demands and as a means of rationalising allocative decisions regarding social expenditure.

10. Systems of social planning were only being developed, therefore, when the oil crisis of 1973 and the subsequent economic recession struck. Earlier optimism about a temporary set-back has given way to a realisation that a fundamental change has occurred in the economic environment of the advanced economies. Economic growth as a general objective of policy remains, but the prospects of a sustained high level of economic growth have diminished for most countries. The major problem is to maintain the social advances already made in the face of inflationary pressures on costs and a slow-down in economic growth. While this situation may make planning all the more desirable in theory, in practice the accompanying social tensions and the reduced room for manoeuvre make achievement of consensus more difficult.

11. To examine experience abroad against this background we chose for study three West European countries in which formal arrangements for social planning in some sense exist at national level, viz. the Netherlands, Norway and France. Apart from the existence of an established planning structure, the main criteria determining the choice of individual countries were the accessibility of information and the desirability of illustrating different institutional approaches to social planning. Thus in the Netherlands the emphasis is on provision of scientific information as an aid to policy formation and on the coordination of policy preparation; in Norway an integrated plan is prepared within the administrative system as part of the regular governmental work; while in France the emphasis is on the preparation of an integrated national economic and social plan developed by a participative planning process managed by an independent planning body. Thus the three 'models' studied represent a range of planning systems. The studies are based on a survey of planning and other literature relating to the countries concerned, supplemented by extensive on-the-spot discussions with planners and administrators in each country.

12. None of the countries is a mirror image of Ireland. Appendix B gives some comparative economic and social statistics for Ireland and the other three countries. Although the Netherlands and Norway are similar to Ireland in having small, open economies, they are much more advanced economically. Norway and Ireland are similar in the size and cultural homogeneity of population, but the population structure and the geographical size and features of the countries differ sig-

nificantly. These differences have important social and institutional consequences. Since its oil discoveries Norway is among the richest countries per capita in the world, but even before these discoveries it had reached a high level of prosperity, despite scant resources. The Netherlands, though much smaller in size, has a much larger population than Ireland and is a prosperous urbanised society. Despite the differences in scale between France and Ireland the international standing of the French national planning system meant that it could not be ignored in any study of public planning in liberal democracies. The Welfare State has reached maturity in these countries and it is of considerable interest, therefore, to examine current thinking about social planning in them. The three countries have a number of broadly common institutional features that influence the political and administrative spheres and contrast with the position in Ireland. A note on these features is given in Appendix C. A national planning system cannot be understood, of course, in isolation from the political, social and administrative structures and traditions of a country.

13. The terms of reference require us to consider the process of planning, by which we understand the procedures and steps by which planning is carried out. The planning process can be elaborated on with considerable theoretical refinements, but essentially it can be divided into four basic phases: a pre-decision or analysis phase, a decision phase, an implementation phase and an evaluation phase. In public planning, if policy objectives are pre-determined outside the planning system, i.e. politically, the first two phases will be concerned only with the means of attaining the objectives. These phases may involve a dialogue between the authorities, the planners and the interest groups in the community. The implementation phase includes responsibility for control, adjustment and review of plans in operation. The evaluation phase, which is concerned with the results achieved, leads into the renewal of the planning process, if the process is a continuous one.

14. The study of the French planning system was completed before the 1981 French national elections took place. Certain institutional changes affecting planning have been made or proposed by the new French Government and known changes are indicated in footnotes. The report as a whole was completed before the change of government following the June 1981 general election in Ireland, but it was not submitted to the NESc until shortly after the change of government took place.

15. The report has six chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the perceptions of social planning and of social planning requirements in Ireland. Chapter 2 describes the arrangements for social planning at national

level in the Netherlands, Chapter 3 those in Norway and Chapter 4 those in France. Chapter 5 discusses the purpose of social planning, the need for it, the problems encountered in it and the planning arrangements required. Chapter 6 sets out recommendations for planning structures and processes designed to provide for effective social planning in Ireland.

CHAPTER 1

PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL PLANNING IN IRELAND

Introduction

1.1 In this chapter we trace the development of the idea of social planning in Ireland and the evolution of the arrangements for planning at central government level. From the literature and our consultations with the various interests mentioned in the terms of reference we found certain perceptions both of the meaning of social planning and of the planning arrangements necessary. The problems perceived to be associated with social planning in Ireland are considered in Chapter 5.

Social Planning: The Development of an Idea

1.2 In modern times all Irish governments have adopted and implemented social policies and there have been attempts at tackling major social problems – slums and tuberculosis, for example – in a planned way. But the term social planning came into use only after national planning for economic development had become established. In looking for the origins of the term social planning we need not go back further than the beginning of economic planning.

1.3 The late fifties have been seen by many as a watershed in Irish history, and this has been attributed to a large extent to the initiation of planning for economic development. November of 1958 saw the publication of the *Programme for Economic Expansion*; the background technical document on which it was based, *Economic Development*, appeared later. Formal national planning in Ireland began with these two documents. Both documents were expressly concerned with the economy, rather than with social conditions. The Programme sought to release a dynamic of progress in the Irish economy which would result in a sustained increase in real national income. While it concerned itself with the main productive sectors of the economy and how they could be developed, social considerations intruded in a number of ways.

1.4 First, the inspiration to propose a national plan, and the will to

adopt it, resulted from the lack of economic progress generally and the serious recession which the country had just gone through. This was a period marked by high levels of unemployment and emigration and low public morale: the Programme offered a way out of a socially black period.

1.5 Second, "economic" objectives were distinguished from "socially desirable" objectives, although it was asserted that there was no conflict between the two. The Programme marked a shift, however, in public policy both in relation to social investment and to current social expenditure. "Social" investment in houses, schools and hospitals was regarded as unproductive. State policy in the recent past had favoured such investment. Because much of the backlog was considered to have been made up and because of the need to stimulate economic growth the emphasis in the Programme was on productive investment. In addition the burden of direct taxation was to be reduced in order to attract foreign capital, entrepreneurs and experts. How could this be done? One of the ways of doing so, expressed in a well-known paragraph, lay in

deferring further improvements in the *social services* (our italics) until a steady growth of real national income was well established. If resources are being used to the maximum to provide productive employment and raise all-round living standards it is impossible to devote them at the same time to improvements in social welfare — the national candle cannot be burned at both ends.

(*Economic Development*, p. 24)

Thus the key-note of the Programme as far as social policy was concerned was that the economy must be expanded before the social services could be expanded.

1.6 Third, it was recognised that economic development was not simply a matter of economics. *Economic Development* (p. 27) identified "other conditions of economic progress no less important than increased capitalisation", such as education, technical training, health and housing. The Programme was to be criticised for its lack of policy on education or technical training, however, (FitzGerald (1963)), but the fact that it did not deal with social development generally was not criticised at the time.

1.7 The chief objective of the *Second Programme for Economic Expansion*, which related to the period 1964-1970, was "the raising of the real income of the community by 50% in the 1960s" (*Second Programme*, (1963) p. 17). In addition, it stated a "complementary aim", the reduction of involuntary emigration, and promised special attention to educa-

tion, training and other forms of human investment. Not only had the criticism of the First Programme for its neglect of education been taken to heart but the solution of a major social problem, emigration, was introduced as a specific objective of planning. Emigration, like unemployment, had economic implications but it was its social significance which had made it a major preoccupation of the government and the people.

1.8 In the event the Second Programme was abandoned before the end of its term and its abandonment became the occasion for a review of planning in Ireland. The National Industrial Economic Council (NIEC),¹ which had been set up in 1963, attributed some of the failure of the Programme to the lack of involvement in the planning process of those who were expected to implement the plan, not just the public service but the community in general. And lack of involvement by the community was due to

the fact that the Second Programme was mainly concerned with economic matters, regarded as a means of social progress, but was not associated with a complementary social programme. Neither the social implications of economic growth, nor the dependence of social progress on the rate of economic expansion, was got across sufficiently clearly to the public at large. If more than passive acceptance is to be achieved the next programme must be explicitly social as well as economic in its content and objectives. Only that way will there be a wider appreciation of what the plan is seeking to achieve, and why and how it is proposed to achieve it. (NIEC Report No 24 (1966) p. 14)

1.9 When the next programme appeared in 1969 its title, *Third Programme: Economic and Social Development 1969-72*, reflected its wider remit. While the primary emphasis continued to be on economic development — the first two aims were concerned with achieving sustainable increases in employment and maintaining the highest level of sustainable economic growth — the programme proposed

the introduction of a social development programme which will help shape the social aspects of Irish life in accordance with national aspirations. (*Third Programme*, p. 9)

This was a far cry from the cautious reference a decade before to burning the national candle at both ends. Yet the cautionary note was sustained.

¹The NIEC was an advisory body consisting of representatives of industrial employers and unions and experts appointed by the Government.

The inclusion of social development as a major objective of the present programme does not mean that an acceptable level of national prosperity has been achieved, but rather that the stage has now been reached where more thought must be given to how the fruits of progress are to be used. We must avoid a situation where the pursuit of material progress becomes the exclusive goal of economic endeavour.

(*Third Programme*, p. 8)

1.10 The Third Programme proclaimed that "a rise in economic prosperity is of little value for its own sake; it is only valuable if it makes possible, and is used for, an improvement in the quality of life" (p. 7). This concern with the fruits of economic growth reflected contemporary international discussion of the purpose of economic development. Economic growth was not seen as an end in itself but as having for its ultimate objective an increase in individual and national well-being. According to the Programme

Individual and national well-being is a concept capable of embracing many meanings and values. Each society will interpret it in its own way, since it is determined by the values which a society considers important and by the way of life which it seeks to promote. These values are shaped by tradition but should evolve in response to what is best in current development and what is required in present circumstances. Leadership can foster and guide this evolution, and is an obligation and responsibility not alone of Government but also of organisations and individuals.

(*Third Programme*, p. 16)

While recognising that material welfare and improvements in living conditions merited a high priority, it identified a number of other objectives of social development, viz. the equitable sharing of economic progress, the care of the under-privileged, the fostering of cultural and artistic values, the preservation and development of the national heritage, the improvement of the environment, the promotion of community development and respect for human dignity and the better use of leisure.

1.11 The discussion in the Third Programme marked a major step forward in the thinking about social development, but the influence of this thinking on the proposals in the Programme was limited. Developments proposed in the traditional social policy areas of education, health, housing, and income maintenance were stated to represent a "stage" in the formulation of a comprehensive social development programme. The extent to which the developments were integrated into the economic

programme was unclear, however. The Third Programme was still-born. By 1972 the enthusiasm for national planning had waned. Four years were to elapse before the next attempt was made. The idea of a "comprehensive social programme" almost disappeared from official view.

1.12 Although there was no development of government thinking on social planning in the form of publications in the early 1970s the subject continued to get attention elsewhere. In November 1971 the Catholic Bishops' Council for Social Welfare organised the Kilkenny Conference on Poverty, which is usually taken to mark the "rediscovery of poverty" in Ireland, replicating the rediscovery that had taken place in other countries in the 1960s. The Council (1972) published *A Statement on Social Policy*, the purpose of which was to make proposals for incorporation in a "comprehensive social development programme" which it envisaged being included in a Fourth Programme.

1.13 In 1973, following a change of government (to a Fine Gael/Labour coalition), it was announced that in addition to a new NIEC — the previous body had lapsed in 1971 — a National Social Council would be established to advise the government on social policy. Later in the year, however, one council, the National Economic and Social Council (NESC), was established. Apart from the addition of representatives of certain farming organisations, the membership was broadly the same as in the NIEC. The new council was to be concerned with economic policy, as NIEC had been, but it was to be concerned also with social policy

The main task of the National Economic and Social Council shall be to provide a forum for discussion of the principles relating to development of the national economy and the achievement of social justice. (NESC Constitution, para. 1)

The Council established a Social Policy Committee as one of its permanent committees. The Council has produced a series of reports on issues in social policy and on the development of the concept of social policy.

1.14 While in opposition the government parties had committed themselves to the idea of a "social programme" corresponding to the economic programmes which had been developed. However, neither an economic nor a social programme was prepared. In September 1976, however, a Green Paper, *Economic and Social Development 1976-1980*, was published. Despite its title the document made only a passing reference to social development. The analysis of the current situation and the proposals in the Green Paper were to be discussed with the social

partners with a view to formulating a national plan to be published as a White Paper. Before a national plan was formulated and published there was a change of government again (to a Fianna Fáil administration). In 1977 the new government gave the statutory function, "to promote and coordinate economic and social planning", to a new Department of Economic Planning and Development. This was the first mention of social planning in legislation. The new department was in effect given responsibility for working out what social planning meant and how it should be done. The Department was abolished in 1979 and the statutory responsibility for economic and social planning passed to the Department of Finance.

Perceptions of the Meaning of Social Planning

1.15 In attempting to identify perceptions of the meaning of social planning in Ireland we have had to rely on the literature and on the views currently held by people concerned with public administration and with social issues. In spite of the persistent demands for social planning and of all that has been written about it and about planning for social development no consensus on the meaning of either concept has emerged nor did we find any agreement among those we consulted. Social planning at national level² is perceived in three main senses as

- the planned development of specific social policies at departmental level
- the coordinated planning of social policies at inter-departmental level
- planning in relation to national social objectives at the level of overall government.

The fact that social planning is understood in three different senses does not mean that there are three incompatible perceptions of planning requirements. The important point is that each sense involves planning at a different level and hence differences in the planning process and arrangements. Another view of planning placed the emphasis on the provision of better information for policy-making, rather than on planning structures.

The Planned Development of Specific Social Policies

1.16 Planning seen as the planned development of specific social policies places emphasis on the technical function of planning in the develop-

²At local level the term social planning is understood in the literature in a variety of senses, e.g. planning community development, planning local welfare services, planning the social aspects of physical development.

ment and management of particular social policies by departments. Policy analysis can be regarded as an input to planning in this sense or as a variant of it. This view highlights the *analytical* aspect of planning as a means of rational policy-making. It becomes necessary to ask a number of questions in relation to each policy: What is the purpose and what are the objectives of the policy? How successful (effective) is it in achieving its objectives? How efficient (cost-effective) is it in doing so? Does it need to be changed to make it more effective or efficient?

1.17 The need for better planning, and particularly for better planning of specific social policies, has been a recurring theme in the reports of the NESC. Without planning, it has argued, the efficiency and effectiveness of policies will suffer, anomalies in policies will persist and unintended consequences of policies will be overlooked. Report No. 36³ asserts that any useful discussion of universal or selective strategies in social service provision brings up

the old problems of evaluating the impact of policy, measuring the outcome of policy choices and avoiding the presumption that events subsequent to a policy act are necessarily its consequence. Acknowledgement has also been given to the fact that the range of unsought consequences (for good or ill) from any action usually exceeds in number those which were first intended. (pp. 97-98)

Report No. 38⁴ identified certain anomalies in the administration of social policies.

A number of anomalies and curiosities which have been mentioned would, however, cost relatively little to remedy, and their removal would help reduce the complexity of the welfare system. In order to show up such cases, it is worthwhile to re-examine services periodically in the light of their original intentions, the relevance of those intentions today, the actual results being achieved, and the interactions with other services. (p. 258)

Coordinated Planning of Social Policies

1.18 The view of social planning as the coordinated planning of social policies regards the planned development of specific social policies as insufficient. It focusses on the *coordination* function of planning in achieving the integration of the various social policies. The Council for Social Welfare (1972) has emphasised the need for coordination in social planning.

³*Universality and Selectivity: Strategies in Social Planning* (1978).

⁴*Universality and Selectivity: Social Services in Ireland* (1978).

At the centre there is need to integrate the overall task of social policy formation. This is something that can only be done at the centre. There is clear need for some agency or grouping whose task it would be to oversee the social services as a whole, as well as those other services with some social content, so that there would be coherent social policies operated by a system of administrative agencies providing comprehensive, flexible and humane services.

(*Statement of Social Policy*, para. 2.45)

1.19 The NESc too has recognised that the planned development of particular social policies is not enough to ensure social justice or to promote efficiency in the use of resources. Separate planning of social policy ignores the fact that the objectives of many policies and services are related and that there are trade-offs between policies in different areas. As is observed in the NESc Report No. 38 already cited

The very variety, number and complexity of social services in Ireland, . . . can create problems in themselves. For administrators, there are problems in coordinating the services, in trying to maintain a consistency of approach in linked services, and in taking care of interactive effects when any one service is changed. (p. 257).

Report No. 27⁵ and Report No. 47⁶, in particular, underlined the need for an integrated approach to policies on income maintenance and personal taxation.

1.20 Nor have the demands for better coordination, and hence integration, of social policy development come solely from outside the administrative system. While departments were quick to point out that there is a great deal of co-operation between them and that ad hoc inter-departmental committees can be useful, we found in our consultations a demand for a better system of inter-departmental coordination, particularly for social issues that transcend the concerns of individual departments. It was pointed out too that there are major social challenges which are not the responsibility of any one department at present, such as the decline of certain urban and rural areas, the increased participation of married women in the labour force, the "microchip revolution". Public policies are called for but since no one department is responsible some inter-departmental response is needed. Then there are major groups or categories of people who are neglected or dis-

⁵ *Integrated Approaches to Personal Income Taxes and Transfers.*

⁶ *Alternative Strategies for Family Income Support.*

criminated against despite the fact, or because of the fact, that a number of different departments are dealing with them. Even where a lead role is assigned to one department, e.g. Department of Health, in the case of deprived children, or the Department of the Environment, in the case of itinerants, there remains the problem of ensuring effective coordination of effort. In other cases not even this first step has been taken.

Planning in Relation to Overall Social Objectives

1.21 Social planning is also equated with national planning in relation to the overall objectives of government, which are held to be social objectives. The point was made in a general way in our consultations: the role of government in Irish society is so pervasive that we need a clear understanding of its social purpose. As we have seen, the Third Programme accepted that economic development was not an end in itself; the ultimate purpose of economic development was "an increase in individual and national well-being". If the attainment of economic objectives is only a means towards attaining other "social" objectives then it is necessary to define these other objectives. And since these objectives are not necessarily achieved by attaining planned economic objectives, it is also necessary to plan how they are to be achieved.

1.22 Critics of the first two programmes for economic development argued that the government should be concerned with "social" development as well as "economic" development, and hence it should also engage in social planning so as to promote social development. Such development would not happen; it had to be planned. What precisely social development meant was never clearly stated. Social policies apparently were to be the counterpart of economic policies and social planning was seen as parallel to economic planning. But social planning is also understood to be – or it is implied that it is – subsidiary to economic planning, because economic development is seen as creating the conditions for social development. Social planning follows or is made possible by economic planning, the latter being concerned with increasing national resources and the former with their distribution. This relationship has tended to be the one observed in practice. The classic expression of the relationship is given in the quotation from *Economic Development* above (1.5).

1.23 From the criticisms of economic planning it is possible to infer, however, that one of the purposes of social planning is to determine the social objectives of economic development and, by extension, to consider the social implications of such development. This carries the important implication that social planning is not just about planning

the social use of resources. Those who see social planning as relating to the social purpose of government intervention in society or of economic development are concerned effectively with the *strategic* role of planning.

1.24 The NESc has been a strong advocate of overall planning. In 1976⁷ it argued that "the absence of an accepted strategy for economic and social development was a major reason why public expenditure has risen".

Without an overall strategy no system of priorities is possible. Without priorities, there are no consistent criteria which can be used to weigh proposed increases and different expenditures against each other -- no over-riding objectives to which Departmental objectives can be subordinated or against which they can be policed. Without a strategy, the pattern of public expenditure emerges by a process of accretion -- it is built up like a mosaic that when completed contains neither picture nor message.

(NESc, Report No. 21, p. 51)

The Development of Planning Arrangements in Ireland

1.25 While national economic planning found quick acceptance across the political spectrum, the institutional arrangements for such planning were scarcely discussed. The main preoccupation was with methodology and the contents of the plans. As Katsiaouni (1978) has observed, the theory of indicative economic planning offered little guidance on administrative practices and requirements for planning. The type of national planning arrangements was not exposed to rigorous analysis. The Department of Finance was accepted, however, as having the dominant role in developing the national plan.

1.26 The planning function in administration was examined by the Public Services Organisation Review Group (PSORG) whose report, published in 1969, set forth a planning structure within the government administration. The Report (p. 109) distinguished between only two levels of planning, "macro-economic" and "micro-economic and social". Planning at the two levels ultimately had to be coordinated. At the micro-economic and social level planning was seen as concerning individual projects for sectors of the economy and, in the case of government departments, projects in areas assigned to them by law. The co-ordination of the national plan meant fitting the projects at the lower level into the overall plan. Thus social planning was seen as subordinate

⁷ Report No. 21: *Report on Public Expenditure*.

to overall national planning, which was equated with macro-economic planning, although that term was interpreted as covering planning generally at national level. In accordance with its view of two levels of planning the PSORG Report directed its attention towards improving planning *within* departments and towards the *coordination* of planning at government level, a task it assigned to the Department of Finance. The PSORG Report did make several references to social planning, but did not succeed in clarifying matters. In the Report the term "social planning" is used in a general sense, but in addition there is a discussion under the heading "Social Planning" which refers only to health and social services, "the two main areas of social involvement by the State" (p. 112). It is clear from subsequent discussions in the Report, however, that the social role of education was recognised, even if the need for planning was perceived more in terms of manpower requirements.

1.27 The relationship between planning and politics was discussed in the PSORG Report. Clearly this is a particularly important issue in social planning, however it is perceived. Of its nature planning in public administration raises the problem of the relationship of the planning process to the determination of objectives, either overall national objectives or the objectives of particular policies. There appear to be two broad views: one holds that the determination of objectives is a political or governmental function outside the planning process, the function of which is the technical determination of the best means of achieving the objectives; the other holds that the planning process contributes to the formulation of objectives, even though the eventual choice of the objectives is of course a political one.⁸ According to the PSORG Report

planning is . . . the determination of the means by which we proceed from a present situation to a predetermined goal at a specified future date . . . where the public business is concerned, the determination of national objectives is, in the first place, a political decision and, in the last analysis, the choice of ends indicated by the planning process is, in a democracy, the prerogative of government. Subject to this, the purpose of the planning process is, with agreed goals, to seek out, investigate and evaluate the possible courses of action leading to the national goals. Planning must also review progress in the implementation of the chosen courses and

⁸ Sometimes this view is pushed further -- the role of the planners is to rationalise choice in such a way that the optimal, and hence the only desirable course, is clear to the politicians. This view of the role of planning, leading to the "death of ideology", was common in some circles in the 1960s.

must continually revise these courses in the light of the performance and what remains to be performed. At the same time the planning process may reveal that goals are either deficient, mutually incompatible or require disproportionate effort for achievement. Planning, therefore, will influence the determination of future policies (p. 109).

While there is some ambiguity, the Report appears to lean towards the view of public planning which sees politicians and administrators mutually engaged in the process of identifying objectives and means. We shall consider this issue further in Chapter 5.

1.28 The PSORG Report identified planning as one of the key functions in administration. It revealed that planning was poorly developed structurally and proposed structural changes in the organisation of departments designed to make it effective. Presumably because its remit related to the organisation of departments it did not pay much attention to the process of planning. But the process of planning can be as important as the plan and the planning process envisaged strongly influences the structural requirements.

Planning within Government Departments

1.29 One of the central problems identified in the PSORG Report was that ministers and administrators were too preoccupied with administrative minutiae and too little concerned with policy development. According to the Report: "in the absence of planning functions in Departments planning for the whole public service cannot be coordinated" (p. 142). The Report recommended two main structural changes within government departments: (i) the establishment of an Aireacht as the central policy-making body and the assignment of responsibility for implementing policy to executive agencies and (ii) the establishment of four staff function units in the Aireacht to assist the secretary of the department in four key areas of management and to coordinate activity in these areas in the executive agencies. The four staff functions identified were planning, finance, organisation and personnel. An important corollary, designed to remove from ministers the burden of administrative detail, was a recommendation to the effect that ministers should not be answerable in parliament or in law for the actions of the executive units in pursuance of policy. These actions would be subject to review by an administrative appeals system.

1.30 In 1972 the government decided to proceed with the introduction of the staff units in four government departments on an experimental basis. Reports of the task forces set up to work out the details in two departments, the Department of Health and the Department of Trans-

port and Power,⁹ have been published. Staff units for planning were introduced in these two departments and are operational.¹⁰

1.31 Given that the machinery of government has not been restructured as proposed in the PSORG Report the planning units have to function in a somewhat different administrative and political environment to that envisaged in the Report. The functions of the planning units, as exemplified by those specified for the Department of Health, include:

- analysis of aims and objectives and their relationship to on-going activities
- identification and analysis of alternative means of attaining policy objectives
- drawing up and coordinating plans for consideration in the light of the likely level of resources available
- appraisal and review of effectiveness of existing policies and the development of relevant indicators for this purpose.

(*Restructuring the Department of Health*, (1973), p. 68)

There is no published account of the extent to which these functions have been exercised by the planning units. No plans of the individual departments concerned have been published.

Inter-Departmental Planning

1.32 There is no permanent inter-departmental structure for planning at inter-departmental level. There is a long-established procedure for inter-departmental consultation on policy proposals before they are submitted to the government for decision. Before a proposal is brought by a minister to the government it is circulated to all relevant departments for observations.¹¹ Each department can seek to influence the proposal before it is submitted to government, and can brief its minister for the cabinet meeting. The Department of Finance has an important role in the consultation process since its views must always be obtained and it gives an overview of proposals besides considering their financial and economic aspects. The Department of the Public Service is responsible for over-viewing personnel and organisational implications of proposals. The Department of the Taoiseach coordinates all business brought before the government, but its function in relation to policy development has been limited heretofore. The consultation arrangements tend to

⁹ Now the Department of Transport.

¹⁰ Similar units exist in the following departments: Agriculture, Environment, Labour, and Industry, Commerce and Tourism, but it appears that not all of them are operational yet.

¹¹ Sometimes ad hoc Inter-departmental committees are set up, usually to deal with complex policy issues.

stress the negative aspects of the coordination of policy development: other departments seek to counter or veto aspects of proposals which may affect their interests or responsibilities. The Department of Finance has statutory responsibility for the promotion and coordination of economic and social planning. Medium term planning is coordinated by the Public Expenditure Division of the Department. The Department also has statutory responsibility for identifying policies considered necessary for general economic and social development. From the information available, however, it appears that policy proposals are produced in a piecemeal fashion, mainly at the initiative of individual ministers and departments. There appears to be no effective inter-departmental coordination that focusses on inter-relationships between various social policies and no effective means of considering the social implications of other policies.

Planning at Overall Level

1.33 Chubb (1974) has pointed to the absence of procedures or structures whereby the government itself can adopt a more positive and creative role in relation to policy development. He refers to

a growing awareness, felt by an increasing number of political and public service leaders over the past few years, of the need to give sustained attention at the top to problems that transcend individual departments and demand, in the words of one prominent leader, "horizontal looks and viewpoints". (p. 50).

The budget and the national plan, when it was produced, have been means of providing "horizontal looks".

Budgetary Planning

1.34 While the primary purpose of the national budget is to balance the revenue and expenditure of the state, budgets are also instruments of economic and social policy. The budget is of particular importance nowadays to social expenditure since the level of such expenditure has been rising rapidly and the budget is the main instrument by which the level is determined. It is the principal means by which government policies on income redistribution are implemented.

1.35 One of the peculiarities of the budgetary arrangements is that the annual estimate for the individual departments and the policies on which it is based are debated only after the levels of expenditure have been effectively fixed by the budget. The inadequacy of the traditional budgetary procedures as a coordinating mechanism was summarised ten years ago in an article published in *Administration* (1971). The main problems were identified as: "how to align expenditure proposals with

projected resources over time and how to ensure that those resources are being applied efficiently and effectively to the attainment of national objectives". But how were national objectives to be determined and how was the alignment of resources to be achieved? A solution was seen in programme budgeting, derived from the Planning, Programming, Budgeting System (PPBS) developed in the United States. PPBS aimed to identify national objectives with precision on a continuing basis, to determine the priorities among objectives, to search for alternative means of attaining the objectives at least cost, to link objectives and the costs of attaining them over future budgetary programmes and to measure the effectiveness of programmes.

1.36 At the beginning of the 1970s programme budgeting was introduced on an experimental basis and it was intended it would be extended to all government departments by 1976 and that the budget would be prepared and published in programme format. In the event programme budgeting made only limited progress and the government effectively abandoned the idea of adapting budgetary procedures to programme form. While the annual estimates for departments are still compiled internally on a multi-annual basis, both the budget and the published estimates relate to a single financial year. The practical effect of the multi-annual forecasts of expenditure is unclear, therefore. No analysis of why PPBS made so little headway in Ireland has been published and hence it is not possible to say whether there are any lessons to be learned with regard to the design of social planning arrangements. Wildavsky (1970) identified a number of reasons that are regarded as contributing to the ultimate failure of the system in the United States. The system was too ambitious — you cannot do policy analysis on everything simultaneously; it failed to generate the necessary commitment at political and administrative level; and the expertise and information systems to support the system did not exist. Such problems seem pertinent to the design of social planning arrangements. The reproduction of such weaknesses would be likely to cause social planning to fail also.

1.37 Analysis was an integral part of programme budgeting. As part of the programme budgeting arrangements the Department of Finance set up an analysis unit, which continued in being after programme budgeting was abandoned. During the existence of the Department of Economic Planning and Development responsibility for analysis remained with the Department of Finance, analysis being directed at the efficiency and effectiveness of individual policies and hence being related to public expenditure control, a finance function. In order to promote analysis in line departments and develop a capacity for it, a scheme was introduced under which trainee analysts were recruited from line departments and

trained in the Department of Finance. This training includes an advanced education course in analytical techniques. The unit continues to promote analysis and to give assistance and direction from the centre.

1.38 A noteworthy development in recent years has been that certain budgetary provisions have become negotiable in connection with the negotiation of National Wage Agreements and National Understandings.

National Planning

1.39 The (First) Programme for Economic Expansion was prepared by the Secretary of the Department of Finance with the assistance of a small group of officials. Subsequently a Development Division was established within the Department. It prepared the Second and Third Programmes. The methodology of these programmes has been described as projection-oriented rather than policy-oriented (Norton (1975)). The work of preparing the programmes centred on the Department of Finance. Although the line departments and the public sector generally were also involved in preparing the programmes, their commitment to them has been questioned by the NESC. Commenting on the lack of government strategy for economic and social development since the early 1960s, the NESC remarked that neither the Second nor Third Programmes "seemed to be widely accepted in the public service as a framework for thought and action".¹²

1.40 The views of the social partners and the NIEC were obtained on the practicability of the Second Programme. In addition a formal system of consultation with industrialists on projections and targets for individual industries was initiated. The consultations with the private sector regarding the Third Programme appear to have been more limited. The NIEC was not formally consulted, though some informal consultations took place. Parliament was not consulted on any of the programmes.

1.41 The establishment of the Department of Economic Planning and Development in 1977 produced a number of innovations. The function of government planning was embodied in legislation and responsibility for it allocated to one department. Social planning was put on the same footing legally as economic planning. A sequence of planning responsibilities was outlined in the legislation: to promote economic and social planning for the development of the *economy* (our italics); to identify policies for general economic and social development; to review and

appraise the plans and activities of line departments giving effect to government policies for economic and social development; to provide for the coordination of the plans and activities of line departments and for their integration with national economic and social plans; and to review the implementation of national economic and social plans. The new Department was thus made responsible for an integrated economic and social planning process.

1.42 The Department of Economic Planning and Development initiated a planning cycle, which it envisaged would consist of Green Papers, presenting options for public discussion, followed by White Papers, fixing targets to be achieved and setting out the instrumental policies which the government was adopting to achieve the targets. This process was set in train with the publication of the Green Paper, *Development for Full Employment* in June 1978, which was followed by the publication of a White Paper, *Programme for National Development 1978-1981*, in January 1979. Following the Department's discontinuance its planning functions were assigned to the Department of Finance. In the re-organisation that followed in the Department of Finance planning was combined with Public Expenditure in one division. The only planning documents published since have been concerned with public investment.

Perceptions of Arrangements Needed for Social Planning

1.43 As we saw above (1.15) there are three perceptions of social planning in Ireland – the planned development of specific social policies, the coordinated planning of social policies, and planning in relation to overall social objectives – which give rise to planning needs at three levels of central planning: departmental, inter-departmental and overall. The planning need was also seen in terms of the production of better planning information. Participation in the planning process emerged as an issue from the review of national planning.

Planning at Departmental Level

1.44 The need for policy analysis and policy evaluation was frequently mentioned in our consultations. It was said that government departments needed to have the capacity for analysis to review existing policies and to evaluate alternative proposals for policy development. The reason is clear. In talking about policy development one is rarely talking about starting from scratch: in most cases it is a question of modifying or adding to existing policies. If the modifications or additions are to represent improvements it is necessary to have a thorough understanding of how the existing policies work. From consultations it emerged, how-

¹²NESC Report No. 21, *Report on Public Expenditure*, (1976) p. 48-9.

ever, that there is no systematic programme of social policy analysis/evaluation and that there are not enough analysts.

Planning at Inter-Departmental Level

1.45 Planning at this level is seen as requiring better administrative and political coordination of the development of social policies. We found no clear view, however, as to what should be done to achieve this.

1.46 The Council for Social Welfare in the *Statement on Social Policy* proposed the establishment of a unified department under a senior minister in the cabinet, with responsibility in respect of the health, income maintenance and welfare services and with a planning function (lead role) in relation to social policy as a whole, which it regarded as including the social aspects of policies that have other primary purposes. Effectively this meant the amalgamation of the Departments of Health and Social Welfare, as recommended in the PSORG Report, and the assignment of the lead role to the new department.¹³ While the two departments have been under the one minister in recent governments the results of this in terms of coordination of policies appear to be limited.

1.47 Chubb (1974) has observed that

the central administration is capable of studying problems in detail, but is divided vertically service by service into departments. Inter-departmental committees are no substitute for ministerial study and consensus, not at least if ministers rather than civil servants are to make policy. (p. 50)

Cabinet committees or sub-committees have been established in the past, especially by multi-party governments, but they have operated under the confidential cabinet system, however, and hence under a closed system.

Planning at Overall Level

1.48 Social planning at this, the highest, level is seen as requiring arrangements for determining social objectives and for relating public policies to those objectives. This is seen as creating a need for a national planning system and for a national plan in some form. We found no clear views as to how such a planning system is to be organised and managed. For some the traditional arrangements for the coordination of national

¹³ In a subsequent document: *Planning for Social Development: What Needs to be Done*, published in 1976, the Council merely advocated that one of the 'social' departments be given a lead role in relation to social planning.

planning appeared sufficient. One department expressed the view, however, that in the context of social planning "it seems inescapable that overall responsibility for a national plan would be a matter for the Taoiseach's Department". As matters stand at the time of writing this report, statutory responsibility for coordination of planning at national level rests with the Department of Finance. National planning, as it was understood in the sixties or as it was envisaged when the Department of Economic Planning and Development was set up, is not going on.

1.49 The planning approach in the economic programmes was criticised for a number of reasons: not enough attention was paid to policy measures; the programmes attempted to deal with the economy in too great detail instead of concentrating on a limited number of objectives; there was a complete lack of political involvement in the planning process. (Kennedy et al (1975) p. 155-6)

Planning Information

1.50 A general feeling among those consulted was that economic planning was based on firm data and intelligible theory but that social planning lacked equally firm data and intelligible theory. There is general agreement on the inadequacy of social data in Ireland. The NESC in its Report No. 17: *Statistics for Social Policy* (1976) examined the shortcomings in certain social statistics in relation to social policy and made a large number of recommendations for improvements. We do not propose to go into the details. We will consider in Chapter 5 what more needs to be done. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the various government departments are the sources of official data. The extent of the analysis made in published official data has been limited heretofore. The reports published by the NESC and the studies published by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) are the main sources of independent information and analysis.

1.51 We found general support for the idea of producing a periodic social report, which is in accordance with the growing interest internationally in such reports. The NESC in its Report No. 15, *Towards a Social Report*, stated that a social report could be designed to help improve policy-making.

First, it could highlight social problems, and make possible more informed judgements about the national priorities and second, by providing the insight into how different measures of national well-being are changing, it might ultimately make possible a better evaluation of what State-sponsored (and financed) programmes are accomplishing. (p. 6)

The Report published in 1976 was a prototype social report which was to have been developed. Although it contains a great deal of information, the lack of relevant information in many policy areas is even more revealing. The development of social indicators is also felt to be important. People concerned with social policy are acutely aware that having defined social policy objectives it is very difficult to measure progress in attaining them.

Participation in Planning

1.52 Those who have written about social planning in Ireland, and those whom we consulted for this study, have identified three kinds of participation

- political participation by the elected representatives in the endorsement of plans
- administrative participation by all administrative units responsible for implementing plans
- public participation by client and interest groups affected by plans or policies, or in a position to generate support for or opposition to them, and by independent experts.

1.53 In regard to political participation the need to involve parliament in national planning is seen as a basic democratic requirement. Up to now participation has not extended beyond the purely party level and parliament has had no formal role in national planning. A leading planner has argued that:

democratic principles are not fully served by consulting only the major organised interests . . . The interests are sectoral, not national . . . Government and Parliament must keep this in mind and this is why, as part of the democratic process, the plan proposed by the Government after the formal consultations have taken place, should be the subject of debate and approval by Parliament.

(Whitaker, (1977) p. 290)

The point has been made to us that where social objectives and social policies are concerned the need for political endorsement is all the greater.

1.54 Though the need for participation by all sectors of public administration in the planning process in relation to overall planning may seem self-evident, it has not been practised effectively. Since government departments and subsidiary bodies are likely to be more heavily involved in implementing policies under social planning than under economic planning their commitment through involvement in the planning process is seen as even more critical.

1.55 Although the NESC, and before it the NIEC, has provided a forum for debate and discussion between certain interest groups and experts, including senior civil servants, neither of these bodies participated in policy formation nor in the preparation of a national plan, unlike their counterparts elsewhere. Participation by interest groups at other levels of planning has been very limited and participation by clients of social services virtually unknown. Social planning requires as much consensus as is possible on social objectives and policies and the participation by interest groups and clients can be seen as a means of promoting that consensus. Since the objectives and policies intimately affect the lives of individual citizens and social units it is also seen as a way of ensuring that policies and the means of implementing them are in better accord with the needs and wishes of the people affected. Independent experts can act as catalysts in the planning process.

Conclusions

1.56 There is no consensus in Ireland on what is meant, encompassed and implied by social planning. Different perceptions of what it means and encompasses exist and these perceptions have implications for planning arrangements. We distinguished three perceptions of social planning, viz. the planning of specific social policies, the coordinated planning of a range of social policies and planning in relation to overall social objectives. These three perceptions of social planning create a need for planning arrangements at three levels of central government: departmental, inter-departmental and overall level. (We have not examined the arrangements at sub-national level.) At departmental level the planning need is seen as requiring more effective arrangements for policy analysis/evaluation. At inter-departmental level, there is perceived to be a need for more effective coordination of the planning of social policy development at political and administrative level. At overall level the need is for central coordination of public policies in pursuit of social objectives. It was also perceived that arrangements were needed to improve social planning information and to provide better for participation in the planning process.

1.57 The existence of three different perceptions of social planning does not mean that there are three incompatible systems of planning, even though some people placed the emphasis on one or other approach. It will be obvious that the three systems can be linked. If we look at the perceptions of the meaning of social planning and of the planning arrangements necessary as a whole it is possible to draw some important conclusions regarding what might be termed key issues in social planning. These issues are key in the sense that if the planning arrangements fail to cope with them social planning will not be successful. The

key issues that emerge are

- determination of social objectives
- coordination of social policies
- analysis/evaluation of social policy
- improvement of social information
- participation in the planning process.

The various preceptions of social planning in Ireland can be interpreted as a demand for a social planning system or systems that can cope with these issues.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL PLANNING IN THE NETHERLANDS

Introduction

2.1 Dutch society differs radically from Irish society. A knowledge of its nature is crucial to an understanding of the approach to social planning and of the problems connected with it in the Netherlands. The basic fact about Dutch society is that major ideological blocs exist and pluralism therefore permeates the society. Although the influence of the bloc system has been declining since the mid-1960s it still provides the mould for Dutch institutions. This stratification known as "verzuilen" or pillarisation (society resting on pillars) has its origins in history: in the constant tension between religious and secular values in Dutch society on the one hand and within the religious and secular groupings on the other. This interplay produced five main political-social blocs: a Roman Catholic bloc, two Protestant (Calvinist) blocs, one more orthodox than the other, a Liberal bloc – the product of 19th century liberalism, and a Socialist bloc – the product of the industrial revolution in the 19th century.

2.2 Each bloc developed its own political party, trade unions and employer organisations (except socialist of course), its own newspapers, and radio and television programmes.¹ The confessional (religious) blocs have provided their own schools, up to and including university, and State aid for them is guaranteed by the constitution. The hospital services are run as private non-profit institutions, mainly by bloc organisations. The confessional blocs have provided most of the welfare services² through voluntary organisations, which are subsidised by the State. The private organisation of social services has made it difficult for governments to control developments.

¹On a common network provided by the State.

²By welfare services is meant mainly non-financial services provided for individuals and groups. Some 15,000 organisations are subsidised.

2.3 Traditionally, political support and voting followed bloc rather than class lines. Class structures cut across the blocs. Since no party could achieve a parliamentary majority, the Netherlands has always been governed by coalitions, normally formed after an election. Access to political power depended on ability to compromise. An intricate system of inter-locking memberships of organisations within blocs enabled a powerful elite to negotiate policies with comparative freedom. Nowadays, however, a formal policy programme is drawn up and put to parliament when a coalition is formed.³ The politics of accommodation (Lijphart, 1968) or compromise (Weil, 1970) was sustained by careful attention to bloc proportionality in the distribution of State funds and access to power. Thus bloc proportionality was observed in State aid to schools, in the provision of subsidies and in appointments to bodies such as the Council of State and the Social Economic Council, and the higher civil service.

2.4 The need to search for accommodation or consensus has given rise to an advisory/consultancy network consisting of numerous permanent advisory bodies (external advisory bodies). These have been established, mainly by law, to provide for consultation between ministries and national umbrella organisations representing private organisations. These organisations have been described as the fifth power in the state with the consultancy network as the iron ring surrounding the policy-making process. This quasi-corporate framework does not exist in Ireland. The advisory bodies may relate to specific ministries (sectoral policy) or to cross-sectoral policies, such as target group policies.

2.5 Major changes in the bloc system have taken place in recent years. The private voluntary organisations have become progressively deconfessionalised and dominated by professional staffs and this has given rise to new problems of control in the area of welfare services. Professionalisation has produced a functional emphasis, making coordination difficult. The Catholic and Socialist trade unions have federated while the Protestant unions have formed a Christian union. The three confessional parties have recently come together to form a new party, the Christian Democratic Appeal. The State has acquired by law stronger powers of control in the health area and is endeavouring to do so in other areas.

2.6 Under the Dutch system of government formation, ministries have tended to be more independent than in democracies generally. The coordinating roles of the Prime Minister and the Minister for Finance

³This has made the formation of governments more difficult.

are consequently less strong. Thus the natural tendency in all administrations to produce administrative exclusiveness and organisation-centred approaches to policy is reinforced. Besides, the need for careful balancing of political power and prestige has not always favoured the most rational division of policy responsibilities. Ministries recruit their own staff.

2.7 The administrative system within ministries is centralised. The civil service head of each ministry is the secretary-general. Under him ministries are divided into directorates headed by a director-general who usually has a number of divisions working to him. The secretary-general's office usually consists of a number of central divisions for finance, personnel, organisation, information, legal affairs. In some cases, though not all, it has a research and development or similar planning unit. There is no standard structure for planning within ministries and the function appears to be developed more in some ministries than in others. Except where execution of policy has been specifically delegated, either functionally (i.e. to executive agencies or organisations) or territorially (to local authorities)⁴ ministries are responsible for both policy development and execution. Policy is developed largely on a divisional/directorate basis.

2.8 The Dutch have never practised centralised national planning as in Ireland. Ideological differences concerning the role of the State⁵ and the openness of the Dutch economy are the usual explanations given.

The Dutch Approach to Planning

2.9 The Netherlands, accordingly, does not have a national economic or social plan in the sense of a set of policy decisions for future action that lays down the objectives being set and the means proposed to achieve them. What is referred to as an annual economic plan, published in conjunction with the budget, is essentially a detailed macro-economic forecast of short-term economic developments. There is no equivalent "social" plan. Nor is there any planning process, outside the budget, initiating policy formation in a systematic way. Structurally the key features of the Dutch arrangements are special organs, "independent" of the administrative system, for the provision of *planning* information and formal structures within the system for the *coordination* of policy formation at political and administrative level.

⁴Appendix C gives information on the local authority structure.

⁵The Christian parties have always laid stress on the principle of subsidiarity and on the idea of the proper spheres of influence of the various groups in society: government, political parties, churches etc. The liberal (conservative) bloc likewise has been opposed to State planning.

2.10 The social-political situation has produced a particular planning response. That response reflects a need for the provision of institutions for interest aggregation and functional representation (through external advisory bodies) and a need to balance these by organs for the provision of open information in a manner seen to be independent of political, administrative or other interests. Thus, the independent collection, analysis and publication of planning information takes on an important role in planning in the Dutch system. As Abert (1969) has put it in discussing economic planning

The Dutch believe that the process of political decision in the area of economic policy is sharpened significantly by at least attempting to remove as many aspects of the problem as possible from the realm of unsupported opinion and emotive rhetoric (p. 130).

2.11 Planning is officially defined as scientific policy formation, directed towards the promotion of rational and consistent policy-making. The definition emphasises the role of planning in providing knowledge and scientific analysis for use in policy formation, and considers that the policy decision itself is a political act, outside the competence of the planner.

2.12 Three types of planning are recognised: sectoral planning, facet planning and integral planning. Sectoral planning means the traditional form of planning relating to a particular service or policy sector falling within the responsibility of a particular ministry. It is task and organisation centred. Facet planning is concerned with planning of government policies from a particular facet or aspect, viz the economic, physical or social.⁶ It is horizontally orientated, requiring an inter-ministry approach to policy. Integral planning, as the name implies, is concerned with synthesising sectoral and facet planning into a coherent and consistent plan or overall policy. Under the present planning arrangements sectoral planning is the responsibility of individual ministries. Facet planning is the concern both of planning offices established to provide planning information and of policy coordination organs set up for each facet. Integration of current policy development falls to the government.

The Planning Structure

2.13 For provision of *planning information* there are three statutory offices for facet planning;⁷ the National Physical Planning Agency for the

⁶In theory facet planning implies that for every policy its implications for each facet should be examined.

⁷Established in 1941 (under a different name), in 1947 and 1973 respectively. The physical planning office reports to the Ministry of Housing and Physical Planning and the economic planning office to the Ministry for Economic Affairs (not the Ministry for Finance).

physical facet, the Central Planning Office for the economic facet and the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCPO) for the social facet. There is also the statutory Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR in Dutch),⁸ which deals with information for long-term planning. The SCPO and the WRR are effectively the offices concerned with social planning, the SCPO from the facet point of view and the WRR from the integral and long-term point of view. The SCPO is under the aegis of the Ministry for Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare, while the WRR reports to the Prime Minister's Office. The SCPO is supervised by an advisory council,⁹ representative of the administration, local authority associations, political parties and independent experts, and with an independent chairman. The Central Planning Office is connected with social policies in that it examines their economic effects.¹⁰

2.14 For *policy coordination* there are three¹¹ non-statutory permanent cabinet sub-committees: the Physical Planning Council, the Economic Council and the Welfare Council, supported by three permanent inter-departmental committees of senior civil servants: the National Physical Planning Committee, the Central Economic Committee and the Inter-Departmental Committee for Welfare Policy. For each facet one minister is designated as coordinating minister. For the social facet the coordinating minister is the Minister for Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare. In the social area there is also an independent advisory body, the Council for the Harmonisation of Welfare Policies,¹² which has responsibility for advising the government and parliament on the better harmonisation of welfare legislation and policy structures.

2.15 This structure has been superimposed on the traditional structures for advice and coordination arranged through the external advisory bodies, and inter-departmental coordinating committees (internal advisory bodies) which, like the external bodies, are very numerous. The Ministry for Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare provides an important coordinating role also since it is responsible for various aspects of social life outside work.

⁸Set up in 1972.

⁹The economic and physical planning offices also have advisory bodies, though the roles of the three advisory bodies are not the same.

¹⁰The Central Planning Office is responsible for the development and application of econometric models. The Dutch are among the leaders in this field.

¹¹The coordination structure actually extends to seven areas of policy, the other four being defence, science, European integration and government organisation and personnel.

¹²Non-statutory body at present, but it is intended to make it statutory.

2.16 The planning and coordinating structures are linked in that the SCPO provides the secretariat of the Inter-Departmental Committee and its director-general is a member of the Committee. The Welfare Council approves the social and cultural report published by the SCPO and the biennial work programme of the Office. The chairman of the Harmonisation Council is a member of the Welfare Council, although not a member of the government.

2.17 While, as mentioned already, there is no common structure for planning at ministry (sectoral) level, another contribution to planning, in the sense of scientific policy formation, has been arranged through the establishment of a special body for the promotion of policy analysis, the Committee for the Development of Policy Analysis, established in 1971.

2.18 The external advisory bodies provide for the development of planning information and coordination through participation in policy development (and to some extent in policy implementation). An important advisory and participatory role in the development of economic policy, and of social policies related to economic policy, is played by the Social Economic Council, an independent body representative of the social partners and containing independent experts.

2.19 Figure 1 shows the overall structure for planning information and policy coordination for the social facet.

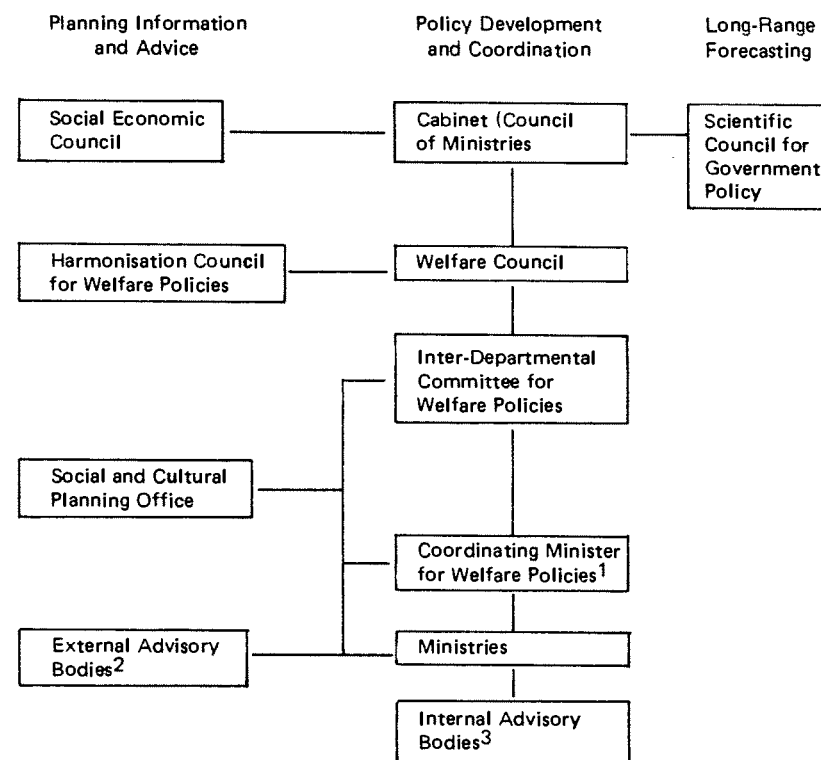
The Meaning and Scope of Social Planning

2.20 The Dutch have no formal definition of what is meant and encompassed by social policy or social planning at national level. This is not to say that there are not well understood principles which guide policies. Dutch social policy has passed well beyond the confines of the so-called residual model of welfare – minimum provisions for the few – to what might be termed the citizen's rights model, which is based on the principle that citizenship confers certain social rights. Social policy is no longer preoccupied with the financial or collective needs of the citizens but is concerned also with the opportunities for a fuller social life.

2.21 In general, the Dutch regard welfare as being synonymous with well-being. They view social policy in the positive sense of contributing to that well-being rather than merely redressing social disadvantages. The SCPO has adopted a working definition of well-being: the higher the quality of existence and the more satisfactory the relations between groups in society the higher is the level of social and cultural well-being. By quality of existence is meant the extent to which highly-prized

Figure 1

Basic Structure for Social Planning Information and Advice and for Policy Coordination of Social Policy Development in the Netherlands



¹ Minister for Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare.

² In some cases these bodies relate to cross-sectoral policy areas and hence are advisory to the ministry that coordinates the area concerned.

³ These may also report to a coordinating minister for cross-sectoral policies.

values are realised in terms of health, education, housing, etc. Such a state of well-being clearly does not depend on social policies alone but is the outcome of the total effect of economic, spatial and social policies. This requires their proper integration or attunement. The notion of well-being includes both objective and subjective components. Satisfactory relations between groups concern both social cohesion and the removal of discrimination and unfairness affecting particular groups in society.

2.22 When the organs for the planning of information and policy coordination were established the meaning of welfare or of social and cultural policy was not explicitly defined. The ambit of these bodies is regarded as implicitly defined, however, by the areas of social-cultural policy that are the responsibility of the ministers who form the Welfare Council. These ministers are: General Affairs (Prime Minister), Justice, Home Affairs, Education and Science, Finance, Housing and Physical Planning, Public Health and Environmental Hygiene, Agriculture and Fisheries, Social Affairs and Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare.¹³

The Planning Process

2.23 In looking at the Dutch planning arrangements in the light of the key issues in social planning identified in Chapter 1, it will be seen that four of the five issues are provided for, viz., the coordination of social policy development, policy analysis, the development of planning information and participation in planning. The determination of social objectives, however, presents problems. The Netherlands is a pluralist society in which substantial ideological differences between political parties have to be reconciled in practice to provide a government and maintain the system. It is obviously difficult to reach agreement on explicit social objectives, yet a broad measure of agreement regarding the general direction of social development is necessary and, paradoxically, is possible.

2.24 It is difficult to speak of a planning process¹⁴ in the Netherlands

¹³The Ministry of Justice deals with the administration of justice and detention centres; the Ministry of Home Affairs with law and order, local government and public sector organisation and the Ministry of Social Affairs with social security (insurance), income distribution and labour policies. The Ministry for Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare caters broadly for life outside work, its responsibilities ranging over cultural affairs, including the media, nature conservation, outdoor recreation, welfare services, including social work, and public assistance.

¹⁴Some Dutch commentators have quoted with approval Dror's (1965) definition of planning "as the process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future directed at achieving goals by optimal means". This definition suffers from vagueness regarding the critical phases of policy implementation and evaluation, and does not provide for renewal.

in the sense of a systematic approach to policy development and policy evaluation. The Dutch have no revolving system of policy review and renewal, apart from the annual budget and the political programme of each new government on taking office. This programme is not the product of the planning system. The work of social planning organs is not integrated, therefore, with any specific cycle of planning. An important advantage of economic "planning" is its connection with an ongoing activity, the annual budget. Social planning, on the other hand, has no such focus or renewing activity.

2.25 There is, of course, an elaborate process for the planning of individual policies. This involves extensive internal and external consultation, the processing of proposals through the policy coordination systems and in many cases through the Social Economic Council and eventually parliament. There is a practice of submitting reports to parliament to enable debate to take place before policy proposals are formally submitted. This enables parliament to debate the principles of policy. Although there are increasing efforts to integrate facet policies, which is the *raison d'être* of the planning and coordination system, social planning is still largely issue-oriented and is initiated by an individual ministry.¹⁵ These remarks are not intended to imply that policy-making is purely incremental; there are examples of strategic and innovative planning in various fields such as education, health and welfare services. The functions of the various organs of policy coordination, policy analysis, planning information and participation provide an insight into the planning process, however. These functions are now described.

Coordination of Social Policies¹⁶

The Welfare Council

2.26 The Welfare Council (like the other Cabinet Councils) is presided over by the Prime Minister. It was established in 1971.¹⁷ The ministerial membership has been given above (2.22). The Minister for Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare has the task of coordinating work

¹⁵Action at ministry level may of course produce a legal framework that promotes systematic planning at sub-national level. Examples of important innovations in this regard are given later.

¹⁶It was not practicable in the course of the study to examine the functions and approach of the internal advisory bodies (2.15). In general they seek to promote cooperation between ministries both in the development and execution of specific policies. Some of them relate to specific target groups such as the aged.

¹⁷All the cabinet councils and the inter-departmental coordination committees were set up following the report of a Committee to examine the distribution of tasks and policy formation.

within the Council. This does not entail any authority over the other ministries, however, and the minister has no formal powers. The secretariat of the Council is provided by the Prime Minister's Office.

2.27 The Council is not a formal decision-making body, but in practice decisions are reached there in most cases. One of its tasks is to unburden the cabinet (important in the Dutch government system) while a second, implicitly, is to improve policy-making through better coordination at political and official level. The Council is also an attempt to give practical expression to the concept of collective responsibility in the social field. Meetings of the Council, unlike those of the cabinet, are open to civil servants and experts from the planning offices. This allows policy proposals to be examined more freely and in more detail than is practicable at cabinet level.

The Inter-departmental Coordination Committee for Welfare Policy

2.28 This Committee was set up at the same time as the Welfare Council. Membership consists basically of a senior civil servant from each of the ministries represented on the Council, under the chairmanship of the secretary-general of the coordinating ministry. The secretary of the Council is an ex-officio member as is the head of each of the facet planning offices and the secretary of the Harmonisation Council. There is also a representative from the ministries of Economic Affairs and Defence. The SCPO provides the secretariat for the Committee. Its coordinating role does not replace traditional consultation at inter-departmental level. The Committee has been described as the "civil service terminus". Its main tasks are to achieve the greatest possible measure of agreement at official level and to ensure that clear and consistent policy proposals are presented to the Council. It can refer back for further consideration any proposals which do not meet these criteria. Meetings of the Committee are formally reported and the reports are circulated to interested parties: thus viewpoints and decisions are formally on the record. Members of the Committee are assumed to be empowered to bind their ministries administratively.

The Harmonisation Council for Welfare Policies

2.29 The Harmonisation Council was set up in 1977 following a report¹⁸ by a group of independent experts which highlighted major bottlenecks in the operation of the Dutch welfare state. These bottlenecks were attributed in part to the piecemeal and organisation-centred development of services. The group recommended that planning should be based

¹⁸The report became known as the Bottlenecks Memorandum.

no longer on the many separate services and facilities, but that instead systematic decentralised planning should proceed from three core concepts: education, care and welfare. It also recommended the creation of a council to guide the harmonisation of policies and structures. The Council is independent and has a full-time chairman and eight part-time members, all experts in the social field. Its function is to advise the government on request or on its own initiative regarding the shortcomings in the attunement of the main lines of social policy and to make proposals for better harmonisation. It is concerned with the harmonisation of inter-related policies rather than with the contents of individual policies. Its reports are published. It has a small staff with a generalist orientation. The impact of its work cannot yet be assessed.

2.30 The coordination system appears to have weaknesses. Effective coordination of policy development depends on a variety of factors, such as the existence of objectives towards which coordination can be directed, the willingness of the parties to interfere in each other's domain, the quality of the information, the time available and, most important, the stage of policy development at which the coordination takes place. In the Dutch system there is no provision for advance coordination by way of setting guidelines or deciding options for subsequent studies and consultations. This leaves the individual ministries as masters of the play. While the existence of the coordinating organs may have the effect of ensuring improved coordination in the initial stages there are limits to coordination under the present structure. The Welfare Council is engaged almost wholly in post-coordination, i.e. in considering completed proposals. While the Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee appears to engage to some extent in actual policy development (concurrent coordination) this is not yet the standard practice. The social policy coordinating system has no function in relation to the social aspects of economic or spatial policies. Hence it cannot contribute to the integration of social values into such policies. The establishment of the Harmonisation Council may be seen as a tacit admission that the existing structure was not promoting effective coordination.

Policy Analysis

2.31 Responsibility for the improvement of policy developments within ministries through policy analysis rests with the Committee for the Development of Policy Analysis, a non-statutory body attached to the Ministry of Finance, which was set up in 1971. The chairman is the Director General of the Budget and the other members comprise a representative of each Ministry and the heads of the facet planning offices. There is no other formal link with the coordination or planning struc-

ture. The Committee has a small multi-discipline professional secretariat and also uses outside experts in its work. The Committee's main tasks are to develop policy analysis techniques, to promote policy analysis in ministries, through training personnel and building up a documentation and information base, and to carry out policy analysis. It would seem, however, that so far little effective policy analysis has been done. The Committee spent much of its early years on the first two tasks, which represent less of a threat to ministries. The absence of systematic policy review would appear to inhibit the establishment of an effective linkage between analysis, planning and coordination.

Provision of Social Planning Information

2.32 The two advisory organs, the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCPO) and the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) together with the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), provide the main independent information for policy formation. Other sources of information for ministries include operational data, inputs from their own research units (most social ministries have some such unit) and from commissioned research and information provided by external advisory bodies.

The Social and Cultural Planning Office

2.33 The SCPO was set up on the recommendation of a committee established to look into the structures, including the planning system, needed for the future development of society. That committee adopted the concepts of facet planning and defined planning as scientific policy formation. Finding no provision in the planning structure for the social and cultural facet it recommended the creation of a planning office for this purpose.¹⁹ The SCPO is an independent office, but it is more closely associated with the administration than the other planning offices. It has a small (about 30) multi-disciplinary staff. The director-general is a sociologist.

2.34 The law establishing the SCPO lays down three specific tasks for the Office:

- (1) to carry out scientific investigations with the aim of achieving a coherent description of the social and cultural situation in the Netherlands and of likely developments
- (2) to contribute to a choice of policy objectives and to indicate the advantages/disadvantages of various ways of achieving them
- (3) to collect the information necessary for the evaluation of policy in areas of inter-departmental responsibility.

¹⁹The same committee recommended the setting up of a body for integral planning. The WRR is not on the lines recommended.

It is important to note that the SCPO is required to work specifically in areas where the authorities of ministries overlap, so that its focus is on integrative issues in social policy.

2.35 The main work of the SCPO heretofore has related to the first two tasks. The first task entails the production of a social report. The Dutch *Social and Cultural Report*, presently produced every two years, is the most comprehensive of its kind. The report systematises available information, points to problems and the implications of trends, comments, sometimes critically, on policy proposals or the lack of them and generally draws attention to central issues in social policy. Insofar as it brings together skillfully in one place information relevant to policy issues, and gives an independent overview, the SCPO produces a handbook of reference for parliament, the political opposition, the coordination organs, interest groups and the public at large. The Welfare Council approves the report before publication – the law specifies that a report be published. Social indicators have been developed only to a limited extent in the Report.

2.36 The second task involves undertaking special studies of particular policy issues. The special studies are not specifically related to proposed policy developments, however.²⁰ Special studies are normally published. Apart from comments on policy problems in the *Social and Cultural Report* the SCPO has done little work in the field of policy evaluation. The emphasis is on its informative role.

The Scientific Council for Government Policy

2.37 While the SCPO has to look to trends in its social report, long-term forecasting itself is the task of the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR). The basic tasks of the Council are to provide information on developments which influence society in the long-run, to identify potential problems in government policies and to coordinate research regarding the future. The Council consists of independent experts, mostly university professors, and political balance is carefully maintained. There is a multi-disciplinary staff. Liaison with the facet planning offices, the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Committee for the Development of Policy Analysis is provided by appointing the heads of these bodies as advisory members.

2.38 The Council is, in effect, a kind of "think tank". It is precluded

²⁰Appendix D indicates the type of studies carried out by the SCPO and the WRR.

from dealing with current policy or giving advice about it. The Council works on a five-year programme, coinciding with its term of office. The programme is drawn up after consultation with various interests, including the government, the political parties, organised interests and academics. Like the SCPO the Council uses the results of research by other institutions. Public institutions must provide it with the information it requires. The usual procedure in tackling a project is to form a working party, chaired by a council member with a staff member as secretary and often including outside experts.

2.39 Reports are submitted to the Prime Minister and are published after having been noted by the Council of Ministers (cabinet). Since it is important that the Council be seen to be independent, neither the Prime Minister's Office nor other Ministries are consulted on a draft of a report, but in practice the views of the facet planning offices are sought. By a resolution of parliament the government must state its position on a report within three months of publication. This does not compel the government to reach a decision within that period, it merely may indicate the procedural steps it has taken to have the report examined. But the government must inform the Council eventually of its findings with respect to a report. The influence of the Council's work is difficult to assess and there are no claims that it has had a significant influence on government policy heretofore.

The Central Bureau of Statistics

2.40 The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) is responsible for compiling and publishing practically all the statistical information pertaining to the economic, social and cultural activities of the country. The CBS is an independent agency established by law. The work of the Bureau is actively supervised by a Central Commission of Statistics which comprises representatives of the various sectors of political, economic, social and scientific life of the country, including leading members of the employers' and employees' organisations. The director-general of the Bureau, however, has sole authority and responsibility for the publication of statistical information. The CBS has statistical directorates for economic statistics and for social statistics.

Social Research

2.41 In a planning system devoted to the provision of scientific information for policy formation it might be expected that social research and planning would be coordinated to some degree, but this does not appear to be the case. There is an elaborate structure of advisory and coordinating bodies for scientific research. It would appear, however, that social scientific research in the Netherlands, as elsewhere, suffers from the

common problems of fragmentation, and general lack of direction and coordination. Efforts are being made at national and ministry level to attune research better to social priorities by specific national research programmes and by more systematic research in policy areas. Aside from research undertaken in the universities, as a part of normal academic work, and in specialised institutes, much of social research is sponsored by ministries. Most ministries now have some research capability. Social scientists²¹ are employed mainly in this way in ministries. The planning organs are an attempt to build a bridge between research and planning and policy development.

Participation

2.42 Administrative participation at central government level is achieved through the various internal advisory bodies and the policy coordination structure. Parliament operates on the committee system and this enables it to give in-depth consideration to policy issues. The practice of consulting parliament on the broad lines of policy before legislative proposals are brought forward also promotes parliamentary participation. On the other hand the consultation with interest groups sometimes leads to agreements on policy that reduce parliament's role to one of ratification of the agreements. Public participation is highly developed. Aside from the decentralised operation of much of the social services by voluntary bodies, these bodies have access to the formation of policy at government level through the various external advisory bodies (largely a creation of the 1960s). In the area of welfare services, however, participation by the clients or beneficiaries has been limited heretofore, but changes are in prospect.

The Social Economic Council

2.43 The Council was established in 1950 under an industrial reorganisation law. In addition to its advisory functions regarding economic and social policy, it also has certain executive functions in relation to the establishment and supervision of commodity and industrial boards. The Council's importance heretofore has derived from its advisory functions. The Council is financed by a levy on enterprises. It has forty-five members, divided into three groups of fifteen, one group comprising independent experts and the other two representing employers and employees, members being drawn from the various central organisations in proportion to strength.²² The independent members are mainly

²¹In this report the terms "social scientist/social science" excludes economists/economics and relates to disciplines such as sociology, political science, anthropology, psychology, etc.

²²The members are appointed by the Crown and political balance is maintained in the independent group. The chairman is usually appointed from that group.

university professors, but include the head of the Central Planning Office and the chairman of the Central Bank and a consumer representative. Each member has a designated alternate member who can attend meetings and participate in study groups on his behalf. The independent members hold the balance of power and are intended to act as a buffer between the competing economic and social interests and thus help to prevent the work of the Council deteriorating into a clash of interests. The independent members through their expertise and detachment play a vital role in promoting the search for agreement that is in the public interest. They are not accountable to the government, however.²³

2.44 The government is required by law to consult the Council, unless there are exceptional circumstances, about all important economic and social policy proposals, excluding the budget of course. The Council may also give advice to the government of its own accord. In practice the Council exercises its right to give advice of its own accord sparingly, preferring not to compete overtly with the political system. It seeks unanimity where possible since unanimous advice is usually accepted by the government. The advice of the Council is usually published. Its secretariat is small and so it has to rely a good deal for information on the administration and experts, including those co-opted to working parties. Concerning social policy the Council confines its activities to policy areas that closely impinge on economic policy, such as social protection (minimum wage policy, social security, rent, consumer law), income distribution, labour policy, housing and educational policy as it relates to the economic system. Significantly, the head of the SCPO is not a member of the Council.

2.45 In the past the Council was a most influential advisory body in the development of economic policy and certain social policies. Lijphart (1968) considered that the Council represented the pinnacle of the institutionalisation of the accommodation process and had a political significance ranking almost with that of the cabinet and parliament. It would appear, however, that the societal changes during the 1970s may have weakened the Council's role and although it remains an influential body, Lijphart's claim would probably be considered exaggerated now.

Openness

2.46 Openness is perhaps one of the striking features of the Dutch social

²³ "They are expected to serve as independent experts contributing their individual views, experience and expertise as men of affairs to the deliberations of the Council" (Singh (1972) (p. 41)).

planning and advisory arrangements. It is a product of the special circumstances of Dutch society. Thus all reports of the Social and Cultural Planning Office, of the Scientific Council for Government Policy and of the Social Economic Council are normally published. Openness, at least in theory, is a feature of Dutch government. Thus the government and ministers are under a general obligation to publish policy proposals for discussion before they are submitted to parliament. The advice to ministers of the external advisory bodies is required to be published, except where civil servants serve on the bodies. However, as they do in most cases the effect of the rule is reduced. An important reason for the publication of "planning information" is the fear of parliament that the planning organs would strengthen the government at its expense, since exclusive knowledge reinforces power. Another was the fear that "scientific" information would lead to hidden ideological or professional bias in advice on policy. Publication was seen as a protection against both dangers.

Decentralisation of Planning

2.47 The planning role of the provinces²⁴ is likely to grow as a result of proposals to restructure local government administration. The provinces will have a coordinating role between local and national planning. Two specific measures, if they become law, will strengthen the planning function itself. One proposal will set up a planning framework for the whole field of health care through which all health services will be planned interdependently at provincial and local level under a system of development plans. General policy and standards only would be determined at national level. The other measure entails the introduction of decentralised planning in the area of the non-financial welfare services. These would be planned at municipal level by means of an annual plan set in the context of a four-year outline plan. The plans would be coordinated at central level to determine the demand on resources. The government would not seek to impose uniform standards of service or provisions. Government subsidies of services would be replaced by a block grant for a set of services. The municipalities would decide its detailed allocation between services.²⁵

Problems in Social Planning

2.48 The Dutch structures for planning information and policy coordination in the social field may be seen as an accommodation to political and institutional problems in policy planning, which are discussed

²⁴ See Appendix C.

²⁵ The proposed legislation is politically sensitive and it remains to be seen if it will be passed.

further in Chapter 5. The tasks of the planning and forecasting offices are designed to provide improved planning information and insights from social scientists for policy-making. Some of the problems encountered in social planning in the Netherlands are clearly peculiar to that society. The lack of a national plan and of explicit social objectives, a consequence of political attitudes and circumstances, removes a steering mechanism for social planning. The natural tendency is towards negotiated policies, developed on an incremental basis.

2.49 The institutional arrangements for the coordination of policies are a response to problems in policy coordination. The weaknesses in the arrangements have been discussed above (2.30). As regards the planning arrangements, planning conceived as an information system outside the administration obviously runs the risk of isolation from the policy-making process, unless a strong linkage is forged. Not only must the planning organ be competent to provide relevant information but the policy-making organs must be willing to use it. But such willingness creates a measure of dependence and involves a surrender of some power. It is not surprising, therefore, that the SCPO appears to have difficulty in getting access to actual policy-making, but it may be incorrect to ascribe this solely to bureaucratic politics. An organisation such as the SCPO cannot contribute policy advice or evaluation in all policy areas. Some priorities appropriate to its expertise and to the needs of key policy developments are necessary. Such matching is difficult, however, in the absence of a formal planning or policy renewal process. The existence of the WRR is a recognition of the need to seek out the right questions in relation to policy development. The Dutch have tried to bring social science to the aid of politics through the inter-disciplinary approaches of the SCPO and the WRR, and through them, to bridge the gap between policy and research. However, the fact that neither organ has been able to influence policy strongly so far makes the effect of the scientific input unclear. The processing of general social research results by the planning organs may help bring social scientific research closer to policy-making than would occur if the organs did not exist. But there is an unanswered question as to whether effective input to policy is possible from outside the administration. The importance of consensus is reflected in the power of the Social Economic Council in the past. With the decline of consensus, the power of the Council has also declined.

2.50 Planning in the Netherlands is perhaps even more difficult than usual. The Dutch institutional arrangements for improving social policy development amount to a comprehensive assault on the problems of modern government. There seem to be critical weaknesses, however.

The facet approach in practice allows the economic and physical sectors to select their own objectives. The system relies on the political system to provide an overall unity of purpose but the nature of the political system makes that extremely difficult. Independent planning information that is not produced in response to specific policy demands depends a great deal on political timing for its influence. The Dutch planning system is nonetheless an ambitious attempt to reconcile planning and politics.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL PLANNING IN NORWAY

Introduction

3.1 Norway is one of the richest countries per capita in the world. Its resources in oil and natural gas are likely to maintain or enhance its position for the remainder of the century. In the 19th century, it was, like Ireland, predominantly an agricultural society and suffered from heavy emigration in the second half of the century. Industrialisation came late but through the development of industries and services Norway succeeded in eliminating involuntary emigration and achieving full employment. Today less than 7% of the population is engaged in farming and the total engaged in farming, forestry and fishing is only 9%.

3.2 In Norway strong central policies aimed at achieving a desirable level of social equality through State action co-exist with traditions of strong local government. A strong commitment to planning is sustained as much by informal networks as by formal planning structures. Strong State direction of economic and social development has proved to be not incompatible with private ownership and management of the productive sector.

3.3 The homogeneous nature of the Norwegian society is reflected in the absence of significant ethnic or religious minorities (95% of the population belongs nominally to the Lutheran State Church). The absence of historical elites has also promoted social cohesion, which has been reinforced by public policies and social attitudes.

3.4 Polarisation on class lines has been modified by a number of cross-cutting cleavages, due in part to historical factors and in part to the socio-cultural situation. At present (1980) there are six parties¹ repre-

¹ Labour (social democrat) party, the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the Centre (formerly Agrarian or Farmer's) Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Christian Democratic Party. The first two are the largest at present. The Labour Party is not a purely class party (Rokkan (1967)), while the Conservative Party is well to the left of similar European parties (Torgerson (1974)).

sented in the Storting (parliament). The Labour Party came to power in 1935 and remained in office uninterruptedly (apart from the war and a short break) until 1965. It was out of office from 1965 to 1971, being replaced by a coalition of the remaining parties. Since 1978 it has governed as a minority party. Traditionally the only alternative to a Labour, or a Labour dominated, government has been a coalition of the remaining parties.

3.5 Pluralism was effectively maintained by a balancing of interests outside the purely political field by what Rokkan (1966) calls "corporate pluralism". A feature of Norway is the existence of a variety of national organisations for interest group representation. These have direct access to the administrative and political system through formal consultancy/ advisory relationships. Rokkan suggests that "votes count in the choice of governing personnel" but "the crucial decisions on economic policy are rarely taken in the parties or in parliament; the central area is the bargaining table where the government authorities meet directly with trade union leaders, the representatives of the farmers, the smallholders and fishermen, and the delegates of the employers' association. These yearly rounds of negotiation have in fact come to mean more in the lives of the rank and file citizens than the formal elections. . . . Decisions are not made through the counting of heads, but through complex consideration of short-term or long-term advantages in alternative lines of compromise". (p. 107) These remarks are considered still relevant today despite changes in political circumstances. Paradoxically the procedure has not inhibited effective planning.

3.6 In Norway the core of a ministry concentrates on policy development, as well as on financial, legislative, and political regulation of the policy area. Hence ministries have only small staffs. The practice is to decentralise, either functionally or territorially, the actual administration or operation of policies. Functional decentralisation is achieved by the creation of directorates,² councils or independent organs under ministries to carry out policies.³ The subordinate agencies act as advisors to the ministries in the process of policy formation. Organisationally ministries are centralised under a secretary-general, but there is also an Under-Secretary of State (a political appointee) who takes an active part in coordinating the work of the ministry from a political

² There are exceptions. The health directorate in the Ministry of Social Affairs is both the policy-making unit and the executive agency for the health service, but this arrangement is viewed with disfavour.

³ The structure resembles the Aireacht/Executive agency structure proposed in PSORG Report, but the minister remains answerable to parliament for the executive area.

point of view. Ministries are divided into mainly functional departments. Ministries recruit their own staff.

3.7 Territorial decentralisation is achieved through entrusting major public tasks of national importance to the local authorities whose structure is outlined in Appendix 3. Apart from responsibility for local services, the local authorities are responsible also for providing first and second level education, the health services, and social welfare services (apart from social insurance benefits). They also run economic services such as electricity and public transport. The social insurance service is run by a national institution. In contrast to the Netherlands, the role and influence of the voluntary sector is limited. The role of the local authorities is thus much wider and their financial position is far stronger than in Ireland. The local authorities are financed by taxation and government grants. They are entitled to a share in the income tax receipts from their areas – up to 15% for the municipalities and 7% for the counties. This is their main source of finance. The government operates a tax equalisation system and also gives direct grants for various services.

3.8 A number of features of Norwegian society were decisive in determining the direction of economic and social policies and the approach to planning. First, the homogeneity of the society was favourable to the development of a broad consensus on the objectives of national policy, although the consensus did not emerge until the Second World War. Second, the primacy of politics, established through historical processes, was maintained through the parliamentary, administrative and planning systems. The central planning apparatus was established within the administrative system. Planning and policy decisions were seen less as technical issues than as political decisions. The long period of social democratic government enabled continuity of economic and social policies to be maintained. Third, the monopoly of political power was counter-balanced by a strong corporate structure of economic and social interests that ensured them a share in the consensus building. Fourth, the administrative structure with its small policy-making elite fostered a spirit of cooperation in the pursuit of national objectives. Fifth, as Bergh (1977) has noted, the opening up of the positions of power in ministries to economists promoted harmony between economists and politicians, especially since economists also entered some central political positions. The technical competence of the economic planners and model builders gave strength to economic planning and credibility to the planning process. It also facilitated the bargaining between economic interests and between them and the government by providing relevant and reliable information. This strengthened the consensual process. Social attitudes, which facilitate political action, have

been a crucial factor in favouring planned social development in Norway. Such attitudes may be more important ultimately than structures and techniques. This is not to suggest that there are no problems in social planning in Norway.

The Norwegian Approach to Planning

3.9 Economic and social development in Norway has been steered since 1948 by a regular series of plans of long-term programmes coinciding with the life span (four years) of each parliament. Constituting in effect the election programme of the government in power the programmes are overtly political and hence dovetail planning and politics. The programme is published in the Spring of the election year (elections are held in the Autumn). If the outgoing government loses the election, the new government may revise the programme.

3.10 The Norwegian approach to planning has three clear features. The first feature is the firm view that socio-economic planning is the government's responsibility. This view determined that the central planning unit would be located within the administration. Until recently the central planning unit, the Secretariat for Long-Term Planning, was located in the Ministry of Finance. At present (1980) the Secretariat is a separate Ministry, but this arrangement may be temporary.

3.11 The second feature has been the strategic emphasis in Norwegian planning.⁴ As an OECD report (1976b) remarks: "Norwegians wish to understand and control the future, not to submit to the pressure of events or to let priorities be determined by pressures". The strategic role of the plan has increased according as the old-style indicative, sectorally oriented, planning has declined in the face of increasing uncertainty. The government's plan (1978-1981) is essentially a strategic plan rather than a detailed programme.

3.12 The third feature is that social development has always been central to economic planning, although the emphasis between the economic and social use of resources naturally has varied in accordance with the needs of development strategy. Recent long-term programmes have placed much greater emphasis on the social aspects of development and on social values. In part, this is a reflection of the level of economic development attained, but it marks also the influence of

⁴An excellent example of the strategic thrust of Norwegian planning was a report presented to parliament in 1974, titled *Petroleum Industry in Norwegian Society* (Parliamentary Report No. 25 (1973-'74) which examined the economic and social consequences for Norwegian society of the development of the new resources.

social scientists who have been introduced into the administration and planning units over the past decade.

The Planning Structure

3.13 Public planning in Norway takes place at three levels: national, county⁵ and municipal. As far as social planning is concerned the main interest centres on national planning and municipal planning. While each county is required by law to prepare and publish a periodic plan for the economic and social development of the county, the social content of the county plans has been limited. County plans are not specifically linked to the national plan. Until recently the counties were weak politically and administratively, but this has changed and planning at county level seems likely to increase in importance.

National Plans

3.14 National plans fall into three main categories: the government's long-term programme, the annual budget/economic plan and reports to parliament outlining sectoral plans or more general plans. "The role of the long-term programme is to provide the basis for guiding the main features of development in society. The programme outlines the principal objectives of the government's policy. It shall contribute to a better overall picture of tasks in various fields and to clarify the options and limitations".⁶ Although the programme is presented to parliament, it is not constitutionally binding but it commits the government politically. Responsibility for coordinating the preparation of the programme rests with the Secretariat for Long-Term Planning. The Secretariat has a social affairs division, headed by a sociologist, which has an influential role in preparing the programme. The budget is published in a multi-annual form covering a four-year period. The multi-annual fiscal budget is integrated into the long-term programme and thus provides an indication of the programme's demand on resources. Apart from this linkage, it would appear that the annual budget and economic plan are only loosely related to the long-term programme. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for both the budget and the annual economic plan. There is a standing inter-ministry committee (National Budget Committee) for the preparation of the budget and also a ministerial committee (Government Economic Committee).

3.15 As regards policy development generally the following points might be noted. First, most ministries, including most of the social

⁵The Norwegian county is a much larger geographical unit than the Irish county.

⁶*Long-Term Programme 1977-1981*, para 1.1.6.

ministries, have central planning or research and development units. Important departments within ministries often have planning units as well. Many of these units now have social scientists. Second, there is no common institutional provision at sub-cabinet or civil service level for the *co-ordination* of policy formation apart from the general co-ordinating role of the Ministry of Finance. Informal networks are very important in Norway. Third, there is the consultation system with interest groups, already mentioned, which takes various forms. Fourth, experimentation is an important part of the policy development process in Norway. Legislation permits departures from standard arrangements as part of a controlled experiment in the fields of education, health and social welfare services. Fifth, the importance of the long-term programme to the development of policy appears to depend on the ministry concerned. It should not be concluded from this, however, that the programme is not taken seriously by the ministries.

3.16 The Central Bureau of Statistics plays an important role in planning. It is responsible for the development of macro-economic models and other models, such as taxation and labour-market models, used in economic and social planning. There is free movement of staff between the Bureau and the Secretariat for Long-Term Planning.

3.17 There is no specific institutional provision for policy analysis, but the Ministry of Finance has general responsibility for its development and promotion.

3.18 Participation in policy development is arranged through advisory councils and similar bodies attached to ministries. The consultation process at government level is largely informal since there is no Economic and Social Council or equivalent body. The interest groups have not favoured the setting up of a council. There is, however, a fairly formal structure for income settlements and an incomes policy of some kind has been long a feature of Norwegian economic and social policy. A note on these arrangements is given in Appendix E.

Municipal Plans

3.19 Municipal planning falls into two broad categories: physical planning and social services planning. All plans are published. In the social policy area, each municipality has a series of boards, e.g. an Educational Board, a Health Board, a Social Service Board, formed from members of the municipal council in accordance with the political strength of the parties. These boards have primary responsibility for developing the specific services. Health services, outside institutions, and non-financial welfare services are planned under a new system introduced in

the last two years under which each municipality has to develop a four-year plan and budget for these services in accordance with general planning guidelines specified by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The planning system is linked to a reform of the financing arrangements of local authorities, under which separate transfers by the State to supplement tax revenue are being replaced by a block grant. The general aim of the development is to increase the decision-making role of the municipalities in determining the level and mix of services in accordance with local needs. This aim follows from a general goal of the 1978-1981 long-term programme: "society should be based on a decentralised decision-making system". The reform aims at making planning a routine part of management at local level. It is also an instrument of expenditure control.

Meaning and Scope of Social Planning

3.20 The Norwegians have no formal concept of social planning; social development covers the whole of social life. Economic planning has always focussed on social goals. The emphasis on the economic aspects reflected a basic concern with the promotion of economic security for the people and the recognition that economic success automatically satisfied many social goals. Three fundamental and related social objectives have been pursued since the war: full employment,⁷ greater equality in incomes and comprehensive social security on universalist principles. Economic growth was needed to achieve these objectives; it was not an end in itself. The Norwegians realised that without economic growth equalisation in itself would do little to improve the lot of the less well-off, while without a positive policy on equalisation growth would not promote social cohesion.

3.21 A conscious effort was made, therefore, to make equalisation an accepted policy.⁸ An acceptable social profile in income distribution has been a central objective of policy, heretofore, and the main policy instruments have been high progressive taxation and transfer payments, plus income subsidies in the case of farmers and fishermen. The result is that post-tax income distribution in Norway is less unequal than in many economically advanced societies. (Sawyer (1976)).

⁷This is a requirement of the constitution. Article 110 states that it is incumbent on the authorities of the State to create conditions which make it possible for every person who is able to work to earn his living by his work. The Labour Directorate under the Ministry of Local Government and Labour is responsible for the operation of manpower policy and of the unemployment insurance scheme. Among other things it is required to arrange with the public authorities for programmes of public works to maintain employment in periods of unemployment.

⁸A specific department in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Public Administration has responsibility for distribution policy.

3.22 The current long-term programme (1978-1981) is more of a social programme than an economic programme and it marks some significant changes in the understanding of *social objectives*. The starting point of the programme is the goal of "a qualitatively better society" which, the government considered, required particular emphasis on the following strategic issues:

- security and good living conditions
- greater solidarity and equality
- strengthening the family and the local community
- employment for everyone
- a better working environment
- sound management of natural resources and the environment
- freedom, democracy and legal protection
- international solidarity.

3.23 Each of these strategic issues is analysed in a separate chapter of the programme. Policy guidelines in pursuit of the strategies are laid down. It is not possible to detail the guidelines nor would it serve much purpose to do so without examining how far they have been observed in practice. In regards to equalisation, however, greater solidarity and equality involved a shift from concern with equalising post-tax incomes to reducing disparities in pre-tax incomes. There was also a shift from a concern with equalising income distribution to achieving greater equality in overall living conditions. The latter gives rise to new informational needs. The influence of the social scientists is reflected in the concern with the family, the local community and the prevention of social problems arising either from dislocations caused by economic development or the unintended effects of social policies.

The Planning Process

3.24 The planning process for the preparation of the long-term programme is a co-operative effort between the central planning unit, the ministries and the Central Bureau of Statistics. Traditionally the Ministry of Finance has had a strong influence on the plan.

3.25 The procedure for the preparation of the long-term programme remains fairly informal, reflecting the co-operation in Norwegian administration. Work on its preparation commences about half-way through the current programme and consists of three main phases, which may be described as the issue phase, the analysis phase and the drafting phase. The preparation of the programme is overseen by a Committee of Under-Secretaries, emphasising its political nature. The issue phase is a critical one in that it determines largely the orientation of the pro-

gramme. The analysis phase consists of a study in depth of the various issues accepted for study. There is no standard procedure: some issues may be studied by the planning unit itself, inter-ministry or interdisciplinary study groups may be formed or outside experts may be employed to prepare a report. In the drafting phase the planning unit prepares a structure for the programme for political approval. The various ministries then prepare drafts of chapters or sections of chapters taking into account the various studies and the comments made on them. The participation of the ministries is designed to heighten their commitment to the programme. The planning unit remains responsible for synthesising the programme, assessing its economic feasibility and preparing the final draft for government approval.

3.26 The planning unit does not engage in consultations with organised interests in preparing the programme. Such consultations as take place occur at the level of the individual ministries and are not formally structured. The programme is published and presented to parliament following approval by the government. Parliament debates the programme but cannot alter it, since it is in effect the government's electoral programme rather than a parliamentary programme. The opposition prepares a critical commentary on the programme, which may form the basis of its revised programme if it wins the election. There is no specific provision for review of the programme during its life nor is there any system of annual reports on progress, apart from the budget and the annual economic programme. However, if circumstances change significantly the plan may be amended. Thus, the 1978-1981 programme was revised when international and domestic circumstances made a change in direction necessary.

3.27 In regard to the development of social policy the initiative lies with the individual ministries. There is extensive consultation through formal advisory bodies and otherwise. Reports⁹ to parliament outlining issues and policy options are an integral part of the consultative process on policy development. Such reports are usually considered first by the relevant parliamentary committee¹⁰ and subsequently in a plenary session of parliament. While the influence of the government party(ies) is obviously important, committees usually strive for as

⁹Such reports may serve a broader planning purpose and constitute strategic planning documents in themselves, e.g. the report on the petroleum industry. Another example was a report titled *Natural Resources and Economic Development*. (Parliamentary Report No. 25 (1973-74)). Both reports addressed basic questions in long-term planning, regarding the balancing of economic growth, welfare and conservation.

¹⁰The parliamentary committees relate to policy areas of ministries.

much agreement as possible, thus contributing to the building of consensus. The process is often cyclic in that the parliament, in the course of its consideration of the budget or otherwise, may request the preparation of a report on a policy issue. The views of parliament on such reports are taken into account in forming definitive proposals for legislation. Parliament can be said to share in the *preparation* of policy proposals, therefore.

Co-ordination of Social Policies

3.28 The long-term programme does not work out details of policy but the programme promotes the concept of the inter-relationships of policies and the examination of issues and problems on a cross-sectoral basis. It will be clear from the social themes cited above that the current programme has attempted such an integrated approach. This general approach was quite deliberate and reflected again the influence of the social scientists. In the introduction of the long-term programme (1978-1981) it is stated that "special emphasis has been placed on fields where the objectives and measures cross over traditional sectoral limits, so that the programme can contribute to placing individual cases and sectoral plans in a broader context". One of the problems with this approach is that it can result in a high level of generality in the analysis. This can reduce the identification of the policy sectors with the programme, and creates a need to ensure that subsequent policies follow the logic of the analysis. It is not clear that the arrangements in Norway ensure this. Apart from the long-term programme, policy co-ordination is pursued mainly through the ordinary administrative channels.

Policy Analysis

3.29 While policy analysis and programme evaluation are seen as important to the planning process there is no formal structure or programme for this work at present. The Budget Development Division of the Ministry of Finance has general responsibility for improving budgetary and policy evaluation processes. It has prepared a manual on policy analysis for ministries, but the response in action terms seems to have been limited.

Provision of Social Planning Information

3.30 In connection with the provision of social information in Norway it is necessary to consider the roles of the Central Bureau of Statistics, social reporting, social research and social scientists.

The Central Bureau of Statistics

3.31 The collection, analysis and publication of all economic and social

statistics produced by the government system is centralised effectively in the Central Bureau of Statistics. The Bureau also oversees statistical enquiries undertaken by ministries. Administratively the Bureau is independent, but is attached to the Ministry of Finance for budgetary purposes. It is headed by a director and there is at present no board of management or advisory board. Organisationally it has three main operational departments: production, statistics and research. The research department concentrates on economic research: it is responsible for the national accounts and for the development and application of the econometric and other models. The Bureau carries out research on taxation and publishes an annual analysis of taxation. There is a unit for socio-demographic research, which, inter alia, prepares a type of social report. The Bureau employs a number of sociologists.

Social Report

3.32 A social report, called *Social Survey*, is published every three years. The report attempts to give a picture of the welfare situation and of the distribution of well-being in the population. It consists of tables of statistics and a linking commentary. The analytical content is limited and, unlike the Dutch report, government policy is not discussed. Outside social research is not drawn on to any extent. The report covers conventional social policy areas. An attempt is made to give some coherence to the distribution of well-being by including a table of social indicators. The indicators are purely numerical. Although they give some idea of the comparative status of groups, statistical relationships are not explored. There is no specific link-up at present between the social report and the long-term programme.

*Social Research*¹¹

3.33 Four features of social research in Norway might be noted. First, the organisation of social research is kept separate from economic research. Second, contract research is considerable. Third, social research always has had a strong practical orientation. "In Norway there has been a strong desire to keep research activities as close as possible to demanders and users" (OECD, (1976b)). This practical approach has fostered a positive support for research by the authorities. Fourth, government ministries are always strongly represented on research councils and on boards of official research organs.

3.34 Co-ordination of research is the responsibility of research councils. Social research comes under the aegis of the Norwegian Research

¹¹ Social research in Norway is well described in an OECD (1976) report, although there have been some changes meantime.

Council for Science and Humanities (NAVF). Until recently its social science sub-council was responsible for promoting social research, but there was little direct connection between the research it funded and planning. Planning-related research fell to the ministries to sponsor. Within the last two years a new Council, the Research Council for Societal Planning, has been set up under NAVF whose task is to promote and co-ordinate social research for public planning and policy-making. The new Council comprises representatives of ministries, local authorities, the research community and social organisations. It has developed a number of thematic research programmes, which it makes operational by awarding research contracts itself or influencing ministry contracts.

Official Research Institutes

3.35 The two main official research institutes connected with social planning are the Norwegian Institute for Applied Research (INAS) and the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR). NIBR is concerned mainly with research for physical and regional planning, but it also conducts social research and experiments in relation to planning at local level.

3.36 INAS was set up in 1968 with the broad task of providing additional knowledge about social processes, structures and changes in Norwegian society as a basis for political and administrative decisions affecting the level of living and welfare of the population. The director is a sociologist. It is funded partly by a government grant and partly by research contracts from ministries. Apart from research it is engaged in the development of a routinised information system to describe the level and distribution of living conditions. It also has the task of developing models to analyse the relationship between public policies and living conditions.

Social Scientists and Planning

3.37 One of the most significant developments in social planning in Norway in the past decade has been the recruitment by ministries of social scientists (sociologists and political scientists mainly). The social scientists have brought a new dimension of thinking to the development of the long-term programme, in particular by bringing about an understanding of the importance of social relationships in national planning. On the one hand, the need to integrate social values into economic planning has received an emphasis, while on the other the need to question the role of traditional social policy responses to social problems has been brought to the fore.

Participation and Openness in Planning

3.38 Norway is generally regarded as practising an open and consultative form of government at national level, but the preparation of the national plan is mainly a closed affair. The participation of socio-economic and professional interest groups in the policy-making process through advisory councils is well established. Ministries consult with such organs in the preparation of the long-term programme. Interest groups also have the possibility of influencing parliamentary committees when they are considering government proposals. In White Papers and in reports to parliament the government usually gives the views of the bodies consulted. The public has a general right of access to official documents in Norway and the system of reports to parliament ensures broad access to policy proposals. All plans, national, county and municipal are published. There seems to be no strong emphasis on the need to involve clients or the private citizen in the planning process at local level. Various factors may account for this, such as the importance of the political process, the direct operation of most social services by the public authorities, and the smallness of most municipalities, which means that the services are run directly by elected representatives.

Problems in Social Planning

3.39 The political and institutional problems in social planning would appear to be less in Norway than elsewhere. A broad consensus exists on social values and on social goals. The planning process is accepted across the political spectrum and is integrated with the political cycle. The strategic focus is strong. While policies may often evolve by marginal changes, major innovation is facilitated by the planning process. Incremental changes are set in the context of long-range perspectives. At the institutional level the ministry structure and the strength of informal networks has fostered the co-operative spirit in policy development. However, the problem of the co-ordinating social policy was frequently mentioned in discussions and sectoral divisions at central level are also reflected at local level.

3.40 In Norway, as elsewhere, provision of social planning information remains a problem. The linkage of social research to the planning process has heretofore been limited. The new research council may help in this connection. The use of social scientists in the central planning unit and in the ministries opens up the possibility of better use and direction of social research for planning. It means also that there is now a possibility of bringing understandings of social relationships to bear on planning and policy at the level of decision-making. The quality of the economic information appears to be high, but the econometric models, here as elsewhere, have a limited capability for evaluating the economic

effects of social policies. The decentralisation of planning has created information problems. The central department has suffered a loss of information, while the municipalities lack sufficient disaggregated social data.

3.41 National planning for social development is well developed in Norway. Political and social attitudes and the administrative structure have been favourable to the planning. Social planning, always central to national planning in Norway, has been extended to focus on the quality of life. The political role of the plan ensures that planning and politics are effectively reconciled in the planning system.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL PLANNING IN FRANCE

Introduction

4.1 French society is more fragmented politically and socially than Irish society. It is strongly polarised. The main lines of political alignment are the centre-right coalition in power (1980)¹ — mainly Gaullists and centrists, and the left, socialists and communists. Socially France is characterised by the existence of a variety of large national organisations representative of various interests. These include the employers, the self-employed, farmers and the trade unions, and many other sectional interests. The trade unions are divided into five main groups and there is no unifying organ to weld them together as a negotiating or representative group.

4.2 There has been considerable stress on the unity of the State and hence on the unity of the public service in France. The public service, i.e. central and local government, public institutions and public corporations, is conceived as a unit. The administrative system is characterised by centralised policy-making and decentralised execution, subject to tight control and supervision from the centre.² The tradition of government intervention is strong in France reflecting the responsibility of the state for the economic and social welfare of the community. "The function of the French state was never simply to provide law and order; it was always considered responsible for the economic and social welfare of the community" (Ridley et al (1964)). Appendix C contains details of the administrative system in the départements and the communes (municipalities).

4.3 French ministries are divided on vertical lines and in most ministries

¹Since this study was completed there has been a change of government, with the left coming to power for the first time in over twenty years.

²The new government, however, has proposed major changes in relation to decentralisation.

the director of a division is answerable directly to his minister with no intervening control. Partly as a result ministers have strong personal *cabinets* staffed by political aides and politically reliable civil service experts. Besides looking after the Minister's political interests these cabinets coordinate the work of the Ministry and act as a brains trust at the minister's disposal. The Prime Minister's and the President's cabinets are large and very important, acting as innovating and counter-vailing influences on the other ministries. The structure makes coherent planning difficult in ministries.

4.4 The top French civil service is dominated by the experts of the grand corps: the administrative corps in the administrative departments and the technical corps (technicians) in the technical departments. Besides holding down most of the top posts in the ministries, members of the corps also play leading roles in ministerial cabinets, in public corporations and in private business. They form an important and pervasive network at the top of French management.

4.5 Other notable features of the administrative structure include advisory organs which afford interest groups access to the policy-making process, and the creation of mission-oriented organs attached to ministries. These organs are independent of the civil service. The most famous of them is the National Planning Commission (Commissariat Général du Plan).

4.6 France has developed an extensive welfare state. The right to an "appropriate means of existence" is guaranteed to all citizens by the constitution. Underlying this right is the concept of national solidarity which is important in France. "Solidarity is an egalitarian unifying concept, blurring — sometimes desperately — social division and distinctions and emphasising instead the unity of the nation. It stresses the sharing rather than the transferring aspects of social protection" (Cohen et al (1975)). Protection rather than redistribution has been the keynote of social policy. A feature of the complex social security system, is the existence of separate funds for the different social security services managed jointly by employers and employees. There is a complex advisory and administrative structure for the services. Social assistance is the responsibility of the communes and covers important preventative and rehabilitatory functions besides providing monetary assistance, which has been relatively unimportant. Social welfare services are also the responsibility of the communes.

4.7 Under the Fifth Republic the roles of the President and Prime Minister and of the executive generally have been strengthened at the

expense of parliament. The presidential term of office, seven years, provides for a continuity in government that is unique in modern democracies, but is being subjected to increasing criticism. In relation to the planning system it means that the government, through the President, has the opportunity of presiding over the implementation of one full plan at least.

The French Approach to Social Planning

4.8 A formal centralised planning system for national development has been in operation in France since World War II, and the Plan has become an established part of the process of government. The French planning system has no parallel in western democracies. It has married technique to dialogue with the aim of producing a coherent and consensual approach to national economic and social development. The key features — established by law — are a national planning organisation, the National Planning Commission,³ a participative planning process and a medium-term national Plan, currently of five year's duration.

4.9 The French structure for economic and social planning was an effort to organise the modernisation of France, combining traditional features of French government with a boldly innovative approach. Its two key features, the independence of the planning organ and dialogue were intended to remove two of the road blocks to planning: administrative rigidity and social polarisation. The process of dialogue created a need for relevant information which it was to be a critical function of the planning organ to organise and provide. Planning was an extension of State intervention, in a new form and for new purposes. The interventionist tradition has had an important influence on the sense of mission of French public servants, for which the Plan became a new means of expression.

4.10 The Plan was seen as an instrument of education, order and progress (Options Report on Fifth Plan, 1966-1970).⁴ It was designed to provide coherence and consistency in national policies. This created another crucial role for the planners. "The planners are men of coherence" (Massé (1963)). To the planners fell the task of synthesis. Planning through dialogue may be seen also as an attempt to give a new form to the idea of national solidarity, and to promote the idea of national partnership or association between capital and labour, central to Gaullism.

³The National Planning Commission used to report to the Prime Minister. The new government has established a Ministry of Planning and Regional Development. The Commission now reports to the Minister in charge.

⁴The nature of the "Options Report" is described below (4.44).

4.11 In the Sixth Plan (1971-1975), which marked a turning point in social planning, the need for a plan and its social purpose were set out in the following terms:

"... it is necessary more than ever to establish a periodic diagnosis of the economic and social situation of the country, to analyse the problems that confront it, to identify the policies and the actions capable of resolving them, and, more generally, to provide a frame of reference for public policy and for the actions of all the French" (p. 9) and

"... to ensure to France the mastery of its destiny, to reinforce democracy in our society and to respond to the wish of the French to live better, such are the permanent objectives of our economic and social development" (p. 11).

4.12 The provision of information, which in the economic context has been characterised as national (now global) market research, has been a crucial element in the dialogue process, especially for the trade unions who are less well equipped than the employers to produce information. The pursuit of coherence meant that in the heyday of the Plan its detailed target forecasts broken down into economic sectors represented an equilibrium. No changes could be made that endangered the equilibrium. An important consequence, which still remains broadly true, was that the Plan could only be effectively controlled at the beginning of its preparation in the determination of the major hypotheses underlying it⁵ (Bauchet (1966)).

4.13 The hope that the dialogue would lead to consensus and to the "concerted" economy in which decisions are taken collectively, was disappointed. It became clear that the Plan was to be the government's decision ultimately. Its political nature was indeed reinforced as it became more social. It was not a coincidence that the development of the social aspect of the plan resulted in parliament being brought into the planning process.

4.14 French planning practice has evolved pragmatically becoming more comprehensive as computerised techniques in macro-economic planning developed. Apart from the First Plan (1948-52), the Plans have remained non-compulsory or "indicative". Although the social content of the Plan has progressively increased, the Plan has remained

⁵"Dans la détermination des grandes hypothèses sur qu'il répose" (p. 143).

fundamentally an economic plan. By "fundamentally" is meant that the logic of the prevailing political/economic philosophy has always been followed in determining the economic objectives of the Plan. The policy choices have never been subordinated to social objectives. The underlying assumption has been that the economic strength of France, which has come to be seen as depending on industrial competitiveness in a world market, is the guarantor of the political power of France. It is assumed that economic strength is consistent also with maximum social progress in the long run. The economic strategy of succeeding plans was aimed at adapting French industry to fulfil this role and, as a corollary, at rehabilitating the market system, even in the social policy area, e.g. housing.

4.15 The Seventh Plan (1975-1980) marked a major change in the conception of the Plan. The idea of setting detailed consistent targets for development was abandoned as unrealistic in the new conditions of uncertainty. For this reason and also because of the need to approach new social demands in a longer term perspective, a new approach was adopted.

The Seventh Plan will have a strategic character; rather than a collection of forecasts it will be a coherent system of actions; it will indicate in a clear manner the main orientations that will firmly guide our policy; it will fix objectives of our development for the next five years and will formulate, in relation to foreseeable risks, the principles which will inspire our actions; finally, it will select those actions which seem decisive for the achievement of objectives and whose implementation must be assured come what may.⁶

The new approach was continued in the draft Eighth Plan (1981-1985).⁷

4.16 The instrumental function of the French plan is somewhat elusive. The connection between the Plan and public policy development, including the budget, not to speak of private market decisions, has always been imprecise and controversial. Since social planning depends heavily on public policy the Plan clearly does not cover all that might be termed social planning. It can be safely said that the French Plan has never aimed, even in its heyday, to be a detailed blueprint for societal development and that policy development has not been rigidly tied to the Plan. The political role of the Plan is discussed in Appendix F.

⁶Rapport sur l'Orientation Préliminaire du VII^e Plan (p. 7) (our translation).

⁷Abandoned following the change of government. A new interim plan is being prepared.

4.17 Apart from the Plan, a version of PPBS, known as RCB (Rationalisation du Choix Budgetaire), is in operation for budgetary planning. Policy analysis is built into this system. It would appear, however, that neither the Plan nor RCB has affected the fundamentally incrementalist approach to public policy development generally, although each has had some innovative influence.

4.18 As regards the coordination of social policy development, the Plan heretofore has performed less of a role than in the coordination of economic policy. In the preparation of the Sixth and Seventh Plans, however, the analysis and discussions focussed on cross-sectoral issues in social policy, and cross-sectoral programmes were included in the Plans.

The Planning Structure

4.19 Besides the government and the ministries, the main organs in the French planning process are:

- the National Planning Commission (Commissariat Général du Plan),
- the National Planning Council
- the Plan Commissions/Committees
- the Regional Councils
- the Economic and Social Council
- the Parliament.

There is a variety of lesser organs which support the process.

The National Planning Commission

4.20 The National Planning Commission is headed by a Planning Commissioner, appointed by the Prime Minister. The Planning Commissioner is charged with the preparation of the Plan. The task of the Commission is to stimulate, coordinate and eventually synthesise its preparation. It has a dual role, that of advisor to the government and promoter of consensus. Its position involves a careful balancing act: maintaining the openness of the planning process while avoiding either isolation or duplication within the administration. The success of the arrangement obviously depends a great deal on the ability and diplomatic skills of the Commissioner and his staff.

4.21 The Commission has a relatively small staff and consequently has to rely heavily on other parts of the administration for the studies and projections required for the preparation of the plan. This principle of making others do the work was a deliberate strategy. It prevented the Commission becoming a vast planning bureaucracy. The Commission's role ensures that it is involved as of right in all stages of the preparation of the Plan and has an influence on its orientation.

4.22 The Commission is organised on the basis of divisions, seven at present: economic, industrial, finance, agriculture, regional and town planning, tertiary services and social affairs. The social affairs division was set up in 1965, marking the emergence of the Plan as an instrument of social planning. Most of the staff of the social affairs division have an economic background. The other social sciences are weakly represented. The Commission employs staff on secondment or contract from the ministries, the public and the private sector. The staffing arrangements introduce an element of renewal into the organisation and help to keep it from becoming bureaucratic.

The National Planning Council

4.23 The National Planning Council is a kind of a cabinet sub-committee, established in 1974 to link the planning and the government process — always a problem area in French planning. The 1980 Council comprises the President, the Prime Minister, the Ministers for Finance and Economic Affairs, the Budget, Labour and Participation and the Planning Commissioner. Other ministers attend as business requires. The Council oversees both the preparation and implementation of the Plan. It is intended to promote a better linkage of the budget and the Plan, though some have seen it as an instrument of political control of the planning process.

The Plan Commissions/Committees

4.24 The dialogue process is conducted through the medium of temporary planning commissions and committees⁸ which are established on the recommendation of the Planning Commissioner for the duration of each plan. Originally known as modernisation commissions (Commission de Modernisation) each commission is normally given a formal mandate which is drawn up by the National Planning Commission. The reports of the commissions are published. The number and type of commissions vary with each Plan, although there is some broad continuity. This flexibility is an attribute of the system and enables it to respond to changing problems and priorities.

4.25 The membership is made up of representatives of the ministries involved in the areas covered by the commission's mandate, of employer's organisations, trade unions, interest groups and independent experts. The Planning Commission is associated at a senior level with each commission and plays an active part in its work.

⁸The distinction between a commission and a committee is not important and subsequent references to a commission relate also to a committee. The Plan Commissions for the Seventh Plan and the draft Eighth Plan are listed in Appendix G.

4.26 The key commission nowadays is the Commission on Development. This Commission, presided over by the Planning Commissioner with a member of the Economic and Social Council as vice-president, contains the national leaders of the main interest groups involved in preparing the Plan, as well as experts and senior civil servants. It tends to be more political by nature than the other commission.

4.27 The main features of the commissions are: they are consultative only; they aim to be representative, though not in any comprehensive or proportional sense;⁹ they link up with the socio-economic sectors in the administration; they seek unanimity rather than majority decisions (there is no voting system and interests represented are not bound by commission reports). Whether the membership adequately represents the public interest has been a matter of debate; consumers and clients of public services are weakly represented, as are local interests.

The Regional Councils

4.28 The relationship between regional planning and the national plan has never been successfully worked out. The law requires that the regional establishments (effectively the Regional Councils and the Regional Social and Economic Committees) be consulted on the national choices that orient the preparation of the Plan. Nonetheless the role of the regions in the preparation of the Plan has been limited and has greatly declined in recent plans.

Inter-Ministry Committees

4.29 In preparing the Seventh Plan a large number of inter-ministry committees was set up to study various aspects of the Plan. The idea was to associate the ministries more closely with its preparation. The development was resented by the parties to the consultation but a similar procedure on a smaller scale was followed in preparing the draft Eighth Plan.

The Economic and Social Council

4.30 The constitution of the Fifth Republic formally recognised the existence¹⁰ of the Economic and Social Council and specifies that any plan or law concerning a plan of an economic or social character shall be submitted to the Council for its advice. Accordingly, the Council is consulted both on the Options Report and the draft Plan before they are submitted to parliament. The structure and membership of the

⁹Each organisation represented has only one member on a commission.

¹⁰The Council, originally an Economic Council, has existed since 1925. For an excellent brief account of its history and functions see Hayward (1966).

Council is fixed by law. The membership is made up of representatives of government nominees, trade unions, business and agricultural organisations, other interest groups (including consumers). The total membership is very large (currently 200). The Council has only a small permanent staff and this limits the service that the staff can give to the members. There tends to be some inter-locking membership between the Council and the Plan Commissions. The general impression is that the influence of the Council on the orientation and contents of the Plan is small. However, since the Council is representative of all major national interests it affords an opportunity to test overall reactions to the final Plan package in the light of the work of the various Commissions in which they have participated.

The Parliament

4.31 By law the preparation of the Plan is divided into two stages: an options phase and a plan phase. The approval of parliament is required for both the report on the options of the plan (Options Report) and for the Plan itself. The Plan is not, however, a legally binding document. Parliament also has some control over the implementation of the Plan through its control of the budget. In practice, however, parliamentary control of the Plan has been weak.

4.32 Figure 1 sets out the basic elements in the planning structure.

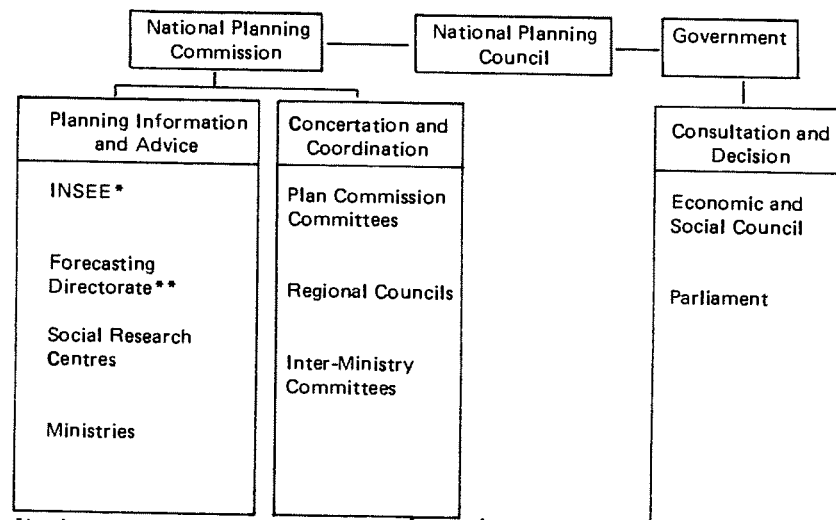
Scope of Social Planning in the Plan

4.33 Although the law authorising the preparation of the Second Plan (1954-58) specified a plan for social and economic development, it was not until the Fourth Plan (1962-65), titled *Plan for Economic and Social Development*, that planning of social development became important in the Plan. In addition to the continuing objective of maximum economic growth, that Plan posed the questions of the purpose of such growth and how its fruits should be utilised. This raised an issue that went beyond the mission of the Planning Commission, i.e., it was basically a political question. Following consultation by the government with the Economic and Social Council in the course of the preparation of the Plan it was decided to give priority to social investment over consumption. The unsatisfactory features of the consumer society in America and the growing criticism¹¹ of it suggested it was an undesirable model to follow. The Plan remarks that "Without a doubt it would be better to put the progressive abundance that is in prospect in the service of a less partial idea of man" (p. 6). Social investment was re-

¹¹For example, Galbraith (1958) in his famous attack on private affluence and public squalor in "The Affluent Society".

Figure 1

Basic Structure of French National Planning System



*Institute National des Statistiques et des Études Économiques

**In Ministry of Finance.

quired to meet the needs of the immediate post-war growth in population.

4.34 The conclusion was also drawn that a national policy on income was essential if the future fruits of expansion were to be fairly shared, social cohesion promoted and the conditions for better living created. In preparing the Fifth Plan (1965-1970) a major effort was made to get a national incomes policy included in the Plan, but it was unsuccessful and the effort was subsequently abandoned. That failure effectively prevented the Plan from developing into a social contract.

4.35 The Sixth Plan (1970-1975) which came after the events of May 1968 marked some positive advances in social planning. The consultation process was greatly expanded to allow a wide range of social issues and problems to be studied and debated. The Plan itself marked an advance in developing integrated social policies through adoption of cross-sectoral, mission-oriented programmes to improve the position of social groups, such as the aged and the handicapped.

4.36 The Seventh Plan (1970-1975) explicitly recognised the shift to wider social concerns in acknowledging that "during the preparation of the Plan it became clear that the French people are aware of the need

to establish a better relationship with their physical and social environment. This need, which has emerged comparatively recently, calls for long-term action which must be put in hand immediately" (p. 20). The draft Eighth Plan, in recognising the need for social innovation, observed: "In our era economic progress cannot proceed without social progress. Both are inseparable. There cannot be a competitive economy without social solidarity. The quality of social relations is essential to the efficiency of the economy" (p. 32) (our translation).

4.37 The Seventh Plan was prepared against an optimistic background of apparent economic recovery. The strategic social goals of the Seventh Plan were a reduction in inequalities, improvement of the quality of life and a fairer sharing of responsibilities. Strategic policies to achieve these concerned reform of employment and working conditions, a new family policy, reduction of income inequalities, improvement of the efficiency of community services, and better distribution of responsibilities (in government and in industry). Priority action programmes were developed to pursue specific objectives in these areas.

4.38 In contrast the draft Eighth Plan was prepared against a background of crisis: slow growth, high unemployment, inflation, escalation of social security costs and a falling insurance income. The Plan adopted seven strategic policy areas for priority action, only two of which were explicitly social: consolidation of social protection (effectively stabilisation of costs) and promotion of the family¹² and improving living conditions. A third priority area related to specific actions on unemployment, but the Plan failed to produce a strategy on unemployment.

4.39 In conclusion, the integration of social values into economic planning has not made much progress. The Plan has been a limited instrument of social policy and much of policy development has occurred outside the Plan. The Plan has often only ratified what has already been developed through other channels. But the planning process has been an agent of social change.

The Planning Process

4.40 The period between the finalisation of one Plan and the commencement of preparation of the next is a period of research, study and reflection for the Planning Commission and the other main technical organs involved, during which planning techniques are developed and procedures

¹²Family policy has always been central to French social policy for historical reasons. It has never been expressed solely in financial assistance, though such assistance to families has been generous.

re-evaluated. The existence of a planning body with no day-to-day responsibilities is an important advantage in this renewal process.

The Options Phase

4.41 The options phase falls into two stages: the technical/administrative stage and the report stage. The main participants in the administrative stage are the Planning Commission, the INSEE,¹³ and the Forecasting Directorate¹⁴ in the Ministry of the Budget. The Commission prepares a timetable for the preparation of the Plan. It defines the framework of the analyses and the consultations to be undertaken in the light of technical and other studies of future problems. The INSEE and the Forecasting Directorate play an important part in projecting the key economic outputs at the beginning and end of the Plan (the so-called departure or reference accounts) using macro-economic models. The projections, supplemented by the other studies, help to lay the groundwork for the Plan options and subsequent consultations, during which the effects of policy variants are explored.

4.42 The practice in regard to the consultation arrangements for the determination of the Plan options has varied. The practice up to the Seventh Plan was to use the main commissions of the existing plan to discuss the options. For the Seventh Plan four special commissions were set up: Commissions on Growth, Employment and Finance, on Foreign Economic and Financial Relations, on Social Inequalities and on Regional Development and Living Conditions — a blend of the key economic and social issues. This seems to have been intended to reassure the unions — one of whom had withdrawn from the preparation phase of the Sixth Plan¹⁵ — regarding the social intent of the Plan. For the draft Eighth Plan consultations were held through the Commission on Development and directly with social interests.

4.43 The Options Report is prepared by the National Planning Commission. After approval by the National Planning Council and the government, the Report is submitted to the Social and Economic Council for its opinion and then to Parliament for approval. The Council cannot change the Report (or the Plan); it can only recommend changes. The Parliament, however, can enforce changes.

The Plan Preparation Phase

4.44 The Options Report defines the issues to be dealt with in the Plan

¹³Institut National des Statistiques et des Études Économiques (National Statistics Institute).

¹⁴Directorate de la Prévision.

¹⁵See Appendix F.

and identifies the kind of plan commissions needed for participation. The change in emphasis from a detailed to a more strategic plan has led to a scaling down of the number of plan commissions. The key figures in the commissions are the president, the rapporteur (usually a public official) and the staff members of the National Planning Commission who assist the work. The key function of the National Planning Commission is to provide information. Its policy is to give the plan commissions all the relevant information it has. Confidence in the reliability and independence of the Commission's information is crucial to the consultation process.

4.45 The Commission on Development works simultaneously with the other commissions and its report is not a synthesis¹⁶ of the other reports, therefore, nor is it a draft plan. Like the other reports it attempts to summarise the technical evidence placed before it, to give a synopsis of the debate and to identify, where possible, specific conclusions. The true task of synthesis and of preparing the draft plan falls to the National Planning Commission. The Prime Minister's cabinet and the finance ministries play an active part in revising the draft Plan. Approval of the Plan follows the same procedure as for approval of the Options Report.

4.46 It is difficult to assess how much influence the work and reports of the commissions have on the eventual contents of the Plan. Insofar as planning options are predetermined politically the role of the plan commissions is reduced to discussing the means rather than the ends. It is necessary to stress, however, that the importance of the French planning system does not lie wholly in the actual Plan. The various documents and reports produced are published. The national self-interrogation of the planning process may produce influences on policy and behaviour extending well beyond the influence of the Plan. If the reports of the plan commissions are not a "counter-plan", and in the draft Eighth Plan they almost were, their importance as an input to policy may be considerable. The importance of an open planning process is thus underlined. The planning process has influenced social reform in several ways. It has revealed problems often poorly perceived by politicians and administrators. It has helped to harmonise proposals for reforms emanating from different sectors of the administration or different interest groups; and it has been a means of promoting reform, by making recommendations that may find acceptance much later. The government may follow a policy advocated by a plan commission, although for tactical reasons it may not wish to include it in the Plan. Ullmo (1977) cites the example of the policy on social welfare allowances pursued

¹⁶ It is aware, however, of the line of thought in the other commissions.

under the Sixth Plan, which followed the report of the Commission on Social Benefits, although the Plan did not.

Implementation of the Plan

4.47 The National Planning Commission does not supervise or coordinate the implementation of the Plan. The task of implementation falls to the ministries. In the economic sphere the Commission's role and influence has been important, through association with certain instruments for Plan execution, such as the National Credit Council (Conseil National du Credit) and the Economic and Social Development Fund (Fonds de Développement Économiques et Sociaux). Staff members are also represented on various advisory bodies in the social sphere, which, if it does not confer a role in implementation of the Plan, keeps them well-informed.

4.48 There are four general methods of controlling and reviewing the implementation of the Plan at present, apart from the budget:

- Priority Action Programmes (PAPs)
- the Annual Report to parliament
- the mid-term review of the Plan
- publication of indicators relating to the achievement of the main economic and social objectives.

4.49 The priority action programmes (PAPs) of the Seventh Plan aimed at ensuring that action essential to the attainment of the objectives of the Plan would be carried out. They represented a concentration of financial resources on areas of priority. An important innovation, they also provided for both operating and capital expenditure for the programmes. The influence of PPBS thinking is evident in the characteristics of the PAPs, viz specific statement of objectives and policy content, assignment of overall responsibility for each programme to an individual minister, identification of the other ministers concerned and specification of indicators of outputs to be achieved and of budgetary provisions. The PAPs were limited to the duration of the Plan. By and large, the objectives of the PAPs appear to have been accomplished, although various problems were encountered.¹⁷

4.50 The law requires that an annual report on the execution of the Plan be submitted to parliament. The annual review involves the plan commissions, the National Planning Commission, the National Planning

¹⁷ An account of the operation of the PAPs in the Seventh Plan is given by Hayward (1980). The social PAPs of the Seventh Plan are listed in Appendix H.

Council and the government. The Planning Commissioner prepares the report for the government. It is submitted to parliament as an annex to the Finance Bill. The report is in effect a government report and not an independent evaluation of the execution of the Plan.

4.51 The great uncertainty in which planning now has to take place means that the Plan is no longer viewed as a once and for all plan. The Seventh Plan specified that the National Planning Council would meet twice annually to review the Plan, once before the budget and once before the finalisation of the annual report to parliament. It also provided for a mid-term review of the Plan in 1978. The draft Eighth Plan made similar provision for review. The Seventh Plan was adapted following the review. In fact the ink had hardly been dry on that Plan when the so-called "Barre Plan", introduced by the new Prime Minister to counter inflation and a deterioration in the balance of payments, changed the emphasis.

4.52 Publication of indicators aimed at showing the progress of the Plan has been practised since the Fifth Plan, but the nature and purpose of the indicators has continually changed. In the Seventh Plan social indicators were introduced. The INSEE was responsible for the development of the indicators, which it published quarterly. They covered items such as family income, income distribution, remuneration of manual workers in comparison with other workers, overcrowding and equality of access to education.

Coordination of Social Policy Development and Policy Analysis

4.53 The process of producing the Plan addresses all the key issues in social planning identified in Chapter 1. The Plan has attempted to promote the integration of social policies to some degree. Apart from the Plan, coordination of the development and of the implementation of policy is performed in various ways. The device of standing inter-ministerial (political) and inter-departmental (administrative) committees is used for specific policy issues, but there is no coordination system for social policy as a whole. The President's and the Prime Minister's personal *cabinets* play an important role in policy coordination generally.

4.54 Budgetary planning is based on RCB (4.17) and the budget is published in programme form. There is a permanent inter-ministry commission for the promotion of RCB and of management by objectives in ministries. General direction of RCB is the responsibility of the Forecasting Directorate. While the link between RCB and the Plan appears to be limited, the PAPs reflect the influence of RCB at least in struc-

ture. Policy analysis is undertaken in the context of RCB, which has given an impetus to the creation of research and development activities in ministries. According to Carassus (1978), RCB has not fulfilled its early hopes.

Participation and Openness

4.55 Participation and openness is central to the national planning process. All the reports of the plan commissions and much other planning information is published. Consultation with the Economic and Social Council represents participation at the highest level of organised interests and participation by parliament at the highest political level. Advisory organs of various kinds provide also for participation at the level of policy development.

Provision of Social Planning Information

4.56 The INSEE and the Forecasting Directorate "can be said to constitute the main source of scientific economic output in France" (OECD, 1975) as the technical side of economics traditionally has been weak in the universities. One consequence has been that the Plan has always been better served by economic than by social research.¹⁸

4.57 Until recently the National Planning Commission had an important indirect function in coordinating economic and social research. In 1969 a coordination committee¹⁹ attached to the Commission, was set up to finance and direct programmed research for economic and social development. Although it sponsored a lot of projects, the practical outcome was regarded as limited and the Committee has now been wound up. There is an elaborate advisory structure for scientific research. Administrative coordination of the financing of research is the responsibility of the DGRST,²⁰ an independent mission-oriented body modelled on the National Planning Commission. In future both of these bodies will share responsibility for a new programme of economic and social research.

4.58 Applied research and provision of data for planning and policy development is effected mainly in three ways: the technical services of ministries, research establishments tied to ministries and specialist units financed by the National Planning Commission. The most notable of

¹⁸The INSEE specialises in the private sector (households and enterprises) and handles the medium-term economic models; the Forecasting Directorate deals with the public sector and short-term models.

¹⁹Comité de Coordination et d'Orientation des Recherches sur le Développement Économique et Social (Cordes).

²⁰Délégation Générale à la Recherche Scientifique et Technique.

the technical services associated with planning are the INSEE and the Forecasting Directorate. The two most important specialist units financed by the National Planning Commission are the Centre for the Study of Income and Costs (Centre d'Études des Révenus et des Coûts – CERC) which conducts research into income distribution and the Centre for Research and Information on Consumption (Centre des Recherches et de Documentation sur la Consommation – CREDOC) concerned with research into consumption and living standards. The National Planning Commission itself has a section for long-term studies, which, inter alia, prepares scenarios of the future. The organisation of research has caused serious problems in France and the perennial problem of relating research to policy and planning has not been solved.

Social Statistics

4.59 The INSEE is the central body responsible for the collection and publication of official statistics in France. Although it is a directorate of the Ministry of Finance, it has an independent status. Other Ministries also maintain statistical services. The orientation of the INSEE remains strongly economic but social statistics are being steadily improved. Production of official statistics is under the general direction of the National Statistics Council (Conseil National de la Statistique – CNS). The Council includes representatives of the social partners, the administration and experts. The National Planning Commission is represented on the Council and takes an active part in working groups. The INSEE provides the secretariat. The CNS has the responsibility for developing the overall official statistics programmes, both those of the INSEE and of the ministries. It prepares an annual and a five-year programme for statistical development. No official statistical enquiries can be undertaken unless they are included in the programme. The CNS is paying particular attention to the development of social statistics.

Social Reporting

4.60 France does not publish a social report in the strict sense. The INSEE publishes Social Facts (Données Sociales). The declared objective is to collect and present the statistical data needed for the analysis of the social situation in France. The ultimate aim is a system of social accounting equivalent to that of the national economic accounts. This aim has been achieved so far only to a very limited extent.

Social Scientists and Planning

4.61 The technocratic traditions of the higher French civil service and the dominance of certain disciplines have limited the access of social scientists to positions of influence at administrative level. Social scientists have made little headway within the National Planning Commission.

In the ministries sociologists, for example, are usually confined to research and forecasting units, where they play a part in directing outside research. The main contribution of the social scientists to planning appears to be an indirect one through research or work in the plan commissions.

Problems in Social Planning

4.62 Social planning in France has been hampered by what Jobert (1978) calls the "double constraint", the predominance of a macro-economic perspective in planning and the restriction by political factors of the range of social matters covered. The primacy of economics has led to imbalance in the development of economic and social information in the service of the Plan.

4.63 Political control over the Plan appears to have increased under the present (1980) government. There are "no-go areas" which restrict the possibility of social change. In general the social remains a residual in the French planning system. But this is not to discount wholly the advances that have been attempted in recent plans to widen the concept of the social.

4.64 Institutional factors raise barriers to effective social planning in France. The structure of ministries makes it even more difficult than usual to coordinate policy development effectively. This inhibits the development of a central planning approach within ministries. Sectionalisation at ministry level intensifies the sectionalisation of social policies. French ministries have also tended to be unstable as regards policy areas. The planning process has sought to promote a more integrated approach through the cross-sectoral plan commissions, the orientation of policies towards social groups and the social PAPs of the Seventh Plan.

4.65 A second institutional problem is reflected in the failure to integrate local and regional planning in the Plan, although two-thirds of social capital expenditure is incurred at local level. Effective local planning requires appropriate powers of decision, levels of finance, information systems and organisation. Until reforms achieve these, the extreme centralisation of planning and administration is likely to persist.

4.66 Social research and planning seem to be no better coordinated in France than elsewhere. The role of social scientists in the social planning process appears to be limited. Both in the Planning Commission and the administration other disciplines are dominant. The social scientists are confined to research or to a consultancy role within the plan commissions.

4.67 There are two general problems in French planning today, which are relevant to both economic and social planning. The first is that the economic and social crisis makes "concertation" more difficult. If agreement could not be reached on dividing a growing surplus, it is far more difficult to secure agreement on a declining one, short of a total crisis. The room for manoeuvre has become severely limited. Policy decisions are therefore more difficult. Second, there is a crisis of confidence and understanding caused by the changing approach to planning. The draft Eighth Plan marked the disappearance of the anchor point of the French Plan, the growth rate forecast. A common view is that the plan has deteriorated to become a mere government programme. The strategic approach of the Plan has been defended, however, by Crozier (1980) and Massé (1980). One of the problems with the strategic approach is that the results take time to show so that the Plan does not quickly produce its own justification. From the point of view of social planning, however, the strategic approach may present more of an opportunity than a problem, provided confidence in planning is maintained.²¹

4.68 The French national planning system can be seen as an attempt to reconcile planning and politics through directly involving the main social interests in the planning process. Apart from difficulties in achieving a consensus on key issues, the weak linkage between the plan and public policy development meant that the reconciliation achieved in practice was limited. The dominance of the economic dimension in the planning meant that while the Plan was quite successful in promoting the modernisation of the French economy, it was much less successful as a motive force for promoting the adaptation of French society.

²¹The new government may adopt a different approach to planning.

CHAPTER 5

THE PURPOSE AND REQUIREMENTS OF SOCIAL PLANNING

Introduction

5.1 Our ultimate tasks in this report are to develop a concept of social planning and to make recommendations for institutional arrangements and processes for effective social planning. In this Chapter we propose a concept of social planning, discuss the need for social planning, consider the problems to which it gives rise, identify planning requirements and outline possible approaches to them. We confine our attention to planning at national level, where overall public policy is decided. We will refer to planning at sub-national level in Chapter 6 (6.55)

5.2 There is a good deal of confusion in planning terminology. All planning is concerned with achieving some desired result. Sometimes the desired result is called "the aim", sometimes "the goal", sometimes "the objective" and sometimes "the target". One reason for the proliferation of terms is that planning involves a hierarchy of aims or desired results and different terms are required to distinguish various levels of the hierarchy. However, at each decision stage in the planning process the same two basic questions arise: what are we aiming to achieve and what are the steps needed to achieve it; each step in turn may become an aim and for each aim further steps may be worked out which are needed to achieve it. Whether one proceeds by a top-down or a bottom-up planning process this hierarchical system of aims will apply. To distinguish levels in this report we use the following terms and meanings:

- a *goal* means an overall national aim
- an *objective* means an aim to be achieved in pursuance of a goal, but which is not necessarily to be achieved within a specific planning period
- a *target* means a more specific aim which is to be achieved within the planning period.

These terms preserve the idea of a hierarchy of aims and indicate that

aims become more specific as the planning time-scale shortens.

5.3 We make a number of important assumptions in considering approaches to social planning arrangements. First, we assume national economic planning in some form is still accepted as necessary. If economic planning is to be practised, the arrangements for social planning must be compatible with the arrangements for economic planning. We assume the Department of Finance will remain responsible for managing economic planning. Second, we assume the PSORG recommendation for the establishment of a planning unit in each department will be implemented, whether by means of the Aireacht structure or otherwise. Third, we assume the NESC will continue in being.

5.4 In regard to the second assumption, unless the planning capability is improved at the level of individual departments, the imposition of further structures for overall planning is unlikely to lead to a big improvement in the effectiveness of planning. Effective planning at departmental level is essential to improving the administrative input to national planning from the policy sectors, to improving the management of individual policies and to improving planning at local level. But as we shall argue later (5.37) improvement in departmental planning alone will not be enough; it is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for effective social planning. Moreover, a planned approach at departmental level cannot be guaranteed by structures alone; there must be planning skills available, a political and an administrative will to use planning and a system of decision-making that is related to planning.

A concept of Social Planning

5.5 In Chapter 1 we saw that although the term social planning has been used widely in Ireland it has never been defined and that there was no consensus in the literature or amongst those consulted as to what it means in the Irish context. Three different perceptions of social planning exist: planning of specific social policies; the coordinated planning of social policies; and planning in relation to overall social objectives.

5.6 The planning systems in the other countries studied reveal no clear concept of what is meant and encompassed by social planning. The scope of social concerns addressed in planning is wider than in Ireland, but this is scarcely surprising. The nature and scale of social concerns and the meaning of concepts such as "well-being" or "welfare" depend largely on the stage of economic development of a society and on social attitudes. The horizon of social development extends with advances in wealth and technical capacity and changes in social structure.

Social attitudes, which are influenced by social structure, determine the motivation of a society to identify desirable social changes. They also influence a society's willingness to accept such changes and any sacrifices they may entail. The areas of social concern of the Dutch social planning system and the evolution of the social content of the Norwegian and French national plans show that the social content of public policy in these countries is now conceived in a wider sense than the traditional concerns with income maintenance and provision of collective goods and services. The Dutch concept of well-being is particularly wide-ranging. The Norwegian Long-Term Programme 1978-1981 is directed at the development of a qualitatively better society. The aim of French economic and social development is to enable French people to live better. As we saw in Chapter 1 (1.10), these ideas were reflected in Ireland in the Third Programme.

5.7 To define social planning as the planning of social policy or the coordinated planning of social policies makes it necessary to consider the question as to which public policies are to be defined as social. The NESC has adopted Donnison's definition given in Report No. 8.¹

The social policies of Governments are those of their actions which deliberately or accidentally affect the distribution of resources, status, opportunities and life chances among social groups and categories within the country, and thus help to shape the general character and equity of its social relations. Social policies are therefore concerned with fairness.

Donnison went on to add, however, that such policies

can be roughly distinguished from policies concerned primarily with the management of the economy, social control and delinquency, public utilities, medical care, education, agriculture and other functions. But there are social policy aspects and implications in the work of the Departments concerned with *all* these functions. Certain programmes and groups – the social services and their clients – have conventionally been assumed to occupy the centre of the social policy stage because they have often been the main instruments and objects of these policies. But further information about the distributional consequences of every kind of Government action will be needed before any conclusion can be reached about the distributional effects of these particular programmes or of Government social policies in general.

¹ *An Approach to Social Policy*, (1975), p. 30.

5.8 It is clear from this argument that social policy means more than what has been regarded conventionally as social policies or social services.² Social policies are seen as concerned with distribution in a broad sense, not merely with the ex-post redistribution associated with fiscal and social welfare policies. But social policies no matter how widely defined are merely instruments of State intervention in society. The fundamental question, therefore, is what is the purpose of such intervention. Donnison suggests that it is to achieve *fairness*, i.e. equity. That view is a value judgement. Equity is not the only important social value that a government may wish to promote in society through intervention. It is not satisfactory to define the purpose of social intervention by the State in terms of a particular value or set of values, concerning which there may not be a consensus. One arrives at the same difficulty if social planning is defined as planning in relation to national social objectives. There are many possible objectives, some of which may be in conflict. It becomes necessary to ask what is the overall purpose of these objectives. In either case, therefore, one is inexorably forced to consider the highest aim of government. It is possible to reach the same conclusion in another way. Planning is concerned with the achievement of some desired result through either creative or preventative action. Since social planning involves planning interventions by the State so as to interfere in some way with the "natural" workings of society, the overall desired result must relate to the highest aim of government.

5.9 In a democratic society the highest aim of government clearly must relate to the betterment of society,³ a social aim. Accordingly, the fundamental purpose of social planning in a democracy is, we suggest, *the creation of a better society*. This concept of the fundamental purpose of social planning is politically relevant but neutral. It does not pre-determine any particular view of the type of society that is desirable; each society will have to determine this for itself in accordance with its moral and political values and its circumstances at any particular period. A crucial point from the social point of view is that the concept is not dependent on the level or rate of economic development. In times of economic stagnation a society can take action to make itself better in a social sense. Adjustments may be more difficult than in times of economic expansion, but they may also be more necessary. In our terminology the highest aim in planning is "the goal"; hence the funda-

²To distinguish conventional social policies/services from the broader meaning of social policy we place them in inverted commas subsequently in this report.

³Purists might argue that the primary aim is the preservation of society, but that aim is common to governments in all societies and must be taken for granted. Preservation of a democratic society may well depend on social progress.

mental purpose of social planning, in our view, is to achieve the goal of a better society.

5.10 If it is accepted that the goal of democratic government is to achieve a better society, then all the actions of government are properly to be measured in terms of the degree to which they contribute to the achievement of the goal. Since the goal is a social goal, the values used for measurement must be social values, as determined politically. These values must be brought to bear explicitly in all public planning. What is implied by social planning then becomes clear. In relation to economic policies it becomes necessary to question the type and purpose of economic development. We must go beyond considerations of efficiency and the technical aspects of expediting economic growth to consider whether the nature of the development and the policies chosen also improve the quality of working and social life. We must ask if the benefits of economic progress and any unavoidable associated social costs are fairly shared. In the case of physical planning it is not simply sufficient to seek the best technical and economic solutions to problems in areas such as housing, land use and transport; the creation or maintenance of a desirable social environment becomes a dominant consideration. In regard to "social" policies, it becomes necessary to consider the social values that these policies are intended to serve and whether in fact they actually do so. In providing for individual welfare do they, for instance, help restore or maintain the autonomy of individuals or do they create dependence?

5.11 New social concerns also call for attention. It becomes necessary to consider institutional arrangements in society to see if they meet the social needs of individuals for self-fulfillment and participation in a world of rapid change. Thus the sharing of responsibilities in government and at work come within the purview of social planning. Ultimately, the distribution of power in society has to be considered in the planning process. Creation of a better society also calls for a more positive approach to cultural development, to the preservation of our natural and man-made heritage, to creating the conditions in which the "banal" society, the result of the "partial idea of man" (4.33), is avoided.

5.12 It follows that social planning is not some separate kind of public planning. In particular, it is not confined to the planning of a set of policies conventionally deemed "social". Rather it implies the *integration* of specific social values into economic, spatial, social, cultural and institutional policies in pursuit of the goal of a better society. In short it means national planning that is explicitly socially oriented.

5.13 The integration of social values into public policies means essentially that the objectives of public policies should not be determined independently of social considerations. It should not be the task of "social" policies to repair the damage that has been caused by other policies; rather the aim should be to prevent the latter policies causing social damage. This clearly makes sense, even in economic terms, since it can reduce the cost of social repairs. Conventional social policies themselves may be socially damaging. The retreat from the institutionalisation of the aged, to take but one example, which is now evident in many countries, is a recognition of this. It is not merely a response to the rising costs of institutionalisation. The absence of a social perspective can allow undesirable social trends to continue almost unchecked. It may be that the economic cost of the virtually uncontrolled growth and the suburban sprawl of Dublin city can be afforded, but the social cost must also be reckoned. Little attention has been given to the social cost of the deterioration of the social fabric in remote rural areas and in deprived city areas. Social planning would ensure that such issues got on to a national agenda.

5.14 Integration is, of course, not one way. It requires also that the inter-action of "social" policies with other policies must be better understood. Thus the economic effects of "social" policies need to be made more explicit. This is necessary to ensure the informed public debate through which better political choices may be reached.

5.15 The goal of creating a better society has to be made operational. This requires the identification of a set of objectives whose achievement is deemed necessary to the goal at any point in time. We refer to such objectives subsequently as *strategic objectives* and to the policies by which they are pursued as *strategic policies*.

5.16 If social planning is to contribute to making the goal operational then the type of planning structure and process must be suitable. Before considering planning requirements, it is necessary to examine why planning is needed at all and what problems arise in social planning. The nature of the need for planning and the problems to be overcome clearly must influence the planning arrangements.

The Need for Social Planning

5.17 Barrington (1980), in discussing social planning, gives seven reasons⁴ why planning is needed. While all of the reasons are relevant, it is important to distinguish the political need for social planning from the technical need for it.

5.18 Political decisions on objectives and means of achieving them are compromises between what may be desirable in value terms and what is feasible, having regard to restraints on resources of various kinds, including public acceptability. The function of the planning process, in our view, is to help the political process reach better compromises. If the rationality of planning is interpreted in this way a source of confusion over the relationship between planning and politics must be removed. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (1.27), determination and choice of goals and objectives is often characterised as a political function, related to values, while the development of means or policy instruments to achieve the objectives is viewed as a technical function. This dichotomy relegates planning to a technical search for optimal solutions using some approximation of the scientific method. The "best course of action" is to be decided by some rational and ethically neutral criterion, such as cost-effectiveness. This mechanistic view of planning is, we feel, the source of much difficulty in public planning and implies a task for planning that it cannot fulfil. It fails to recognise that the planning process in public planning is as much a search for objectives as it is for the "best" means of achieving them and that means may condition objectives. It ignores the fact that decisions on means are political decisions too.

The Political Need for Social Planning

5.19 From the political point of view the purpose of social planning, as we have defined it, constitutes a justification for planning at overall national level, since a better society is unlikely to evolve without some planned interventions by the State. The political need for a planned approach can be demonstrated more specifically, however, by considering four critical characteristics of modern advanced societies which are shared by Irish society: the rapidity of social change, the rise in aspirations, the erosion of traditional forms of authority and the growth of inter-dependencies.

5.20 The pace of social change in Ireland, as elsewhere, has increased immensely since World War II. If social planning is to contribute to a better society then it must seek to influence social change: promoting desirable change through innovative action or combatting undesirable

⁴It is needed for (i) better management of the social services, (ii) ensuring coherence in social policies, (iii) effective use of scarce resources, (iv) control of the redistributive effects of government policies, (v) ensuring the poorest benefit from social policies; and it is needed (vi) owing to the linkages between economic and social development and (vii) to improve political consensus in regard to social development. These reasons are broadly similar to those given by the Council for Social Welfare (1972).

change by timely counter action. Planning implies that the State will not merely react to social changes but will seek to anticipate and control them. To enable the points of action to be determined periodic social analysis will be required to produce an understanding of the current state of society and of social trends.

5.21 Aspirations rise with economic and social progress. Pressure rises for more rapid advances and injustices become focal points for agitation. As increasing numbers of organised interest groups compete with the party political system it becomes increasingly difficult for the system to fulfil its fundamental role of identifying interests and preferences and working out desirable compromises.

5.22 On the other hand, if there is economic stagnation or slower economic growth in the future the hopes of the rising generation for improved material living standards and personal fulfilment will be diminished. If the costs of that transformation are not seen to be fairly shared the political consequences may be profound. Whatever the economic prospects, therefore, there is a need for a system that will assist politicians to assess and resolve conflicting claims in regard to resources and opportunities and to build a consensus regarding the goal of a better society.

5.23 Linked to the social changes is the challenge to traditional authority at various levels in society. The prescriptive nature of traditional forms of authority is being replaced by more openness and discussion. Structures have to be created in which social issues can be more openly discussed.

5.24 As government intervention in society increases the inter-dependencies of government policies become more pronounced. Education policy, for example, cannot be pursued properly in isolation from policies to do with the labour market, productivity, social mobility, redistribution, etc. It is the fact of such inter-relationships, of course, that is one of the technical justifications for the integrative role of social planning. The linkages between economic and social policies are many and varied. From the political point of view these inter-dependencies cause difficulties in making policy adjustments, since changes in one direction may produce adverse consequences in another or provoke reactions in defence of acquired advantages. Structures are needed to ensure that inter-dependencies are properly considered before decisions are taken so that fairness and balance can be demonstrated and damaging social conflicts avoided.

The Technical Need for Social Planning

5.25 Planning has two basic technical functions. Through analysis it helps to clarify objectives, to identify possible methods of achieving them and to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the methods. Through coordination it helps to bring coherence to action. Analysis is needed both to identify what must be done and to assess what has been done. Social planning requires social analysis at macro-level and policy analysis at micro-level. Coordination may mean no more than the coordination of specific actions to achieve the targets of a specific policy or it may mean coordination in the sense of integrating a set of policies in pursuit of some goal or objective.

5.26 Even if social planning were confined to the planning of "social" policies, the technical contribution of planning is of increasing importance. Resources are always limited in relation to demands and the costs of the Welfare State are rising against a background of diminished economic growth. It is necessary, therefore, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of such policies in order to make the best use of available resources. Planning can help to ensure that priorities are better ordered, greater coherence in policies is secured, and clearer control over the distributive effects of policies is exercised.

5.27 The policy response to arrangements for social planning, like any other policy response, is likely to be influenced by how the problem is defined. In the difficult financial circumstances facing the country at present it is tempting to see the planning requirements in terms of its technical contribution to improved financial control, the need for which is generally recognised. Moreover, better financial analysis and planning should contribute to greater social effectiveness in public expenditure and taxation. But an improvement in financial procedures and a strengthening of accounting processes would not constitute social planning as we have defined it. It would not ensure an explicit social orientation to policy development nor would it meet the political need for social planning. Improved financial planning is, in our view, a necessary contribution to better social planning, not a substitute for it.

The Benefits of Social Planning

5.28 Social planning could help create a new sense of national purpose. It would provide a process through which cooperation could be sought and increasing knowledge of social conditions could be brought to bear on political decisions. Such planning should help relieve the heavy and conflicting pressures on the political system. It would assist administrators in the difficult task of advising on policy developments. For the interest and pressure groups it should provide a fairer hearing of con-

flicting claims, particularly for weaker groups, and an opportunity to influence events more effectively. For those involved in the production of knowledge and social analysis the need for social planning information should provide a fresh impetus and meaning to their work. For the ordinary citizen it should provide a clearer perception of priorities and constraints.

Problems in Social Planning

5.29 Public planning and policy-making involves three essential elements: political decision-making, institutional arrangements for the preparation and implementation of plans/policies (these functions can be separated organisationally) and the production of planning information. Problems in public planning can be expected to arise in three main areas therefore: the political area (political problems), the institutional area (organisational and structural problems), and the informational area (informational and technical problems). Social planning of its nature intensifies these problems. In terms of the key issues identified in Chapter 1, the political problem relates in part to the determination of social objectives, but it is wider than this. The institutional problem concerns, in particular, the coordination of "social" policies, while the informational problem concerns analysis and planning information. Although participation itself may cause problems, participation should be seen as a response to political problems and needs, as the Dutch and French planning systems make clear. Social planning gives rise also to problems in integrating economic and physical planning.

Political Problems

5.30 Political problems in public planning arise from conflicts over values and from the pressures of normal politics. The determination of social objectives involves social values concerning which there may be disagreement in the community. The greater the differences over values in a society and the greater the political fragmentation, the more difficult it will be to reach a measure of consensus on social objectives. Even if there is assent to general social principles, a government may encounter serious problems in mobilising support for specific policies.

5.31 While there may be differences over values in Irish society, as in every society, it is not a polarised society. There is perceived to be a difficulty, nonetheless, in securing consensus on social objectives and on policies in support of them. In the course of our consultations it was put to us that:

there are difficulties in getting agreement to the objectives of policy in any area, including the social area, and in securing public

willingness to pay for the achievement of these objectives. While there may be no shortage of views about existing social policies, it would probably be difficult to achieve both the consensus on a new, more comprehensive framework of policies and a willingness to pay for the extra costs involved. Even for an objective like full employment, for which there is no doubt a commitment in the country, there is little evidence that people are willing to make sacrifices to achieve it. The same would apply to the objective of the elimination of poverty.

Whether or not this view is regarded as representative it does not provide an explanation of the attitudes indicated nor mean that they cannot be altered.

5.32 The other political obstacle to public planning arises from the fact that systematic government planning is severely constrained by the natural workings of democratic politics and the demands it places on the administrative system. Policies tend to be tuned to the requirements of obtaining or retaining political power as a basis for political action. The shorter the electoral cycle the more acute the problem becomes. Policy tends to be related to solving problems in such a way as to conciliate conflicting interests through marginal adjustments. Issues involving major changes will be tackled only where they threaten to become explosive and must be defused. Planning which aims to make policy explicit and to anticipate problems conflicts with the political need to keep policy vague, so as to reduce contention and preserve flexibility, and to postpone potential conflicts over changes or reforms as long as possible. This so-called incremental approach is sometimes justified too by the difficulty of acquiring adequate knowledge for optimal policy-making and by the risks involved in innovation in such circumstances. Hence, it is maintained that incrementalism is a necessary outcome of the need to resolve conflicting interests in conditions of partial knowledge.⁵ A planned approach is also difficult where political change is frequent, particularly if each government is likely to reverse the policies of its predecessor. This has not happened to any great extent in Ireland.

5.33 Policy development in Ireland has followed the incremental model. Thus policy has tended to be developed in a piecemeal fashion and to be centred on policy areas, defined by departmental boundaries, rather

⁵These views of policy-making are expounded by Lindblom (1959 and 1979) and Wildavsky (1974), to name but two, and have been criticised as partial models for even if no planning system is installed there are limits to "normal politics" when the incremental approach will no longer suffice and fundamental reforms must be undertaken. See Cohen *et al* (1975) for a practical example in relation to family allowances in France and the theoretical criticisms of Dror (1973).

than on policy problems and issues which overlap these boundaries. The model is characterised by limited analysis and small changes carried out within a largely closed system. Coordination of policy development tends to be weak and hence inconsistent and even contradictory policies may be followed.

5.34 The political problems call into question whether effective systematic planning is possible at all in liberal democracies. Even where a national planning system exists, political pressures may tend to cause policy development to evolve in an incremental manner. A critical issue in devising planning structures, therefore, is how to align political and planning processes in practical terms. In particular, if a national plan is to be produced what should be its political function and how should it be linked to policy development. We address these issues in our recommendations in Chapter 6 (Recommendations Nos. 1, 2 and 3, in particular, but also in Recommendations Nos. 7 and 8).

Institutional Problems

5.35 The institutional (organisational and structural) problems in social planning are various, but the fundamental one is the problem in policy coordination caused by the unavoidable need to allocate discrete areas of policy responsibility to individual ministers and administrative units. Even if irrational division of responsibility is avoided, problems will arise in coordinating policy responsibility in respect of areas or issues that overlap or interact, as is common with regard to social policies. As indicated in Chapter 1 (1.20) there are always policy issues for which no one has clear responsibility. This division at national level tends to be reflected in policy formation and execution at local level, so that the coordination problem is replicated at local level. The coordination problem may be worsened by the nature of political and bureaucratic behaviour. Ministers and administrators tend to act as defenders or protagonists of the interests of their clients in the community and hence to promote a partial view of public policy.

5.36 That problems exist in the coordination of "social" policy development in Ireland is evident in Chapter 1 and from the incremental approach to policy development described above. This is clearly an important problem because many social problems and social groups require multiple policy responses that cross over departmental boundaries. Examples include urban and rural decay, the aged, the family, the handicapped. Then there is the problem of integrating sets of policies that can conflict with one another or complement one another. The most obvious example is personal income tax allowances (fiscal welfare) and transfer payments (social welfare). But there are many

other areas in which this problem is encountered, such as health care and welfare services, health care and working conditions. In the incremental model the main centre of coordination below government level tends to be the Finance Ministry, as is the position in Ireland. In its capacity as controller of public expenditure that Ministry inevitably must take a view coloured by financial considerations.

5.37 Departmental boundaries are a fact of political and administrative life. It is not practicable to group all policy responsibilities for any social issue or social group in any single department. While an incremental, or a non-planned, approach to policy development at departmental level may compound the problem, the introduction of planning units at departmental level does not guarantee that the problem will be overcome. Planning can all too easily be used (and demanded) as a means of supporting claims to resources and of legitimising allocation decisions. Consequently planning may be used merely to defend better one's own domain of interest. Hence departmental planning could accentuate rather than reduce the problem of integrating policies in different administrative areas, particularly if the planning capacities differ between departments.

5.38 The planning structure itself may cause a problem. Far less attention is usually given to how planning should be done than to what planning is expected to do. Hence expectations are often disappointed. A key problem is how to organise the preparation and implementation of plans, so as to avoid either simple incrementalism if both functions are integrated, or ivory tower planning, if they are separated. In government planning – social or otherwise – this requires better alignment of overall planning and policy development. Another structural problem to be avoided is the creation of competing planning structures. If advisory networks, for example, compete with a planning system, they may undermine systematic planning. They may reinforce the incremental approach in policy development. How participation in planning and in policy development is arranged is very important, therefore.

Informational Problems

5.39 Information is critical to all planning. There is a serious problem everywhere in providing social planning information. There are three aspects to the problem: availability of relevant data, relationship of social research and planning and deficiencies in technique. There is plenty of data available. But the data is often useless to planning, since it has been collected for other purposes and cannot be converted into planning information. Administrative changes in data collection or more research may help fill gaps in planning information, provided the

information required is known. The real problem is often to identify the information required, i.e. the right questions. A basic challenge to planning is to help to identify the relevant questions. Some of those questions will involve values or threaten interests. Hence they become political matters. There may be resistance to seeking the information. The limited progress with the measurement of income distribution, of the distributional effects of government policies and of poverty in Ireland and elsewhere is not solely due to methodological difficulties, but reflects the sensitivity of these issues. Collection and production of social statistics is fragmented in Ireland. Data is often published tardily. Analysis is limited. The report produced by the Department of Social Welfare, for example, appears only every three years and contains no analysis.

5.40 Social planning requires insights into the dynamics of society that complement the understanding of the politician, the economic or physical planner and the general administrator. Social planning has to rely on qualitative as well as quantitative knowledge. Social scientists can contribute to both, but particularly to qualitative knowledge. How to bring the social sciences to the aid of planning and so close the loop between politics, administration and social science is an important problem in social planning. If social scientific input is confined to research, the perennial problem of the relevance of research to policy and decision making arises. The use of scientific knowledge may be limited. Administrators and planners may rely on their own information networks.⁶ The problem is partly structural – whether and how social scientists should be introduced into the administrative and planning system in a non-research role – and partly personnel – the availability of suitably qualified people.

5.41 Analysis, a key issue in social planning, is heavily dependent on technique. In the economic field quantitative measures and techniques have been developed which can be utilised in sophisticated econometric models. There is a large measure of agreement amongst economic analysts on the value of these models. However, in other social science fields equivalent techniques have yet to be developed. As social analysis depends more on qualitative inputs than economic analysis, measurement problems consequently are acute and the predictive power of forecasting reduced. Many of the quantitative measures of outputs of “social” policy are of an intermediate kind. This is particularly true in areas such as education and health, where the real outputs are qualitative and can be known only in the long-run.

⁶OECD report (1979) on the use of social sciences in policy-making.

Problems in Integrating Economic and Physical Planning in Social Planning
5.42 Social planning, as we conceive it, requires the social values be integrated in economic planning. Social policies must no longer be treated as the residual. The view that economic policies are concerned with the creation of wealth and resources and social policies with the redistribution of resources at the margin is not consistent with social planning as we conceive it. Of course a government has to reconcile its economic and social policies in economic terms. It has to seek to influence the choice between public and private consumption; to influence the division between consumption and investment, i.e. to attempt to balance the future against the present; and it has to decide the level and nature of public investment. Policies on income distribution and transfers have economic as well as social effects. But because economic techniques for planning and forecasting are more advanced than social techniques, the economic consequences of social policies are likely to receive more attention than the social consequences of economic policies. How to prevent this happening and to ensure that social values and insights are brought to bear on economic planning is a major problem in social planning. It has important implications for the arrangements for social planning, both in relation to the overall management of the planning process and the personnel engaged in planning.

5.43 Likewise in physical planning a major problem is to ensure that technical and economic considerations do not dominate social ones. The principles underlying physical planning are reviewed only periodically. There is a clear need to debate these principles in a social context. Many of the unsatisfactory features of Irish housing development, for example, are social in nature. The quality of our houses may be generally good, but the social implications of housing policy are not measurable in the quality of the buildings alone. Apart from the distributive aspects of State policies on housing finance, major issues such as social mix, community needs and the general quality of life have to be considered.

Requirements of Social Planning and Possible Approaches

5.44 The perceptions of social planning arrangements needed in Ireland recorded in Chapter 1 reveal a need for planning at three levels of central government: departmental, inter-departmental and overall level. However, no clear relationship between planning at the three levels emerged. Some saw the primary need in terms of one or other level.

5.45 Three different planning models in use abroad have been described in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Each country studied has developed its planning response in accordance with its own political, social and administrative

traditions and circumstances. Each approach is a pragmatic one, and is not based on any theory about the one right way to do national planning.⁷ The assumptions about the role of planning, and in particular of the planning process, can have an important influence on the style of planning. This is clearly evident in the three systems studied. There is the search for consensus or at least understanding in the participative French planning system. The primacy of politics in the Norwegian system results in a tightly controlled government plan. In the Netherlands the emphasis is on planning information as a contribution to better policy formation.

5.46 Despite differences in the planning approaches some common trends are discernible in planning in the three countries. National planning is becoming more strategic. Social policy development is becoming cross-sectoral, i.e. inter-departmental. Planning in certain areas of welfare policy is being decentralised. Different factors are influencing these trends. The development of the strategic focus reflects the fact that the role of a plan as a "reducer of uncertainty" faces a crisis when it encounters the kind of uncertainty that now exists in the international economic environment. Even short to medium term forecasting becomes hazardous. Hence economic planning concentrates on major threats and opportunities. Moreover, social planning requires a medium to long term perspective. The cross-sectoral approach, evident in the development of policies for target groups, reflects the fact that sectoral policies are no longer seen as sufficient. These trends are reflected in the most recent Norwegian and French national plans and in the Dutch planning system. The decentralisation trend is of less immediate relevance to Ireland, given the differences in local government as well as the relatively undeveloped state of welfare services at local level here.

5.47 In our view none of the foreign planning systems is an appropriate model in its entirety for Ireland. The Dutch and French planning systems are too complex for a small country with limited planning resources, while the conditions making for the success of the Norwegian model do not exist in Ireland. The Dutch emphasis on the production of independent planning information is understandable in the Dutch context. While planning information is critically important, the influence of independently produced information on policy development is always problematic. Social planning in Ireland demands more than this in our view.

⁷There are many theories about how public policy and planning should be developed; useful summaries and criticisms are provided by Dror (1973) and Van Gunsteran (1976).

5.48 In designing a social planning system for Ireland it is necessary to have regard to the concept of social planning, to the issues and problems identified with such planning and to Irish conditions.

Strategic Planning

5.49 The concept of social planning that we propose implies the integration of social values into all public policies and the identification of a set of objectives whose achievement is deemed necessary to the goal of a better society as perceived at any point in time. It follows that national planning is required. The integration of social values into all public policies and the achievement of optimal results from social policies would seem to imply a need for the integration of all the policies of the State through a master plan, i.e. "comprehensive rational" planning. We do not believe that it is possible to develop a detailed national plan in which all public policies have clear and mutually consistent objectives, optimal means of achieving them are used and all outcomes are identifiable and capable of being precisely evaluated. Such a vision of rational national planning is utopian, beyond the competence of planners, and even if it was not, is not compatible with the demands and pressures of normal democratic politics. Accordingly we do not regard it as practicable. It has not been achieved in any democracy.

5.50 If comprehensive planning is not practicable the alternative we suggest, is a system of *strategic planning* at overall national level. The distinctive feature of strategic planning is that it seeks to identify a set of objectives whose achievement is deemed essential to the accomplishment of some critical goal. It implies, therefore, a selective approach to objectives, concentrating on those which are deemed to be decisive. If the goal of social planning is the creation of a better society, sustained action directed towards shaping the future will be required. The decision on the set of strategic objectives needed for this purpose is a political one. Any set is likely to include some objectives that command a consensus and others which, although not consensual, are considered politically feasible.

5.51 Strategic planning is not just a statement of objectives; it requires the identification also of what must be done to attain each objective. This will give rise to a set of strategic policies. The degree to which a strategic plan sets forth policies and fixes targets for achievement during its term may vary. In high priority areas it is likely that the plan would set forth specific policies and targets. In other areas only the general lines of policy might be indicated, from which the policy development system would develop objectives and targets.

5.52 Strategic planning provides a means of integrating economic and physical planning into social planning and is in accordance with the requirements of such planning. It is now widely recognised that detailed economic planning or forecasting of the type that reached its peak in the 1960s is no longer practicable. It has been abandoned by the Norwegian and French planners. But some kind of 'tour d'horizon' of the economy is necessary if any effort is to be made to anticipate events so as to steer a safe course for national development. Whatever the problems of "a small open economy" it is inconceivable that no attempt will be made to determine economic strategies. Failure to do so would amount to surrendering our destiny totally to others. The point of strategic social planning is that economic strategies can be tested for their likely social effects and social strategies for their likely economic effects. Physical planning, of its nature, is strategically oriented, which is all the more reason for ensuring that its social implications are fully evaluated.

5.53 Clearly strategic social planning as an integrated process requires the periodic production of a strategic plan for social development. (The nature and purpose of such a plan will be outlined in Chapter 6 (6.4). While it is not the purpose of this study to be prescriptive regarding the nature of Irish society, in order to illustrate what is meant by strategic planning, we will give a few examples of strategic issues that might be addressed in a strategic plan. Reduction of inequality in Irish society might be adopted as a strategic social objective towards the goal of a better society. It would call for a series of strategic policies to achieve the objective and for an assessment of their social and economic effects. Improvement of the quality of life at work might be another strategic social objective, and it too would require a variety of policy responses. In the economic sphere industrialisation might be regarded as a strategic issue and the strategic objective(s) of that policy would need to be assessed for social as well as economic effects. A strategic policy for development of small industries, for example, has considerable political and social significance, besides its economic significance. In the area of physical policy the strategy on housing development as a contribution to a better society would be concerned with a much wider range of social objectives and policies than has been customary in housing policy. In the institutional sphere decentralisation and community development might be identified as strategic objectives.

5.54 Since strategic planning requires the periodic production of a plan institutional arrangements are needed to manage the planning process. In order to decide on appropriate arrangements it is necessary to consider the period a plan should cover, how the planning cycle should

relate to the political cycle, whether the planning process should be managed from within or outside the administration, and if it is to be managed within the administration, where the planning unit should be located. We will examine these issues further in Chapter 6 (6.5-6.18) in the context of Recommendations Nos. 1 and 2.

Coordination of Policy Development

5.55 Coordination of policy development has been identified as a key issue in social planning, conceived as the planning of "social" policies. Institutional factors, as we have seen, make coordination difficult. There is perceived to be a need for inter-departmental planning in Ireland. Strategic planning also requires a structure for the development and coordination of strategic policies in implementing the plan. If a strategic plan were developed without a linked structure for policy development there is a danger that strategic planning would become merely an exercise in public relations. Through providing a linkage a perennial problem of all planning is tackled, viz. the difficulty of effectively implementing the plan. An analogy might be drawn between strategic and operational planning in business. Strategic planning determines the main lines of future development; operational planning develops and coordinates the action plans needed to give effect to the strategies.

5.56 Whether social planning is approached via strategic social planning or via the coordinated planning of "social" policies, therefore, better arrangements for coordinating policy development are seen to be needed. The traditional arrangements, supported by the coordinating role of the Department of Finance, are no longer sufficient. There are various ways in which coordination may be developed. It can be promoted through assigning a lead role for a policy area or issue to a particular department, through the creation of a superministry or through a special ministry for planning and coordination. It can be promoted also through a central planning unit, through inter-departmental committees for a specific set of policies, e.g. "social" policies or economic policies, or through committees for a specific policy issue, e.g. manpower policy, or specific target groups, such as the aged. In the context of strategic planning another possibility is the establishment of ad hoc committees for the coordination of strategic policies in pursuit of each of the strategic objectives of the plan. An important point to note is that if coordination structures are established only at administrative level, then there is no formal coordination at political level below the cabinet. In Chapter 6 (6.19-6.29) we discuss further the coordination arrangements needed and recommend (Recommendation No. 3) new coordination structures.

Analysis for Policy Development

5.57 We have assumed that planning units in some form will be established in all departments. We have indicated above (5.4) that the creation of planning units, necessary though it is, will not be enough in itself. It is necessary to create also the conditions in which planning can be practised successfully. The starting point of all planning is analysis. We have seen in Chapter 1 that there is a perceived need for better provision for policy analysis. This requires action to develop systematic analysis, more staff and better analytical skills. Clearly policy analysis has a major input to make to strategic planning. In policy analysis for social planning, more than quantitative skills (economic and statistical) are needed. The insights of the social scientist (sociologist and political scientist, in particular) will be needed. Other professional skills may be needed, depending on the policy area. In Chapter 6 (6.30-6.33) we make proposals for the development of policy analysis in the context of strategic social planning (Recommendation No. 4).

Development of Social Planning Information

5.58 Development of policy analysis and of planning units in departments can play an important part in helping to identify planning information needs and in developing arrangements for its production. But these approaches would tend to reinforce the existing fragmented production of social data. Although the NESC, as we saw in Chapter 1 (1.50), has called for the improvement of social statistics and has identified specific areas for action, little progress has been made. It seems to be unlikely that much progress will be made in the absence of a structure for the development and monitoring of a continuing programme of improvements in statistical data. There are also wider issues involved in the development of statistical information in the context of social planning. Parties engaged in the planning process might reasonably expect to be in a position to exercise some influence over the kinds of information produced to meet planning needs. This in no way conflicts with the paramount importance of ensuring the objectivity of the data actually produced. Social planning, and in particular strategic social planning, would seem to require more effective coordination of social research and analysis. As we recorded in Chapter 1 (1.51) there appears to be general support for the production of a periodic Social Report, which the NESC has already proposed. We will consider in Chapter 6 (6.38-6.40) how such a report should be fitted into a social planning process. We make two recommendations in Chapter 6 (Recommendations Nos. 5 and 6) for the improvement of social planning information.

Development of Participation

5.59 Full participation by the administration in social planning is essential. It is clear that our concept of social planning requires that the strategic social objectives and the strategic social policies should be endorsed at the highest political level. Accordingly parliament should be associated with the planning process. It is also clear from the concept, and from our analysis of the need for social planning, that it is politically necessary to seek the greatest measure of consensus in the community for these objectives and policies. Hence, it is desirable that organised interest groups, and, where possible, the beneficiaries of social policies, should be effectively engaged in the planning process. If parliament is to be associated with the planning process it is necessary to consider whether it should approve the plan, as in France, or merely debate it as in Norway, whether it should have a say regarding the options that guide the preparation of the plan, as in France, and whether it should be associated also with the coordination of social policy development, e.g. through the establishment of parliamentary committees for key policy areas. In relation to participation by interest groups and beneficiaries of policies it is necessary to consider what should be the role of the NESC in relation to the plan and policy development, whether any other institutional provisions are required for participation in the production of the plan and whether advisory bodies are needed to promote participation in policy development.

5.60 As regards participation by interest groups, the planning system in Ireland in the past was mainly non-participative. There is some evidence that this is changing. The NESC itself is an example of a participative advisory system, although it is not yet linked to planning and policy formation in the same way as the corresponding Dutch and French bodies. The government announced in *National Development 1977-1980* its intention to issue a series of discussion papers as a prelude to decision or policy papers, as part of a regular planning cycle. This indicated a willingness to open policies to discussion and to bring the NESC into the planning process by seeking its views on the discussion document. In regard to policy proposals for legislation there has always been a practice of consulting representative groups with an interest in the legislation. But such consultations have been ad hoc. Usually they have been conducted with groups separately.

5.61 One of the advantages of the French participative planning process is that it forces the administration to become more open. It affords legitimacy to issues for debate by getting them on the planning agenda. This can be to the advantage of the administration. The French method of managing the planning process ensures that independent and

open information is available. This makes participation meaningful and maintains trust. Participation can make planning a learning process. While it may not lead to consensus, it may create a better understanding of the eventual political decisions. Consultation with interest groups individually is no substitute for the inter-action that is possible in a participative planning process. Participation can reduce uncertainties about the demands and reactions of various groups. It provides an opportunity to explain and discuss public policy. Through mutual exchanges of information the basis may be laid for better compromises. We believe that the social planning arrangements in Ireland should be characterised by openness. Openness to change and to frank discussion of social issues is needed if Irish society is to respond to the challenges it faces in a positive way. These challenges are not confined to the island of Ireland itself, but embrace Ireland's social obligations and role in the world. We make three recommendations in Chapter 6 (Recommendations Nos. 7, 8 and 9), on the development of open participation.

5.62 The recommendations put forward in Chapter 6 constitute an inter-related set of proposals for social planning at national level. Our aim is to bring action to bear on the key issues and problems that arise in social planning. We seek to create an essential unity in action. The structures proposed will need to be kept under review. The planning of planning is an important part of social planning.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL PLANNING STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

Introduction

6.1 In this chapter we put forward recommendations designed to make social planning in Ireland effective. To make it effective requires in our view changes from the past both in what might be termed planning philosophy and in planning structures. As regards planning philosophy, social planning, as we have defined it, requires that social, and not economic, objectives should provide the integrating focus in national planning. Social planning must ensure that economic issues do not dominate national planning as they did in the past. In regard to planning structures we do not believe that mere adjustments to the existing administrative arrangements for planning will be enough. We believe that the nature of the planning arrangements are crucial to the success of any planning effort. Unsuitable arrangements for social planning may make it difficult or impossible to induce the changes in attitudes and behaviour that is implied in the change in planning philosophy. Accordingly there is an inter-relationship between the two kinds of changes needed. We consider it necessary to instal planning procedures and processes that will help induce changes in attitudes and approaches at political, administrative and community level. Social planning arrangements must help in the search for some measure of consensus in the community, without which any social planning would be exceedingly difficult. But social planning does not require, and is unlikely to lead to, a consensus on all strategic objectives and policies. Its function, in our view, is to assist the political process, not to supplant it. We make nine specific recommendations. In addition we propose for consideration the establishment of a parliamentary committee on social policies. We regarded it as outside our terms of reference to make recommendations on parliamentary structures.

6.2 The critical recommendations relate to the adoption of strategic planning, to the management of the strategic planning process and to

the coordination of the strategic "social policies".* These are likely to be the most controversial since they mark a sharp departure from planning as practised in the past and involve more than adjustments to existing arrangements. They demonstrate clearly what is at stake in taking on social planning. The remaining recommendations regarding the development of policy analysis, the improvement of social planning information and the development of participation are, of course, important. But they are to a large extent a development of trends. They are intended to create a more coherent policy regarding these issues and in that way to contribute to more effective social planning.

6.3 The planning structures proposed may appear more complex at first sight than they are in reality. In fact only three structural innovations are proposed: a strategic planning directorate, a formal co-ordination system for development of strategic social policies and an advisory council for social statistics. Table 1 shows a functional model of the system proposed in relation to the key issues identified in social planning. Figure 1 gives an outline of the structural relationships.

Strategic Planning

Recommendation No. 1: A strategic national plan for social development should be prepared and published every four years

6.4 The basic purpose of a strategic national plan for social development would be to review and analyse the state of society and to set out the strategic objectives (social, economic, physical, cultural and institutional) of national development. The social objectives would be overriding ones. They would be directed towards the achievement of the goal of a better society. The other objectives would be consistent with them. The plan would develop or identify a set of strategic policies for progress towards the objectives. It would establish, at least in areas of high priority, the targets to be aimed at through these policies during the period of the plan. The plan thus would provide guidelines for policy development as well as induce a planned approach to such development. Publication of the plan with its analyses could help to promote an understanding of the strategies adopted and to engender a commitment to them. By clarifying issues it would help develop a better appreciation of the nature of the choices to be made and of the limits to action.

6.5 It would seem desirable that the adoption of a strategic social development plan should be a key task of a new government. Throughout the report we have stressed that social planning requires the inter-

*See footnote 2, page 110.

Table 1

Functional model of proposed social planning system			
Planning Issue	Planning Response	Administrative/Consultative Organ(s) Involved	Political Organ(s) Involved
Determination of Social Objectives	Strategic Planning and Strategic Plan	Strategic Planning Directorate* and Departments	Government and Parliament
Coordination of Development of Social Policies	Coordinated Development of Strategic Social Policies ¹	"Social" Departments, Strategic Planning Directorate and Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee for Social Policy*	Cabinet Sub-Committee for Social Policy*, Government, Parliament (Dail Committee on Social Policy**)
Development of Analysis	Social Analysis Policy Analysis	Strategic Planning Directorate Department of Finance and other Departments	Cabinet Sub-Committee for Social Policy*
Development of Social Planning Information	Social Report Social Research Social Statistics Development	To be decided Strategic Planning Directorate, Departments Advisory Council for Social Statistics* and Department of the Taoiseach	Cabinet Sub-Committee for Social Policy*
Development of Participation/Consensus	Participation in preparation of Strategic Plan Participation in Social Policy Development	NESC, Ad hoc Planning Groups Advisory Councils*	Parliament

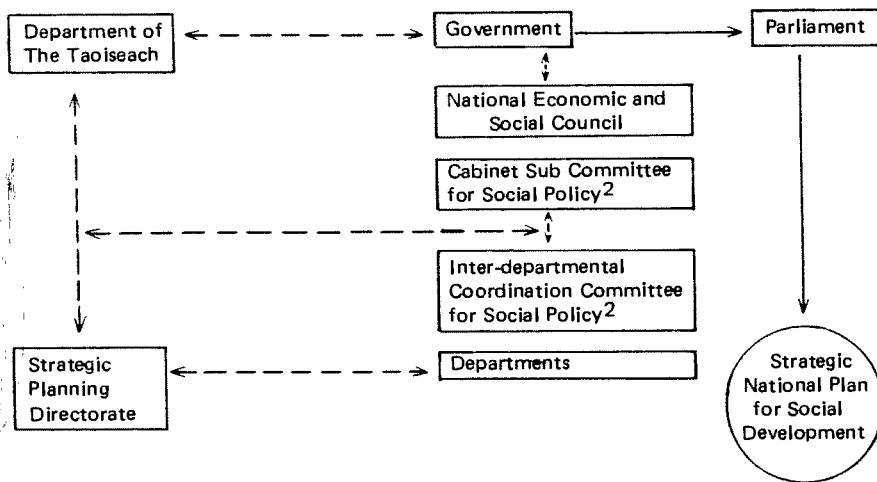
* New organs recommended
** Suggested for consideration, not a recommendation.

¹ The coordination arrangements would apply also to the consideration of the social aspects of other strategic policies.

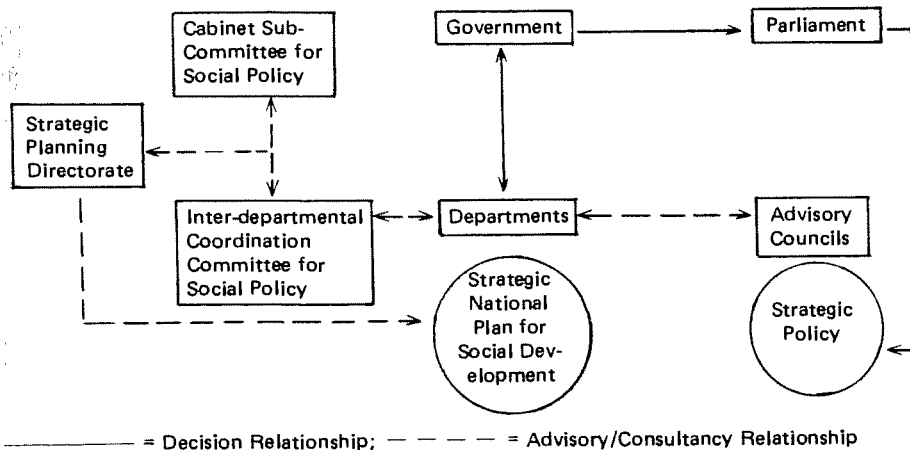
Figure 1

Structure of Proposed Social Planning System

(a) Structure for Preparation of Strategic National Plan for Social Development¹



(b) Structure for Preparation of Strategic Social Policies³ in Implementation of Strategic Plan



¹The Plan would include strategies for social, economic, physical, cultural and institutional development.

²These bodies would consider the social aspects of all the strategies proposed in the Plan.

³The social aspects of economic, etc. strategic policies would be processed through the advisory procedures, as appropriate.

action of planning and politics. It is desirable, therefore, to align the planning cycle as closely as possible to the political cycle. A planning cycle of four years would seem to be better suited to this purpose than the traditional five year one.

6.6 Given that in Ireland, unlike Norway, the political cycle is not fixed, it is impracticable to have an arrangement under which a plan is produced by a government in its final year of office as a basis for future policy if returned to power. In any event, such an arrangement requires a considerable degree of national consensus on policies if wasteful planning effort is to be avoided. In Irish circumstances, some degree of overlap between the planning cycle and the political cycle is unavoidable. In the past Irish governments have lasted about four years on average. There is the possibility that this stability may not endure in the future. If that were to happen, however, and if it were also to reflect serious divergences in policy, then any national plan, whatever its duration, would be likely to require adjustment by a new government. The point of strategic planning is that it may lead to political agreement on national social objectives, at least. The areas of divergence would be confined then to policy instruments or the pace of change. Political instability clearly makes planning more difficult, whatever its form, but planning may help offset the consequences of such instability, c.f. the role of French planning under the Fourth Republic.

6.7 We envisage national planning as a continuous process, not as the periodic production of a plan. With a four-year continuous planning cycle the first two years after the finalisation of a plan would be used by the unit responsible for managing the planning process to undertake, promote and coordinate background studies of strategic issues for consideration in the next plan. At the end of that period, i.e. about half-way through the existing plan and ordinarily in the government's final year of office, it would carry out a major review of the plan. The studies and the review would provide the background material for the preparation of a new plan. Thus a new government coming into office would have the benefit of this material to supplement its own policy studies. The material would help it to decide on any adjustments to the existing plan and provide the basis for the early preparation of a new plan. An outgoing government would be facilitated in developing its electoral policies.

6.8 We propose that the preparation of the plan be divided into two phases, like the French plan, an options phase and a decision phase. The options phase would end with the publication by a new government in its first year of office of a planning document for discussion and consul-

tation. The decision phase would end with the adoption and publication of the strategic social development plan early in the government's second year of office.

6.9 If the planning cycle is not effectively reconciled with the political cycle implementation of the plan will suffer, as appears to have happened in the past. The danger is all the greater if strategic planning is adopted. Strategic planning needs to be complemented by an annual cycle of planning of policy development. But in our view, strategic planning cannot be done properly on the basis of a plan, rolled forward annually. Under such a planning procedure, the strategic focus would quickly be lost and the depth of the strategic analyses would be bound to suffer. The result would be a bias towards projections and financial planning. That is not what social planning means. This does not mean of course that strategies do not need to be kept under review during the period of a plan, since strategies may be undermined by unexpected developments.

Recommendation No. 2: A Strategic Planning Directorate should be set up to manage the strategic planning process

6.10 Preparation of a strategic social development plan clearly must be coordinated centrally. We propose that a distinct strategic planning unit be established on a full-time basis, within the administration. To distinguish it from planning units in other departments and to emphasise its function in directing overall strategic planning we propose that the unit be designated the Strategic Planning Directorate.

6.11 In Norway the planning unit is located within the departmental administration. Until 1980 it was a separate unit within the Ministry of Finance; it is now a separate ministry but this may be temporary. In France the planning unit is independent of the civil service, although closely associated with the government. We do not believe that an independent planning unit would be likely to be successful in Ireland. Experience of planning in Ireland has shown that it has been difficult to engage all the departments effectively in the planning process, even when planning has been promoted from within the administration. It would seem to be more difficult to do so, if the planning process were managed by an independent planning unit. Moreover, such an arrangement places an emphasis on the technocratic approach to planning, and throughout this report we have stressed the importance of the political dimension in social planning. An independent planning unit would create ambiguity about the relationship between politics and planning, which we believe it is essential to avoid. The factors¹ which influenced

¹It can be argued, of course, that the establishment of an independent unit makes it more difficult to dispense with planning and helps also to open up the system. But if the political will to plan does not exist, an independent unit will not create it.

the setting up of the French National Planning Commission were exceptional. Its relative success does not guarantee the same results in Ireland.

6.12 We do not favour combining responsibility for social planning, in the sense of overall national planning that is socially oriented, with responsibility for economic and financial planning. The short period of existence of the Department of Economic Planning and Development did not provide sufficient experience to enable a judgement to be made as to whether a separate planning department could ensure effective social planning in Irish circumstances. The evidence from the planning documents² produced is that the social dimension continued to be viewed in terms of resource allocation, which almost guarantees the dominance of economic values in planning. Whether this orientation would have continued had the Department remained can now be only a matter of conjecture. The experience in France does not provide grounds for optimism. The Norwegian experience is different, but political and social factors largely account for the difference. For the reasons given in Chapter 5 (5.42) there is a natural tendency for the economic dimension to dominate the social. This is especially so if the organ responsible for coordinating economic and financial policies also coordinates overall national planning. The usual objection to separating coordination of overall planning from that of economic and financial planning is that the budget and the plan are not effectively linked. In strategic planning, however, there is not much force in this objection. A strategic plan is not concerned with the total range of policies that have to be financed. The linkage between the budget and the plan is achieved through the development and implementation of the strategic policies of the plan. The arrangements we propose ensure an effective linkage for strategic social policies.

6.13 In our view only a planning unit attached to the Department of the Taoiseach would be in a position to act as a countervailing influence to the economic departments and to ensure that social values and insights are brought to bear on all the strategies of the plan. Moreover, in the context of social planning it is important that the Taoiseach has readily available to him expert advice on major social issues. By virtue of its involvement in social analysis and in the management of a strategic social planning process a Directorate attached to the Department of the

²c.f. *Development for Full Employment, (1978)*.

The emphasis of this Green Paper is on economic objectives. It stems from the belief that economic advance carries with it direct social benefits and that substantial social improvements in other areas cannot take place unless there is the necessary economic progress to support and finance them.

Taoiseach would be in a unique position to provide such advice. Through the Department of the Taoiseach the Directorate would be in a position also to provide coherent advice from the social point of view to the government as a whole. Its function in this respect would be to complement, rather than supplant, the advice of the other individual departments. Accordingly we propose that the Strategic Planning Directorate be located in the Department of the Taoiseach.

6.14 Location of the Directorate in the Department of the Taoiseach would enable it to have the necessary degree of independence in operation and flexibility in staffing. We recommend that the Directorate be staffed partly by officers on secondment from other departments and partly by people from outside the civil service hired on a contract basis. These should include social scientists. In this way a bridge could be built between the administrative, scientific and business worlds. We regard such cross-fertilisation as very important. It is desirable that the Directorate be kept small, but high-powered. We envisage that the Strategic Planning Directorate would perform much the same management role as the French National Planning Commission. Its role will be to assist departments to develop the strategic plan, not to do it for them. The Commission, while maintaining a capacity for analysis itself, gets others to do much of the work of providing information. The Commission's staffing arrangements are flexible and allow for regular renewal. We believe these arrangements to be desirable. They are more easily attainable in a small department like that of the Taoiseach where career outlets are limited and the incentive to move can be maintained.

6.15 Should it be decided to locate the Directorate elsewhere (e.g. in the Department of Finance) it would be desirable that this independence in operation and flexibility in staffing should be retained. The original Norwegian arrangement of a separate unit within the Finance ministry would seem to be the most suitable model in that event.

6.16 We envisage that the Strategic Planning Directorate would have three over-riding tasks:

- management of the strategic planning process, which would include the responsibility for integrating social aspects in all the strategies of the plan
- development of social analysis and social planning information
- a secretariat function in the coordination of the development of strategic "social" policies.

6.17 The management task would include coordinating the preparation

of the plan, organising the consultation process and advising the government on the plan via the Department of the Taoiseach. It would involve keeping the implementation of the plan and the plan strategies under review. It would entail keeping the consultation arrangements and the planning process generally under review also. The task of developing social analysis and social information should include, initially at any rate, responsibility for coordinating social research. In Recommendation No. 3 we recommend the establishment of a coordination system for the development of strategic "social policies" in pursuance of the plan. It is proposed that the Strategic Planning Directorate should service this coordination system. In this way the strategic planning and the social policy development processes would be linked.

6.18 Primary responsibility for coordinating strategic economic policies will remain with the Department of Finance, and primary responsibility for physical planning with the Department of the Environment. The Strategic Planning Directorate, however, in coordinating the overall strategic plan will be responsible for ensuring that the economic and physical strategies in the plan are consistent with the strategic social objectives. In effect economic and physical development strategies will have to be justified in terms of social strategy, a reversal of the traditional relationship. That is also the essence of the new relationship. The development of planning procedures to enable the integration to take place will be a matter for the Directorate. The role of the head of the Directorate clearly will be very important.

Coordination of Development of "Social" Policies

Recommendation No. 3: A Permanent Cabinet Sub-Committee and a Permanent Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee should be established to coordinate the preparation of strategic "social" policies in pursuit of strategic social objectives.

6.19 The process envisaged in this recommendation is, we believe, critical to the success of social planning. Even if strategic planning is not undertaken, arrangements are needed to improve the coordination of the planning of "social" policies. Whether we have regard to the perceptions of the arrangements needed for social planning in Ireland outlined in Chapter 1, to the institutional problems in social planning generally, or to the trend towards cross-sectoral planning abroad, the common element we find is the need for better coordination of "social" policy development. In our view coordination is needed both at political and administrative level. While coordination could be improved by confining formal arrangements to the administrative level, we consider this to be insufficient. Establishment of a Cabinet Sub-Committee would

ensure more effective political control of policy coordination. It would have symbolic significance as an expression of collective responsibility in the area of "social" policy. If political interest in coordination is not manifest, administrative coordination will be weakened. Moreover, the Sub-Committee would admit of a more wide-ranging discussion of policy issues than is possible under the more formal cabinet procedures. The Sub-Committee might be open to civil servants and other experts, as in the Netherlands.

6.20 We do not envisage that the Committees recommended should deal with all "social" policies. Under strategic planning the primary purpose of the coordinating structure is to promote and coordinate the preparation of the strategic policy actions³ in the social area to implement the strategies in the plan. The Committees would also examine the social implications of strategic policy proposals in other areas. It would be a matter for the government to decide if any other "social" policy proposals should be processed through the coordination system.

6.21 It is recommended that the proposed Committees should comprise the following core Ministers/Departments: Taoiseach, Finance, Environment, Education, Health, Social Welfare and Labour. The core group would thus contain the major social departments and include the departments responsible for economic and physical planning, although the role of the latter departments would relate primarily to their financial and housing responsibilities respectively. Other "social" departments, such as Justice or the Gaeltacht, should participate in the Committees if policy development in their area of responsibility is required under the plan strategies. Likewise "economic" departments, such as Agriculture, should participate if the plan strategy specifically involves the development of the social aspects of their policies. It is also recommended that the Strategic Planning Directorate should provide the secretariat of both Committees.

The Cabinet Sub-Committee

6.22 The Taoiseach should chair meetings of the Cabinet Sub-Committee. Decisions of the Sub-Committee would not be binding on the cabinet, but the work of the cabinet should be lightened. The main functions of the Cabinet Sub-Committee would be:

- to consider the social objectives and the strategies proposed to achieve them when the strategic plan for social development is being prepared and to advise the government on them

³New legislation may not be involved.

- to coordinate strategic "social" policy development at political level and to advise the government on such policy
- to consider the social aspects of other strategic policies and to advise the government on them
- to designate the lead minister for a "social" policy issue where necessary
- to approve annually a programme of policy analysis/evaluation in the social area (Recommendation No. 4)
- to consider the social report before publication (Recommendation No. 6).

It is suggested that an annual programme⁴ for "social" policy development might be drawn up for approval by the Cabinet Sub-Committee. This programme could be prepared by the Inter-Departmental Co-ordination Committee in consultation with departments. In this way coordinated political direction of policy development by departments would be ensured in advance.

The Inter-Departmental Co-ordination Committee

6.23 It is recommended that departments be represented on the Inter-Departmental Co-ordination Committee at deputy/assistant secretary level, and that the Committee should be chaired by an official from the Department of the Taoiseach, preferably by the head of the Strategic Planning Directorate.⁵ The Committee should be empowered to set up, where necessary, sub-committees or working groups of lower-level officials to examine specific details of policy proposals. Such sub-committees should be chaired by a member of the full Committee. It would be desirable that the departmental representative on the Committee should have power to commit his department administratively to specific proposals worked out in the Committee, otherwise the effectiveness of the Committee would be hampered.

6.24 The main functions of the Inter-Departmental Co-ordination Committee would be to advise and service the Cabinet Sub-Committee and, in particular:

- to submit a report on the social strategies proposed for the strategic plan for social development

⁴This does not mean that policy proposals need be completed within the year in all cases.

⁵While a chief representative should be appointed for each department, this official could be substituted by another at the same level if the policy issue warranted it. The operation of the Committee should be flexible. What is involved is a Committee framework, not a permanent membership.

- to submit an annual programme for "social" policy development in pursuit of the plan
- to prepare an annual programme of policy analysis
- to coordinate the preparation of the strategic "social" policies
- to prepare a final report on each policy proposal.

The report to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on strategic "social" policies should cover the relationship of the proposal to the strategic social objective concerned, its degree of consistency with other policies, its objectives and targets, its cost during the period of the plan and a forecast of its ultimate cost.

6.25 The Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee would also prepare a report for the Cabinet Sub-Committee on the social implications of other strategic policies. Its function in regard to these policies would be to ensure that their social implications are fully evaluated. It is envisaged that the Coordination Committee would review such proposals after the normal inter-departmental consultations have taken place and before the proposals are submitted to the Cabinet.

6.26 The committee system does not imply or require any change in the legal position of departments. It will have no power to impose solutions. The formal rules of cabinet procedure would continue to apply to "social" policy proposals, subject to necessary modifications. If the coordination system is to have an effective influence on the shape of proposals, it must be in a position to exercise an influence on them from an early stage in their development. If it becomes engaged in the process only at the final stage, its action might be merely ritual. Accordingly, it is important that the procedural arrangements should ensure that the Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee is effectively engaged at the various stages of processing the proposals. No implied commitments should be made before the proposals are cleared through the coordination system. Proposals would be formally submitted to the government only after the Cabinet Sub-Committee had considered them.

6.27 It may be objected that the proposed coordination arrangements will slow down further the process of preparing legislation and policy proposals and that it will add to the burden of ministers. Given that the system is intended to deal only with key policies, however, the extra burden on ministers should not be significant. If effective planning is introduced there is no reason why any serious slow-down should occur. In any event slowness is not a very convincing objection if the objective is better policy-making. The challenge is to make the new system work expeditiously by developing efficient planning procedures.

6.28 A variety of possible coordination arrangements were mentioned in Chapter 5 (5.56). It is necessary to explain why we have rejected the alternatives to the system proposed. A superministry for "social" policy, even if politically feasible, is not a solution to the coordination problem. It merely internalises it. While the designation of a lead department for a particular strategic policy issue, such as a target group policy, may be desirable, even under the coordination arrangements proposed, it does not solve the problem. The department will have to secure the cooperation of other departments in regard to action required in their policy areas. In order to promote coordination it will most likely be necessary to establish an ad hoc committee. The result could be a proliferation of such committees. Our proposal for a single permanent committee structure, with flexible membership, would prevent this. It would also prevent the proliferation of committees that might arise under the various inter-departmental committee arrangements mentioned.

6.29 This is one reason why we do not favour the establishment of ad hoc committees for the strategic policy areas of each plan, i.e. something on the lines of the arrangements for the French priority action programmes. The other reason is that we wish to cultivate permanent cooperation between departments. Permanent arrangements are needed for this. The "social" departments acting in unison can ensure the social a powerful presence. At the same time by promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of policies the committee system should ensure better use of resources. Coordination of the development of strategic policies by the Strategic Planning Directorate would change its function. It would increase the power of the department to which the Directorate is attached, in this case the Department of the Taoiseach. This could weaken the confidence of the policy departments in both the planning and coordination systems. We envisage the Directorate providing a service to the coordination system, but the function of the Department of the Taoiseach in policy coordination would not be changed. Finally, as argued in Chapter 5 (5.37), it is not enough to look to development of planning in individual departments for improvements in coordination.

Policy Analysis

Recommendation No. 4: A regular programme of policy analysis should be undertaken in relation to "social" policies

6.30 There is no programme for systematic policy analysis at present. Such a programme is necessary if social planning, and particularly strategic social planning, is to be practised. Any programme of policy

analysis needs to be politically relevant. We propose, therefore, that the Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee, assisted by the Strategic Planning Directorate, should draw up an annual programme, in consultation with the Department of Finance and the "social" departments, and should submit it to the Cabinet Sub-Committee for approval. The programme could be carried out partly by building up the existing capability for policy analysis/programme evaluation within the administration and partly by contracting out work.

6.31 To build up the analytical capability within the administration we suggest that the analysis section in the Department of Finance be expanded to cater more effectively for "social" policy analysis and evaluation. The main "social" departments – those represented on the coordination committees – should have at least two trained analysts on their staff.

6.32 There are many definitions of policy analysis. For our purposes it means the production of knowledge for decision-making through the use of formal techniques of analysis. It is to be distinguished from research through its emphasis on decision-making. Policy analysis in the area of "social" policy cannot be concerned merely with allocation decisions. It is necessary that the analytical techniques should be capable of addressing values other than efficiency. Accordingly it is important that some guidelines be developed for policy analysis in the social area. These might be developed in compiling the first annual programme for policy analysis. If they were, this would enable political approval to be secured. It follows that a multi-disciplinary approach is needed in policy analysis in this area and that social scientists should complement other disciplines where possible.

6.33 We have considered whether the Strategic Planning Directorate should be given responsibility for the development of policy analysis in the area of "social" policies. We believe, however, that it is undesirable to split up the responsibility for the development of this expertise. It would be preferable to leave the general control of analysis with the Department of Finance. The Strategic Planning Directorate will have an opportunity to influence the annual programme when it is being compiled.

Improvement of Social Information

Recommendation No. 5: A permanent Advisory Council for Social Statistics should be established

6.34 We believe that an essential step in improving social information would be the establishment of a permanent advisory council for social

statistics. Social statistics and data are the raw material for much practical social research. At present responsibility for collecting, storing, publishing and analysing official social statistics is fragmented. As argued in Chapter 5 (5.58) we believe the position will not be remedied by action at departmental level alone.

6.35 The main tasks of the Council would be:

- to advise on measures to improve social data for planning purposes
- to examine and keep under review the arrangements for maintaining, collecting, storing, processing and publishing social statistics, including the question of whether further centralisation in the Central Statistics Office (CSO) would be desirable
- to develop a regular plan for improvements in social statistics
- to advise on social surveys carried out by public service organisations so as to ensure they make the best possible contribution to social data within their scope
- to examine, keep under review and advise on the arrangements for providing access to public data for research purposes
- to examine analyses of social statistics in official publications and to make proposals for the development of analysis and for improvements in methods and presentation.

6.36 The Council should be composed of representatives of the main agencies involved in social research, the administration, the CSO, independent experts and the social partners. It is not envisaged that the Council be a supervisory body for the CSO, such as exists in the Netherlands. In view of the fragmentation of responsibility for public data collection such a body would not meet the needs of the situation in Ireland. But it must be able to consider the domain of the CSO if it is to be effective. A Council composed in this way would ensure an appropriate emphasis on information for planning and research in official statistics. As we argue below (6.48) effective participation in planning depends in part on the availability of adequate information. We propose that the precise definition of social statistics be left to the Council. The Council would report to the Department of the Taoiseach, as the CSO does at present. The Strategic Planning Directorate would seek the advice of the Council before taking any measures considered necessary to improve social data for planning purposes. The Council could either have its own staff or be serviced by the CSO.

6.37 Although better coordination and promotion of social research is needed we consider that this is not an appropriate task for the proposed

Council. It would deflect it from its essential task of developing the data base. How to coordinate social research and planning is a problem that has not been solved in any of the countries studied. We have included a general responsibility for promoting and coordinating social research in the functions of the Strategic Planning Directorate. This will help ensure that research and planning are aligned to some extent. As planning information requirements become clearer this arrangement can be reviewed.

Recommendation No. 6: A Social Report should be published every two years

6.38 The national income accounts give a broad picture of the economic situation of the country. There is no document that gives a corresponding picture of the social situation. This should be remedied by the regular publication of a social report, for which we found a demand in Ireland. Essentially this means following up and developing the NESc prototype report.⁶ Such a report should aim to analyse the existing state of society. It should identify the main trends and show how existing public policies relate to social problems and issues. Thus, it should not be merely a collection of social statistics, but should provide an objective commentary.

6.39 It is desirable to provide a link between the social report and the strategic planning cycle. It is proposed, therefore, that a report be issued every two years aimed to coincide with the mid-term and the end of each four-year plan. The report would serve as an important background document. The impact and value of a social report would be likely to be small if it were to appear only once in the planning cycle.

6.40 While a link between the report and planning is desirable, we do not favour entrusting the compilation of the report to the Strategic Planning Directorate. If the Directorate were to take on this function, there is a danger that it would be diverted from its main planning tasks. It is preferable that the report be compiled by some agency independent of a government department so that it is seen to present an independent view of the state of society. It is reasonable, however, that the government should have an opportunity of considering a social report before publication, so as to be aware of its contents. That is why we have suggested that the proposed Cabinet Sub-Committee on social policies should consider the report before publication. This would apply no matter how it is compiled. The priority is to get a report published

⁶NESC Report No. 25 *Towards a Social Report* (1977).

regularly. We make no specific recommendations as to which existing body, inside or outside the administration, might be entrusted with the task.⁷

Participation

Recommendation No. 7: The Strategic National Plan for Social Development should be debated in parliament

6.41 The planning arrangements proposed in the preceding recommendations cater for administrative participation in the planning process. In Chapter 1 and Chapter 5 the need for political and interest group participation in social planning was also identified. We consider that political and interest group participation is needed both in the preparation of the strategic plan in the development of "social" policy in certain areas.

6.42 We recommend that parliament should debate both the consultative plan document and the draft plan. It should approve the draft plan. This would strengthen political commitment to the plan. Social planning in the sense in which we have defined it would not be meaningful unless parliament (Dáil and Seanad) is given a formal opportunity to debate the state of our society and the direction in which it is going. Parliament is the means of organising the views of all the people at political level. Moreover, as parliament will have to consider eventually the policies proposed to implement the strategies of the plan, it is appropriate that it should have the opportunity of considering the strategies themselves. Unless the parliament is involved in the options phase – the formative stage – it cannot participate effectively.

6.43 We have considered how the strategic plan should be reviewed during its term. By definition implementation of the plan depends on the implementation of strategic policies identified in it. The annual budget and the estimates for the individual departments afford an opportunity for reporting progress. It is preferable that the review of policies presented in these reports to parliament should focus on the plan, rather than that this review be relegated to a separate document. The budget statement should include a review of the progress towards the objectives of the plan and, in particular, should show how the fiscal and transfer payments provisions proposed relate to the policy objectives/targets of the plan.

6.44 Effective parliamentary control of "social" policies would be

⁷Outside bodies competent to undertake it include the Economic and Social Research Institute and the Institute of Public Administration.

promoted if the Dáil, at least, established a social policy committee.⁸ This committee could examine policy proposals in detail before their consideration by the whole House. The parliamentary committee would provide a parliamentary review system corresponding to that provided by the policy coordination system recommended at government and administrative level. We suggest that the establishment of such a parliamentary committee be considered.

Recommendation No. 8: The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) should be consulted by the government on the Strategic National Plan for Social Development

6.45 We recommend that the NESC be consulted on both the consultative plan document and the draft plan. Just as parliament provides a representative view at political level on society so the NESC provides a representative view at organised interest level. We envisage that initially the NESC will be one of the main channels of securing public participation in the preparation of the strategic plan. To assist it in its deliberations the Strategic Planning Directorate should make available to it background analytical material on the various major issues discussed in the plan documents. In this way some degree of openness in the access to material would be achieved. The NESC would be able to devote its attention to its essential role of identifying the area of agreement on strategies for social development and of delimiting the areas of disagreement. NESC reports on the plan should be published without prior reference to the government.

6.46 We have considered whether the NESC should be consulted also on the development of strategic policies. This would give it the same role as the analogous bodies in France and the Netherlands. Practical considerations arise, however, in involving the NESC in considering actual policy proposals. The fact that this would add another layer to the policy development process might be an acceptable price to pay if the benefits were worth it. We have doubts that they would be. We think it would not be feasible for the NESC to consider in depth any significant number of policies. The members of the Council are busy people, and even if the device of alternate members were used, the problem would be likely to remain. Besides, consultation on fully worked-out government proposals is unlikely to produce significant changes in them. We do not propose, therefore, that the NESC should be consulted on policy proposals as a matter of course.

⁸Parliamentary committees are a feature of the parliamentary system in the other countries studied. Even allowing for the fact that ministers are not members of parliament, the size of the Dutch and Norwegian lower houses (150 and 155 respectively) is comparable to that of the Dáil.

6.47 We have also given very careful consideration to whether we should recommend some further formal structures for ensuring a wider public participation in preparing the strategic plan. The publication of a discussion document is not sufficient; the essence of participation is informed debate and this requires both information and a forum for discussion. It may be argued that because of the structure of the membership of the NESC there is a danger that economic issues and values may over-ride social issues and values in the Council's deliberations on a plan. Many important social interest groups are not represented in the NESC. The capacity of the NESC to represent, or to be seen to represent, the social interest could be improved by altering the membership so that a wider range of organised social interests are represented, particularly those which could be regarded as representing consumers, either generally or in respect of particular social concerns. Alternatively, or in addition, the NESC in its consideration of the plan documents could co-opt representatives of wider social interests to its committees or sub-committees for the purpose of consultation. We suggest that both of these possibilities should be looked at.⁹ If advisory councils, discussed in Recommendation No. 9, were set up for target groups, membership of the councils and the NESC could be linked.

6.48 We are reluctant to recommend further formal structures for participation in planning at this stage. The condition precedent for participation is not structures but information. Until adequate social planning information is available to sustain a formal participatory process, we believe a gradual approach to the creation of structures for participation is preferable. We recognise, of course, that one of the purposes of participation is to afford social interests an opportunity to provide information as well as to acquire it, but the planners must be in a position to make available proper planning information if an informed debate is to be possible. An informal approach would be better initially, therefore. This would allow the setting up of ad hoc committees or working groups, which could include representatives of interest groups and experts, to study key issues in the preparation of

⁹We considered whether a separate body should be established for the social area, e.g. an Advisory Council for Social Policies, but we rejected this idea. Such a Council would run counter to the concept of social planning advocated in this report. The need is to integrate the social in all aspects of national development, not to partition it off into a specific area of policy. Social planning requires that each social interest should adopt a consistent attitude to economic and social policies and not adopt contradictory attitudes that produce irreconcilable objectives. If the economic and social are discussed in different forums such contradictions are very likely to emerge.

the plan. The Strategic Planning Directorate will be responsible for keeping the need for more formal structures under review.¹⁰

Recommendation No. 9: Participation by target groups in the development of "social" policies that concern them should be promoted by the establishment of Advisory Councils

6.49 The need to adopt a holistic approach to policy development, recognised in the recommendation for improved policy coordination, also brings up the issue of participation in the development of target group policies. Consultation in policy through advisory councils is well established in the other countries studied. This recognises that target groups or those acting on their behalf, such as voluntary organisations, should have a say in shaping proposals being designed for their benefit. A trend towards establishing national organisations to facilitate such consultation in policy development is evident in Ireland. Already there are officially recognised national umbrella organisations catering for particular groups and serving as a means of communication with government departments. Examples are the Council for the Status of Women and the National Youth Council of Ireland. There is, we understand, a proposal to set up an advisory council for the aged and in the *Report of the Task Force on Child Care Services*¹¹ the establishment of a National Children's Council is recommended.

6.50 We consider that advisory councils can play an important role in "social" policy development for key target groups. It is important, however, to avoid a proliferation of such councils and particularly an overlapping of their areas of concern. Such difficulties are more likely to arise if a piecemeal approach is adopted. It is important too to introduce uniformity in the structure and functions of such councils. We consider that the creation of such councils should be related to the needs of social planning.

6.51 Accordingly we consider that a clear policy should be adopted regarding the establishment of advisory councils. We think that their role in policy development would be enhanced if they were seen as formal advisory councils and not as mere channels for interest group

¹⁰We considered whether, for a start, a body such as the French Plan Development Commission might be set up to give an impetus to participation in the formulation of the plan. While such a body would become involved at an earlier stage than the NESC, it would duplicate the eventual work of the NESC and in Irish circumstances would be likely to contain many of the same people. By leaving the field clear for the NESC as the central organ of formal participation, the advantages and disadvantages of this method of participation can be appraised more clearly.

¹¹Final Report, (1980) Section 5.3.

representation. This would require that the membership of the councils be broadened to include, in addition to representatives of organisations catering for the target group, representatives of professional staffs, of public authorities engaged in providing services for the group and independent experts. Central policy-making departments would need to participate actively in the deliberations of the councils, so that the necessary cross-fertilisation of ideas could take place. If representatives of these departments were to be made full members, however, there would be a danger that the independence of the councils might appear to be compromised. This risk could be avoided by appointing them in an observer capacity. This also would have the advantage of avoiding difficulties which civil servants might have in associating themselves with politically controversial proposals. It would be desirable too that the Strategic Planning Directorate be represented in an observer capacity.

6.52 The main functions of such councils should be:

- to consider and offer advice on policy proposals from government departments for their target group and make proposals for new policies
- to advise on methods for implementing policies, including consideration of any necessary statutory regulations
- to participate in the preparation of the strategic national plan for social development as appropriate
- to promote public understanding of the problems and needs of their target group
- to publicise the services available to their target group
- to encourage the self-development of their target group through personal, voluntary and community efforts.

6.53 As to what advisory councils might be established, this is a matter that would require detailed consideration. It is suggested, however, that the following are the most important target groups to be catered for: the aged, children (or the family), the youth, the handicapped, the itinerants. Advisory councils to deal with deprived urban and rural areas would also help to focus attention more clearly on the problems of these areas.

6.54 The recommendation we make regarding advisory councils is not central to the arrangements for social planning. It represents a further step in developing public participation, and hence in democratising the planning process. What we are aiming at is to fit such councils into a framework of social planning. If the approach and changes we suggest are not acceptable it does not materially affect the rest of the planning

structure. If our approach is acceptable, but it is unacceptable to alter existing councils, there is scope for experiment on the lines we suggest with new councils.

Social Planning at Sub-National Level

6.55 As stated in Chapter 5, we have confined our attention to planning at national level. We realise, of course, that public agencies at sub-national level have an input to make to planning at national level. The achievement of the objectives set by national planning may depend in some cases on effective planning at sub-national level. It follows that planning at local level must be effectively associated with planning at national level. The conditions in which this becomes possible must be created at national level. The centre must provide a well-articulated framework within which the local and other bodies can make decisions on their objectives and on the means to achieve them that are broadly consistent with national policies. It must provide the resources needed as well as the support services by way of information, advice and technical skills. Developments abroad reveal a strong trend to decentralise the planning of certain social and welfare services, particularly personal welfare services. (The latter services are still relatively underdeveloped in Ireland, however.) Central setting of uniform standards is being abandoned in favour of local flexibility, subject to the observance of minimum standards. Flexibility in determining services requires flexibility in decision-making and in finance. The centralising tendency of Irish administration has been frequently assailed. We have identified institutional change as a proper subject for consideration in social planning and we would hope that the social planning process would give an impetus to institutional reforms and change. It may be difficult to make significant advances in regard to planning at sub-national level without special study. We recommend, therefore, that when decisions have been taken on social planning arrangements at national level, a study should be made of planning structures and processes at sub-national level to harmonise planning systems at national and sub-national levels and remove obstacles to social planning at sub-national level.

Conclusion

6.56 The recommendations and proposals put forward in this report are designed to promote effective social planning in Ireland. They can be looked at from two points of view: the philosophy of social planning and the planning structures. We attach great importance to the philosophy, for it provides the social purpose for engaging in social planning. Moreover, the concept of social planning adopted clearly must influence the kind of planning structures needed. The suitability of structures

can determine the success or failure of any planning. We have attempted to identify the structures necessary for the organisation of successful planning, as we conceive it. But structures alone cannot ensure successful planning. Success depends a great deal on the skills, experience and outlook of the planners and on the degree of commitment to the discipline of planning at political, administrative and community levels. We would stress that the benefits of a formal planning process at national level can extend beyond the resultant plan. The process is, we believe, almost as important as the plan, insofar as by focusing attention on the analysis of future threats and opportunities it may help prepare the way for necessary action, even if the action is not immediately practicable for political or other reasons.

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APPENDIX A

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS
IN IRELAND CONSULTED

Department of Economic Planning and Development
 Department of Education
 Department of the Environment
 Department of Finance
 Department of Health
 Department of Labour
 Department of Social Welfare
 Department of the Taoiseach
 AnCO
 Association of Chief Executive Officers of Health Boards
 Council for Social Welfare
 Council for the Status of Women
 County and City Managers' Association
 Economic and Social Research Institute
 Federated Union of Employers
 Irish Congress of Trade Unions
 Irish Farmers' Association
 Medico-Social Research Board
 National Economic and Social Council
 National Social Service Council

APPENDIX B

SOME COMPARATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATISTICS FOR IRELAND
(REPUBLIC), THE NETHERLANDS, NORWAY AND FRANCE

	Ireland	Netherlands	Norway	France	EEC
Physical Area*					
Total (1,000) sq. kms	70	41	324	544	—
% Agricultural area	69	50	9	60	—
Population**					
Total (million)	3.192	13.856	4.105	52.974	259.2
No. per sq. km.	45	336	13	98	170
% aged under 15	31.3	24.3	31.3	23.6	22.6
% aged 15 to 64	57.8	64.8	57.9	62.8	63.6
% aged 65 and over	10.9	10.9	10.8	13.6	13.7
Employment**					
Civilian working population as % of Population	35.4	34.4	45.8	41.6	41.5
Distribution of Employment:					
— Agriculture	23.1	6.3	9.0	9.4	8.2
— Industry	30.4	33.2	32.4	37.8	39.9
— Services	46.5	60.5	58.6	52.8	51.9
Unemployment as % of civilian working population	8.9	4.3	1.8	5.3	—
Self-Employed as % of civilian employment	28.5	14.6	14.1	17.6	16.7
Openness of Economy*					
Imports as % of GDP	58.6	42.9	36.2	18.5	—
Exports as % of GDP	47.7	41.1	24.5	16.7	—
Total Trade as % of GDP	106.3	84.0	60.7	35.2	—
GDP per Capita (US dollars)*	2,940	7,680	8,800	7,170	—
Tax Revenue Plus Social Insurance Contributions as % of GDP*	35.6	54.0	51.2	42.2	—
Transfer Payments as % of GDP*	13.3	30.9	24.6	24.8	—
Investment* % of GDP	24.7	21.1	36.6 ¹	22.6	—

Sources: *OECD Annual Economic Reviews **Eurostat Basic Statistics
 All the figures relate to 1977 except employment (1978).
¹Affected by investment in oil production development.

APPENDIX C

COMMON FEATURES OF GOVERNMENT IN THE NETHERLANDS, NORWAY AND FRANCE

The Netherlands, Norway and France have a number of common features of government, which contrast with the position in Ireland. Each country has three basic levels of government and administration: national, provincial and communal or municipal. At sub-national level the Netherlands is divided into 11 provinces and over 800 municipalities. Both these tiers have elected councils. The provincial tier has mainly executive functions in relation to national legislation and also exercises some supervisory functions in relation to the municipalities. It has been acquiring an increasing role in planning, in respect of physical planning and certain social areas such as education and health (hospitals). Its planning role seems destined to increase. Norway is divided into 18 counties and over 450 municipalities. Both tiers have elected councils. The provincial (county) tier was formerly weak, but it has been acquiring increased powers. France is divided into 92 départements and over 36,000 communes (municipalities), each tier again having an elected council. In addition the 92 départements are grouped into 22 regions for the purposes of regional development and there is an indirectly elected regional council, which however has little real power.¹

The département is a unit of national administration in France and most ministries have field offices in the département. In Norway ministries also operate field services at county level, but the role of the central administration is not as pervasive as in France.

At provincial level in each country the executive is headed by an appointed State official: the Crown Commissioner in the Netherlands, the County Governor in Norway and the Prefect in France. This official has a co-ordinating role in regard to State services at provincial level and a supervisory role in regard to the municipalities.²

¹The new government has proposed legislation to create an elected regional assembly with enhanced powers.

²Under the decentralisation proposals of the new government in France the Prefect will no longer head the departmental services; that function will be transferred to the president of the departmental council. His supervisory role in relation to the municipalities will be changed also.

Municipalities are headed by an elected officer, the mayor, in France and Norway, and by an appointed official, the Burgomaster, in the Netherlands. These are important figures in the local administration. Only large municipalities have professional management. The Norwegian municipalities are the strongest and have an independent source of finance through a share in national income tax. In the Netherlands the social role of the municipalities have been limited by the strong tradition of voluntary organisation of social action.

In the Netherlands and France parliament comprises a directly elected lower house and an indirectly elected upper house. In Norway the parliament (Storting) is elected as a uni-cameral house, but after the election it is divided into a lower chamber (Odelsting — three-quarters of the members) and an upper chamber (Lagting — one-quarter) chosen proportionately from the political parties. Parliament functions as a bi-cameral assembly for ordinary legislation and as a single chamber for some business, notably the budget. In the Netherlands and Norway parliament is elected by proportional representation, by means of the list system, but the electoral and constituency arrangements differ. (The Netherlands has only a national constituency). In both these countries the lower house is elected for a fixed period (four years) and dissolves by the efflux of time. There are no by-elections, vacancies being filled by the next person on the party list. Norway has the unusual arrangement of electing a substitute deputy along with each deputy. The substitute can deputise in parliament when the deputy is absent for any specific reason, such as illness, visits abroad and so forth. The substitute automatically fills any vacancy and is replaced from the party list. In France the National Assembly (lower house) is elected for five years, but the President has power to dissolve it before its period expires. Deputies are elected to single member constituencies under an electoral system that involves a second round of voting where no candidate obtains an overall majority in the first round. A substitute (suppléant) is elected with each deputy and in certain specific circumstances the substitute automatically fills a vacancy. Otherwise a vacancy necessitates a by-election.

All the parliaments operate on the committee system. Proposals to parliament are made by way of numbered reports, the first report in each parliamentary session being the budget which is presented in the autumn at the opening of parliament. All ministry estimates are debated as part of the budget and the estimates and budget must be passed before the beginning of the new (calendar) financial year.

Ministers do not have to be elected to parliament and, if elected, are not allowed to remain members of parliament. They have, of course, a right of audience there and are collectively responsible to parliament. On becoming a minister a member of parliament must resign his seat and be replaced by a substitute. In the Netherlands and Norway election to parliament has not been the main route to ministerial office. The system allows for the appointment of party officials and technocrats to ministerial posts.

In none of the countries is there the same distance between the civil service and politics that exists in Ireland. All civil servants may freely belong to political parties

and even members of the higher civil service can stand for parliament, and get leave of absence for the duration of parliament, if successful.³ In the Netherlands and France many civil servants have sat in parliament or have been appointed ministers directly.

In a variety of ways, some direct and some subtle, the differences of this continental parliamentary and administrative model from the Westminster model we inherited affect the approach to policy development and planning. But other more individual features have the more decisive influence on the national planning arrangements in each country.

³Political activity must be confined, however, to areas outside the civil servant's administrative responsibility and civil servants owe loyalty to the government of the day.

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLES OF PLANNING INFORMATION STUDIES CARRIED OUT BY DUTCH SOCIAL PLANNING OFFICES

(1) Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCPO)

Among the most important studies carried out by SCPO have been:

- a study of the distributive effects of collective and free public services
- a study of the future demand for personnel in the so-called quaternary sector, i.e. goods and services whose provision is directed and wholly or mainly financed by Government
- study of cultural changes in the Netherlands
- forecast of educational development needs up to 2000
- age structure of population and government and social insurance expenditure 1975-2000
- municipalities in order of 'social backlog'
- towards Social Indicators in the Realm of Public Health.

(2) Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR)

Among the most important studies published by the WRR have been:

- *The Next Twenty-Five Years* (a survey of future developments in the Netherlands)
- *Do We Make Work Our Business* (an exploratory study of the relations between economically active and inactive persons)
- *On Social Inequality* (a policy orientated study on social inequality).

The projected areas for study during the term of office of the present Council include:

- national policy with regard to ethnic minorities
- a policy-orientated research into the future (as a follow-up to the previous one)
- the place and future of Dutch industry
- labour problems in the long-term
- international influences on the Netherlands, particularly the relationship between the Netherlands and West Germany (which accounts for a third of its trade)
- public administration, involving a study of the place of planning in the administration and of functional decentralisation
- communications policy.

APPENDIX E

INCOME NEGOTIATIONS IN NORWAY

Achievement of greater equalisation in the distribution of incomes has been an objective of social policy in Norway since the war. The government has not sought to impose an incomes policy. The general view has been that the basis for incomes policy cooperation must be the collective advantages the parties involved see in such cooperation. Wage settlements have been characterised, however, by national collective agreements. The government itself has standing negotiation agreements with the farmers and fishermen under which income support for these groups is negotiated. It also exercises control over professional and corporate incomes. Redistribution of income is achieved through sharply progressive taxation and transfer payments.

Income negotiations are supported by an elaborate framework, partly formal and partly informal. The formal part consists of a strong mediation service, backed up by compulsory arbitration and by a Labour Court, whose task is confined to settling disputes arising from collective agreements. A good account of the system is given in an OECD (1979) report. From the economic and social point of view, however, the informal machinery is of more importance.

Since 1962 a Contact Committee has existed which provides a forum in which the Government, the Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions, the Norwegian Confederation of Employers, the Fishermen's Union and the farmers' organisations (the Farmers' Union and the Union of Smallholders and Farmers) come together prior to the commencement of wage and income negotiations to discuss the economic outlook and exchange views. The Committee is headed by the Prime Minister and includes also the Minister of Finance and the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Public Administration. The responsibilities of the latter include public sector pay, consumer policy, income distribution and price control. Each of the organisations mentioned has one member on the Committee. Not all employees or employers groups are represented in the Contact Committee and special ad hoc arrangements exist to keep these informed of developments in the Committee.

The Committee is assisted in its deliberations by a technical report prepared by a Technical Calculating Committee composed of experts from the government and the other parties, and headed by the director of research in the Central Bureau of Statistics. The Technical Committee uses the short-term national econometric forecasting model to assess the effects of income settlements on prices, incomes, income

distribution, etc. The purpose of the report, which apparently is invariably unanimous, is to give an impartial view of the economic situation and of the effects of different income settlements. It thus reduces disputes about factual matters.

Wage agreements, whether based on national agreements or industry by industry settlements (only twice since 1961), take effect in the spring and last for two years, with a mid-term review. Wage negotiations normally take place directly between the central organisations of trade unions and employers (both strong bodies). For 1976-77, however, a so-called combined settlement (national understanding) covering wages, taxation and transfer payments was negotiated. The Contact Committee played an important role in steering the negotiations through ad hoc groups. This type of agreement has not been repeated. Compulsory arbitration was necessary in 1978. A price and wage freeze was imposed in 1979. Wage drift is a problem in Norway due to the tight labour market.

The policy on farm incomes is to guarantee an income in line with average earnings in industry. Norway is anxious to stabilise the rural population and to raise its level of self-sufficiency in agricultural products. (An interesting policy is the operation of a scheme of "substitute farmers" to enable farmers to take holidays). Fishermen's incomes are also supported. Wage settlements usually include special increases for the lower paid. The position of such workers has become important in the context of reducing disparities in pre-tax incomes.

APPENDIX F

THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FRENCH PLAN

The political instability and the weakness of government under the Fourth Republic (1946-1958) enabled the Plan to assume a central role, as a source of national coherence, guidance and inspiration, relatively independent of a somewhat discredited political system. The democracy of the Plan was a substitute for the paralysis of democracy at political level. The Plan and the administration ensured the continuity of the government. Parliament was not involved in the planning process. As Bauchet (1962) remarked the retreat of parliamentary control was accompanied by a rise of the representation of groups. Curtailment of the disruptive powers of parliament by the Fifth Republic, the strengthening of the executive and the drift towards presidential government have contributed to the politicisation of the Plan and perhaps to some retreat from the substance, if not the form, of consultation. Parliamentary approval is now necessary for the Plan and also for the Options Report which orients the preparation of the Plan. Thus the political process now complements the consultative process. At the same time there is evidence of a growing conflict between politics and planning, but whether this is the inevitable outcome of the strengthening of government or merely the result of particular political and economic philosophies is debatable.

The problem of the political dimension of the Plan was brought into the open by the withdrawal of two of the major trade unions the CFDT and the CGT¹ from the final stage of the preparation of the Sixth and Seventh Plans.² The correspondence exchanged between these unions and the Planning Commissioner is of considerable interest. Writing to the Planning Commissioner in connection with its withdrawal from the Sixth Plan the CFDT objected to the policy choices orienting the Plan, in particular to the alleged subjection of planning to the market economy at a time when, it felt, collective action was called for to solve major problems. It alleged that the government had chosen to act in the interests of the social groups on which it relied and that to continue to participate in the Plan would appear to give support to a trend which they strongly condemned. The Commission's reply

¹ La Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail, one of the large socialist unions, and La Confédération Générale du Travail (communist).

² There were additional reasons for withdrawal in connection with the Seventh Plan, but generally related to the alleged political determination a priori of the Plan options.

made clear the political content of the Plan and the function of the dialogue:

"... the Plan is by definition a decision of the public powers and consequently a political decision. This decision is taken following wide concertation, in the course of which all the economic and social parties can raise the problems they desire to see dealt with, explain the merits of their point of view and propose their solutions. But it is necessarily determined in accordance with the general line of economic and social policy followed by the government and the majority on which it rests. In a pluralist, and in many respects conflictual society, such as ours, it is inevitable that this decision not only may not correspond to the expectation of all the organisations which have participated in the consultation, but may also cause, on the part of some of these, reservations affecting even the principles of the choices adopted."³

His successor in reply to the CGT regarding the Seventh Plan made clear that 'concertation' is more than consultation, however, if less than agreed government:

"The object of the concertation is in the first place to allow the participants to work on a common information base in order to avoid misunderstandings that emerge not from real disagreements but from information that is incomplete and difficult to interpret. In the second place, it is to identify the points of convergence that exist in the analyses and, if possible, in the policies proposed, while at the same time delimiting better and making better understood the divergences."⁴

³ La Planification Française: Cahiers Français, May-June 1977 (our translation).

⁴ Le 7^e Plan: Cahiers Français, July-Sept. 1977 (our translation).

APPENDIX G

PLAN COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES FOR FRENCH SEVENTH PLAN AND DRAFT EIGHTH PLAN

Seventh Plan*	Draft Eighth Plan
Commissions:	Commissions:
Development	Development
Agriculture and Food Industry	Agriculture and Food Business Industry
Commerce, Services and Crafts	Energy and Raw Materials
Energy	Employment and Working Conditions
Foreign Economic and Financial Relations	Habitat and Living Conditions
Overseas Departments	Social Protection and the Family
Research	
Transport and Communications	
Education and Training	
Health and Health Insurance	
Regional Development and Living Conditions	
Social Life	
Committees:	Committees:
Environment	Finance
Finance	International Economy and Foreign Trade
Public Works and Buildings	Overseas Departments and Territories
Consumption	Research
Employment and Work	Regional Development
Income and Transfers	Transport
	Employment and Income

* Excludes commissions established during Options Phase (see para. 4.42).

APPENDIX H

SOCIAL PRIORITY ACTION PROGRAMMES IN FRENCH SEVENTH PLAN

Employment:

Intensification of Public Action on Employment
Improvement of Occupational Training for Young People
Reform of Working Conditions and Upgrading of Manual Work

Reduction of Inequalities

Equality of Opportunity through Education and Culture
New Policy for the Family
Maintenance of Elderly People in their own Homes
Development of Preventative Social Action and Voluntary Social Work
Easier Access to Justice
Strengthening the Consumer's Role

Improvement of Living Conditions

Humanisation of the Hospitals
Improvement of Urban Life
Conservation of the Architectural Heritage
Development of Rural Areas
Conservation of the Natural Heritage

NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS

NOTE: The date on the front cover of the report refers to the date the report was submitted to the Government. The dates listed here are the dates of publication.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>	
1. Report on the Economy in 1973 and the Prospects for 1974	April	1974
2. Comments on Capital Taxation Proposals	July	1974
3. The Economy in 1974 and Outlook for 1975	Nov.	1974
4. Regional Policy in Ireland: A Review	Jan.	1975
5. Population and Employment Projections: 1971-86	Feb.	1975
6. Comments on the OECD Report on Manpower Policy in Ireland	July	1975
7. Jobs and Living Standards: Projections and Implications	June	1975
8. An Approach to Social Policy	June	1975
9. Report on Inflation	June	1975
10. Causes and Effects of Inflation in Ireland	Oct.	1975
11. Income Distribution: A Preliminary Report	Sept.	1975
12. Educational Expenditure in Ireland	Jan.	1976
13. Economy in 1975 and Prospects for 1976	Oct.	1975
14. Population Projections 1971-86: The Implications for Social Planning – Dwelling Needs	Feb.	1976
15. The Taxation of Farming Profits	Feb.	1976
16. Some Aspects of Finance for Owner-Occupied Housing	June	1976
17. Statistics for Social Policy	Sept.	1976
18. Population Projections 1971-86: The Implications for Education	July	1976
19. Rural Areas: Social Planning Problems	July	1976
20. The Future of Public Expenditures in Ireland	July	1976
21. Report on Public Expenditure	July	1976
22. Institutional Arrangements for Regional Economic Development	July	1976
23. Report on Housing Subsidies	Feb.	1977
24. A Comparative Study of Output, Value-Added and Growth in Irish and Dutch Agriculture	Dec.	1976
25. Towards a Social Report	Mar.	1977
26. Prelude to Planning	Oct.	1976
27. New Farm Operators, 1971 to 1975	April	1977
28. Service-type Employment and Regional Development	July	1977
29. Some Major Issues in Health Policy	July	1977
30. Personal Incomes by County in 1973	July	1977
31. The Potential for Growth in Irish Tax Revenues	Sept.	1977

32. The Work of the NESc: 1974-1976	Sept.	1977
33. Comments on Economic and Social Development, 1976-1980	July	1977
34. Alternative Growth Rates in Irish Agriculture	Oct.	1977
35. Population and Employment Projections 1986: A Reassessment	Oct.	1977
36. Universality and Selectivity: Strategies in Social Policy	Jan.	1978
37. Integrated Approaches to Personal Income Taxes and Transfers	Mar.	1978
38. Universality and Selectivity: Social Services in Ireland	June	1978
39. The Work of the NESc: 1977	June	1978
40. Policies to Accelerate Agriculture Development	Sept.	1978
41. Rural Areas: Change and Development	Sept.	1978
42. Report on Policies for Agricultural and Rural Development	Sept.	1978
43. Productivity and Management	Feb.	1979
44. Comments on Development for Full Employment	Dec.	1978
45. Urbanisation and Regional Development in Ireland	June	1979
46. Irish Forestry Policy	Sept.	1979
47. Alternative Strategies for Family Income Support	April	1980
48. Transport Policy	Mar.	1980
49. Enterprise in the Public Sector	May	1980
50. Major Issues in Planning Services for Mentally and Physically Handicapped Persons	Oct.	1980
51. Personal Incomes by Region in 1977	July	1980
52. Tourism Policy	Dec.	1980
53. Economic and Social Policy 1980-83: Aims and Recommendations	Nov.	1980
54. The Future of the National Economic and Social Council	Feb.	1981
55. Urbanisation: Problems of Growth and Decay in Dublin	Sept.	1981
56. Industrial Policy and Development: A Survey of Literature from the Early 1960s to the Present	Feb.	1981
57. Industrial Employment and the Regions 1960-82	May	1981
58. The Socio-Economic Position of Ireland within the European Economic Community	Sept.	1981
59. The Importance of Infrastructure to Industrial Development in Ireland – Roads, Telecommunications and Water Supply	Sept.	1981
60. Minerals Policy	Oct.	1981
61. Irish Social Policies: Priorities for Future Development	Nov.	1981
62. Economic and Social Policy 1981 – Aims and Recommendations	Oct.	1981
63. Population and Labour Force Projections by County and Region, 1979-1991	Oct.	1982
64. A Review of Industrial Policy (A Summary of this report is available separately)	Oct.	1982
65. Farm Incomes	Nov.	1982
66. Policies for Industrial Development: Conclusions Recommendations	Oct.	1982

