

The Background to the Election

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THE END OF THE 31ST DÁIL AND THE CALLING OF THE ELECTION

At 9:32 am on Wednesday 3 February 2016, the Taoiseach Enda Kenny entered a packed Dáil chamber and without any great fanfare or ceremony announced to the gathered deputies that he was headed to Áras an Uachtaráin to advise the President to dissolve the Dáil. Wishing TDs who were not seeking re-election the best for the future and good luck to those offering themselves to the public again, Kenny was inside the chamber for all of two minutes. Leaving behind an array of disgruntled opposition deputies the Taoiseach then, in that most modern of fashions, took to Twitter to announce that the general election would be held on Friday 26 February. The strapline to his tweet was titled ‘Let’s Keep The Recovery Going.’¹

While that apparently anodyne phrase would ultimately cause Fine Gael no end of trouble during the subsequent election campaign (see Chapter 4 in particular) it was, to the party’s election gurus, the obvious slogan on which to run its short three-week campaign. After all Fine Gael and Enda Kenny had seen the hated ‘Troika’ of the European Central Bank, European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund from the country’s

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