

The Fulfilment of Election Pledges by the Outgoing Government

Rory Costello, Paul O'Neill, and Robert Thomson

The government's record of fulfilling pledges that Fine Gael and Labour had made in their 2011 manifestos was one of the dominant themes of the 2016 election campaign. The Labour Party in particular came in for sustained attack on this front from opposition parties, particularly Sinn Féin. Mary Lou McDonald, the Sinn Féin deputy leader, claimed that Labour 'tore up every promise it made', and the issue was raised by party leader Gerry Adams in each of the three televised leaders' debates.¹ Sinn Féin ran a billboard campaign on 'Labour's Broken Promises', featuring an image of former Labour minister Ruairí Quinn signing a pledge not to increase university fees. Another billboard, this time from Fianna Fáil, featured a remark by Labour minister Pat Rabbitte ('isn't that what you tend to do during an election?') made in response to an accusation that the party had over-promised on the issue of child benefit (Fig. 2.1). Many political commentators attribute the collapse in support for Labour to the widespread perception that it broke many of its election promises on issues such as water charges, child benefit and health insurance.²

R. Costello (✉) • P. O'Neill
University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

R. Thomson
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK

© The Author(s) 2016
M. Gallagher, M. Marsh (eds.), *How Ireland Voted 2016*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40889-7_2