

Better Times Ahead: **FOR WHOM**

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Irish companies are beginning to reckon with having to compete with other European companies (principally British) for the supply of young people coming from our third level colleges. While business prospects were poor it did not alarm them that the proportion of our graduates emigrating jumped from 6 percent in 1983 to 19 percent in 1987. Now the scene has changed. Advertised executive vacancies in Ireland shot up by 30 percent in 1988 (as against an average increase of 4 percent a year, 1983 - 1987). October figures will show whether this translated into a similarly large jump in graduate recruitment at home.



Since 1983, some patterns have been built up which Irish companies will either have to emulate or break, e.g. the recruiting visits to Irish campuses by overseas companies where they scatter incentives like the IDA; the awareness among Irish graduates of the much lower personal taxation in the UK; the pull of friends overseas - "sure, all my class is there", etc.

In this regard, it is disturbing to see personal taxation moving to the top of the Confederation of Irish Industry's hit list for 1989 (President's address to CII Annual Conference). Ireland should not want to import the yuppie class of the UK nor that country's degree of social inequality. The CII and the Union of Students of Ireland (USI) should ensure that those graduating are as fully informed about the cost of mortgages abroad as about their levels of taxation. Ireland's low interest rates are worth several percentage points in taxation to the home-owner, not to talk of the difference in quality between what is on offer here and in London. The CII and USI should also educate graduates to the incidence of taxation on the lowest paid which is where any relief the country can afford should be targetted.