

SECULAR REPUBLIC

SUBMISSION TO AN TAOISEACH & MINISTER FOR JUSTICE 5th July 2018

The Constitution of Ireland contains the following provisions:

PREAMBLE

“In the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, from Whom is all authority and to Whom, as our final end, all actions both of men and States must be referred, We, the people of Éire, Humbly acknowledging all our obligations to our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, Who sustained our fathers through centuries of trial, Gratefully remembering their heroic and unremitting struggle to regain the rightful independence of our Nation, And seeking to promote the common good, with due observance of Prudence, Justice and Charity, so that the dignity and freedom of the individual may be assured, true social order attained, the unity of our country restored, and concord established with other nations, Do hereby adopt, enact, and give to ourselves this Constitution.”

PRESIDENT

“In the presence of almighty God I do solemnly and sincerely promise and declare that I will maintain the constitution of Ireland and uphold its laws, that I will fulfil my duties faithfully and conscientiously in accordance with the constitution and the law, and that I will dedicate my abilities to the service and welfare of the people of Ireland. May God direct and sustain me.”

COUNCIL OF STATE

“In the presence of almighty God I do solemnly and sincerely promise and declare that I will faithfully and conscientiously fulfil my duties as a member of the council of state.”

JUDGES

“In the presence of almighty God I do solemnly and sincerely promise and declare that I will duly and faithfully and to the best of my knowledge and power execute the office of chief Justice (or as the case may be) without fear or favour, affection or ill-will towards any man, and that I will uphold the constitution and the laws. May God direct and sustain me.”

In the first instance, the Preamble is legally unnecessary. Moreover, it is not only theistic, but is specifically Christian and trinitarian. Therefore, it is incompatible with the philosophies of non-trinitarian Christians (particularly as regards Unitarians who have a long tradition in Ireland), non-Christian theists (e.g. Jews and Muslims), and Humanists.

In regard to the oaths, they are also theistic and incompatible at least with a Humanist position.

The situation of the oaths in particular has led to the ridiculous and inauthentic state of affairs whereby non-theists have been forced to take them in order to assume the roles concerned.

It should be noted that there were no such stipulations in the constitutions of 1919 and 1922.

[more]

If the Constitution is going to be amended to remove the offence of blasphemy, we think it would be appropriate as well to repeal the Preamble and the oaths in question with provision being made for the latter in statutory law and allowing for those who want to take a theistic oath and those who do not.

[ends]