

## TEXT 5 : The Irish Famine 1/2

« During the winter of 1846/47 a mood *of* despair, panic and hysteria prevailed in many parts of Ireland. The demand for relief was far higher than it had been at the same time in the previous year. As early as October 1846, for example, over 100,000 were employed on the public works alone. But the regional distribution of this relief varied greatly - 20,000 of these people were employed in County Clare whereas the total number of people employed in the nine counties of Ulster amounted to 1,200.

The demands made on the local relief committees for corn were also much higher than they had been 12 months earlier and by the beginning of 1847, as the supplies of corn ran *out*, it was increasingly being replaced by soup. By this time 100 of the 130 workhouses were full and outdoor relief continued *to be forbidden*. However, when faced with this overwhelming demand for relief, many local relief officials and Boards of Guardians abandoned the guidelines laid down by the Government and instead provided relief. This was short-lived however. As soon as the local funds became exhausted it was again the Government who had the upper hand in the relief operations. At the beginning of 1847 the Government announced another change in policy. The public works and relief committees were to be replaced *by* soup kitchens. As their name suggests, their primary function was to distribute soup in the distressed areas. This was to be financed totally *by* the local poor rates. During the summer of 1847, approximately 3 million people were receiving relief in the form of soup. Again the regional contrasts were marked. Moreover the soup kitchens were only a temporary measure, they were to close in August 1847 and after this the Poor Law was to be the main provider of relief. After August 1847 therefore, the Poor Law was to be the main agency for providing relief in Ireland. In order to do this however, the Poor Law had to be extended, and for the first time relief outside of the workhouse was permitted. This meant that relief was to continue to be financed *from* the resources of each local Poor Law Union as far as possible, with the Government providing additional funds only if it was absolutely necessary. »

Kinealy, C. « *The Irish Famine 1845 - 52* », North Irish Roots, 1990, Vol. 2, No. 5 (1990), pp. 158-161

### I. **Right or Wrong** (Justify your answers by quoting the text)

- D. The situation in Ireland worsened (= became worse) between 1846 and 1847.
- E. Before 1847, it was allowed to give food out to the poor outside of workhouses.
- F. Officials in charge of providing relief always obeyed the law.
- G. All areas received the same amount of help.

### II. **In the text, find the English for ...**

- désespoir =
- Tandis que =
- Écrasant (e) / débordant =
- De courte durée =

### II. **Answer the following questions by rephrasing with your own words :**

1. Before starting distributing soup in some areas (after 1847), what was one way used by the government to « help » the poor in Ireland ?
2. Throughout the entire crisis, how were the measure financed ?

III. **Grammar Focus 5** : Observe the words in bold : What are they ? Observe in particular : « (...) continued **to be forbidden**. » : What type of proposition is « to be forbidden » ? Could it be phrased differently ?