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REMARKS
OF

MR. THOMAS W. GLEASON, PRESIDENT
INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN'S
ASSOCIATION, AFL-CIO
VICE PRESIDENT, AFL-CIO

TO

PRIME MINISTER OF IRELAND
MR. CHARLES J. HAUGHEY, T.D.

AT

HOTEL BERKSHIRE PLACE

JUNE 10, 1982

Mr. Prime Minister:

On behalf of the Irish-American Labor Leaders present, it is a pleasure and honor to be meeting with you this morning. We realize your visit to the United States is an important one for you and the whole of Ireland - not to mention a busy one - so we especially thank you for including a visit with us.

Please let me take this opportunity to also thank and commend the members of the Irish Consulate in New York, particularly Sean O'hUiginn and Donal Hamill for their cooperation in arranging this morning's gathering.

Those here today of the American Labor Movement all share a common concern and interest in Ireland. I think it's important to point out to you, Mr. Haughey, that while a good portion of those present have their roots or ancestors' roots planted in Ireland, not all share in this Hibernian heritage. Still, all share in a great love of Ireland.

In our professional lives as union officials, we are called upon every few years or so, to enter into contract negotiations with the employers who hire our members. We fully realize the importance and often tenuous nature of negotiations.

We know that you too are also familiar with the practice of negotiations. We realize - through your words and actions - that as Irish Prime Minister you are committed to continuing serious negotiations to bring peace and justice in unity to Ireland.

On St. Patrick's Day this year, I was privileged to be among the hundred or so guests at a White House luncheon at which you were President Reagan's special guest.

Leading Irish American members of the labor movement were sent copies of the address you delivered that day. I considered it one of the finest and forthright statements of Ireland I've ever heard - and Mr. Haughey, in case you did not know, I've been listening to speeches for 81 years.

In your remarks to Mr. Reagan, you referred to the "worldwide Irish spiritual empire" and the fact that it was stronger here in the United States of America than anywhere else. You indicated your hope that the millions of Americans with their deep affection for Ireland might in some way help to "inform American policy and action to ensure that the encouragement of Irish unity ranks high among her international objective."

Mr. Haughey, if America represents the heart of the worldwide Irish spiritual empire, let it be known that labor leaders are at its core. Count on us as your allies and know that you have our full support of your policies.

We not only share your dream for a united and free Ireland, but we intend to press our politicians not to neglect Ireland, which as you so eloquently told President Reagan on St. Patrick's Day, was founded "on the dream of an Irish Republic which all whom God had created should be recognized as equal; all who God had created free should be free..."

In closing, Mr. Haughey, let me assure you that labor's support for a united Ireland extends beyond those present today. When the American Federation of Labor, Congress of Industrial Organizations gathered for their 14th Constitutional Convention last November, delegates from 102 affiliated unions,

representing 15 million American workers, unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the reunification of Ireland. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters has also adopted similar policy statements.

Our history in the trade union movement in America has been to extend the principles of freedom and equity which our country was founded on to the working place. Now it is our dream and hope to see these sound principles throughout the whole of Ireland which we cherish dearly.

Thank you again, Mr. Haughey, for your time and attention and we wish you all the best during your stay here in America.

Attendance at Meeting with Irish American Trade Union
Leaders, Berkshire Place Hotel, New York, 10 June 1982

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International Longshoremen's Association,
AFL-CIO

John Bowers
Executive Vice-President
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