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**Address by
Mr. Charles J. Haughey T.D.,
President of Fianna Fáil,
at the Annual Dinner of the
Friends of Fianna Fáil
in the Athletic Club, New York,
on Thursday, 6th March, 1986.**

I extend a most cordial welcome to you all, to this, the second Annual Dinner of the Friends of Fianna Fáil in New York.

We are proud to have as our guest of honour this evening that distinguished Irish-American and outstanding labour leader, Peter Brennan. For his presence and his support we are most grateful and appreciative.

As the Friends of Fianna Fáil in New York, you have come here tonight to demonstrate your wish to see Ireland prosperous, peaceful and free, an Ireland you can relate to with satisfaction and pride. You wish also, I know, to indicate your conviction that it is Fianna Fáil which can best be trusted to accomplish all the things you desire in your hearts for Ireland.

The greatest asset Ireland possesses beyond its shores are the Irish of America, who for well over a hundred years have helped to sustain and encourage the Irish people at home and support their will for freedom, independence and economic progress.

On July 4th this year the President of the United States of America will unveil the refurbished Statue of Liberty. As he does so there will surely be present at the ceremony the ghosts of millions of Irish men and women paying their silent tribute, in recognition of the great upsurge of feeling they experienced when their first glimpse of that great symbol of hope and freedom told them their long voyage of misery was over and that the land of opportunity lay open before them. No other statue in the entire history of this world has served as such a symbol of freedom and opportunity to so many millions of people. Nor has the Statue of Liberty entered more deeply into the folk-consciousness of any other people than that of the Irish.

There is increasingly evident among the Irish in America today a desire to help create and be proud of an Ireland which is no pale

imitation of some other nation, but an Ireland which glories in her own history, heritage and culture and whose separate nationality reflects the ethos of her own people. They want to be able to contribute to the making of an Ireland which has its own distinctive identity, which is nourished and sustained by its own traditions and sets out for itself its own criteria and standards. They want to see a modern Ireland successfully achieving economic and social progress, while at the same time cherishing the rich heritage of customs and values handed down from a unique past.

It is Fianna Fáil's ambition to be the vehicle through which the Irish in America can best contribute to the building of such an Ireland.

Ireland during the 1960s and 1970s made great strides forward and achieved a level of economic and social progress which was quite remarkable. In that development period Ireland reached out eagerly to grasp the opportunities of high-technology industry and to provide herself with the industrial and services base of a modern nation. We availed of our entry into the European Common Market to transform our agriculture and we set about creating a modern infrastructure of transport, communications, road networks, airports and all the apparatus needed for economic development and progress. We had gone a long way along the road of progress when, to our bitter disappointment, that great surge of development was halted by the onslaught of the recent world recession which brought serious economic and financial difficulties.

When I spoke to you here at your first Annual Dinner I told you about those problems and difficulties which the economic recession had brought. Because we had been engaged in a major programme of development and capital investment, the onset of the world economic recession found Ireland more exposed to the ravages of the recession than many of the older and more established

economies. Unfortunately, those difficulties still persist in the form of a static economy, high unemployment, the re-emergence of emigration, high taxation and budgetary difficulties.

It is our conviction that we must now start reversing this decline, restoring confidence and getting the economy moving. We are ready to launch a major programme of economic recovery, to generate growth and to get the pendulum of development swinging upwards again.

Ireland is rich in natural resources. One quarter of the territorial seas of the European Community belongs to Ireland. A combination of soil and climate enables us to produce the sort of wholesome natural food of the highest quality that is being increasingly demanded by consumers in the developed world. That same climate enables us to grow trees faster than any other country in the world outside the tropics. There are mineral and hydro-carbon deposits both on-shore and off-shore still to be explored and developed.

Our greatest natural resource, however, is our young, intelligent, educated population which is capable of supplying a highly trained adaptable workforce, almost certainly the best in Europe.

The world is now well into the new industrial revolution, a period of fundamental innovation and development which is going to continue and intensify for the foreseeable future.

Ireland is ideally placed to take advantage of this changing world and the micro-electronic and information-technology revolution. For us in Ireland it does not bring the fear of job losses that it does for many of the older industrial countries. Instead, it offers a heaven-sent opportunity, an opportunity to compete on equal terms in a way that was never available to us in the old traditional sectors. We

can start on an equal footing in seeking an adequate share of entirely new world markets. Our programme of economic recovery will concentrate on areas like micro-electronics, information technology, bio-technology, medical software, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, food-processing, mari-culture, forestry products and high technology science-based industry.

We are not encumbered with the remains of old type heavy industries. We do not have to compete on unfair terms with the larger industrial nations, in industries where economies of size and scale gave them an advantage. The new products and services do not require huge plants and large concentrations of work forces. Fortunately for us the qualities needed for success in this changing world — knowledge, education, inventiveness and flexibility — we have in abundance in Ireland.

During the sixties and seventies the arrival of the multi-nationals in Ireland helped to provide a new base for Irish industry, supplying new management techniques, market research facilities and product development skills. In terms of managerial, research, marketing resources and technological potential, the situation in Ireland is better now than it has ever been in our history. We now have a different type of industrial and commercial community with a reservoir of skills and resources necessary for the development of totally new science based manufacturing and service industries. There is also in place now a comprehensive structure of third-level educational institutes with a range of technological research and training facilities. Ireland has a golden opportunity now to carve out an important niche in this new world of science and technology and develop into a high-technology, high income economy.

Our comprehensive programme of economic recovery will involve a complete re-organisation of the taxation structure, a significant

reduction in personal taxation, and the creation of attractive and favourable conditions for private investment in growth areas.

We shall be intensifying our efforts to secure American participation and investment in this recovery programme. The attitude in Ireland to American investment is almost universally positive and we want American companies to avail of the opportunities offered by a favourable tax regime; a highly-trained, well educated, flexible, young workforce; our access to the vast European market of over three hundred million people.

The Irish tourist industry earned £712 million in foreign currency for us in 1985 of which a sizeable slice came from North America. World tourism is a growth industry and is forecast to continue to grow well into the 1990s. We plan to participate in that growth. The development and expansion of the Irish tourist industry will play a vital and significant role in our programme of economic recovery. The American visitor has always been the mainstay of our Irish tourist industry. With an imaginative investment programme and the development and up-grading of the amenities, activities and facilities that the tourist expects in the right areas, we can look forward to a steadily expanding income from North America over the next decade. We shall be seeking also American investment in tourist-related projects.

Fianna Fáil is now the only democratic party in Ireland which is resolutely and unequivocally committed to the re-unification of our country by peaceful political means. We do not and cannot accept the partition of Ireland by Britain as having any legitimacy or democratic basis and in the international climate of today we see it as an anachronism which cannot continue indefinitely.

Fianna Fáil had no alternative but to vote against the recent Anglo-

Irish Agreement on the basis of fundamental, national principle. As the New Ireland Forum solemnly declared, the democratic basis for a united Ireland had always existed and we can never concede British sovereignty over any part of Ireland, which is something the Anglo-Irish Agreement purported to do. The case against the Anglo-Irish Agreement was stated most clearly and cogently by the British Northern Secretary himself when he claimed:

"In Northern Ireland now we have signed an agreement in which the Prime Minister of Ireland (Taoiseach) has in fact accepted for all practical purposes and into perpetuity there will not be a united Ireland and that Northern Ireland, which is our fervent wish, remains part of the United Kingdom."

That we can never accept.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement also provides for the creation of a new Anglo-Irish Conference, in which the British and Irish Governments can meet to discuss the position of the nationalist community within Northern Ireland and how their situation can be improved. It was the establishment of this process which enabled the Agreement to attract widespread support. We, of course, would welcome any positive results that might emerge from such a conference in regard to matters like the abolition of the supergrass system of trials, the banning of the use of plastic bullets, the disbandment of the U.D.R. and an end to the rampant discrimination in employment against nationalists in Northern Ireland. If there were a possibility that this new Conference might achieve any progress in any of these areas, we decided that we would not in any way interfere with or undermine its activities. And we have been scrupulously careful in maintaining that position and in not doing anything that might stand in the way of positive results. To date, however, there has been very little progress in any of those areas.

At the time of the introduction of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, I personally expressed grave doubts as to whether or not it would bring peace and stability to Northern Ireland. So far it has not done so. Even the most ardent advocates of the Agreement must acknowledge that in the period that has elapsed since it was signed, there has been no reduction in tension and violence.

One of our great anxieties was that the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement would enable Britain to turn to Ireland's friends around the world, particularly here in the United States, and claim that Ireland's problems were resolved, that there was no longer any need for them to be concerned about Ireland and that the British position in Ireland was now fully agreed and accepted and that Ireland's friends everywhere could put their minds at rest.

Of course that is not the position nor is it likely as matters stand that the Agreement will bring lasting peace and stability. There is still a long way to go.

The Irish in America and all Ireland's friends in America still have a positive and crucial role in helping Ireland and the Irish people to reach their final goal of freedom and to achieve a nation in which all the people of Ireland can unite to achieve their full potential. The goal of peace and prosperity has not yet been achieved. It is still necessary to organise the effective and united support of all the Irish-Americans and the friends of Ireland in America for that objective. We want to harness all the friendship, the goodwill and the enthusiasm that exists for Ireland on this side of the Atlantic in a constructive partnership that will make the final political and economic breakthrough to a free and prosperous united Ireland, where the Irish people will be in full and complete charge of their own destiny, holding their heads high among the nations of the world, an Ireland from which Britain to her great credit in the eyes of the world has finally withdrawn.

The Irish-Americans are a powerful section of this great nation. It is our responsibility to maintain their interest and commitment to the advancement of their mother country and to ensure that they are kept fully informed and their power and influence mobilized in support of Ireland's political and economic objectives.

America owes much of her pre-eminence in the modern world and her great economic and political might to the sacrifices, the endeavour and the genius of countless millions of Irish immigrants and their descendants who, from the very beginning of this great Republic, gave it unstinted service and unswerving loyalty.

The United States of America, the leader of the free world, must be constantly reminded by a united and powerful Irish-American voice of the contribution made by the Irish to her greatness and must be urged to use her power and influence to bring about an Ireland once more re-united, an Ireland from which the causes of violence and civil strife will have been removed and where the natural genius of all her people will be directed toward economic and social progress and cultural enrichment. That is the vision that Fianna Fáil offers to all interested and concerned Irish Americans.

I would very much like, in concluding, to extend to all of you, a warm invitation to come over soon to Ireland, to savour your heritage, show solidarity with us and sustain our confidence in our ability to confront and overcome the challenges we face.