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Reference Code:	2018/28/2298
Creation Dates:	12 January 1988
Extent and medium:	2 pages
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Accession Conditions:	Open
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W. S. Smith MS 8/2/88 47/33
Mr. Bassett
What is present
for her file? - Did
M. Burke meet
Mr. Barry?

Ms. Anderson,

Pat Barry, Marketing Manager of Guinness Dublin, rang the Department. He said that the Guinness company were greatly concerned by a series of letters they had received from Irish American organisations threatening a boycott of Guinness products in the United States. They have received letters from Nick Murphy (AOH), Mr. Finnucan (PEC), and James Delaney, Irish American Unity Conference, stating that unless a satisfactory settlement is arrived at in the Oliver Kearney case then they will initiate a boycott in the States.

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The Guinness company claim that they are not party to the dispute and were not involved in any way whatsoever in Kearney's dismissal. They are therefore at a loss as to what to do to head off this boycott.

Barry said that on receipt of the letters the company contacted the Vintners Federation in the North to get the present position on Kearney's case. The company was told that there is no possibility that Kearney will be re-instated as spokesman for the Vintners. He has become too identified with one particular group and the Vintners as a body with both Catholic and Protestant members have a policy of avoiding political controversy. (This report agrees with what Senator Bohan told me previously from the Senator's contacts in the North).

The Vintners Federation in the North have told Guinness that Kearney's solicitors have served notice on them that Kearney is taking legal action against them through the courts. In these circumstances Barry did not understand how Guinness could be involved.

Barry said that the implications of a boycott were serious for Guinness, Dublin because exports to the U.S. were brewed in the St. James Brewery. If the boycott was successful then jobs could be lost in Dublin.

I told Barry that I was familiar with the background to the case and I would discuss the matter with our Embassy in Washington and come back to him on the matter. Barry suggested that somebody from Guinness might seek a meeting with Nick Murphy to iron out the problem in a face to face meeting.

Barry also said that his company had been requested also to make a positive declaration accepting the MacBride Principles. This was something that they could not do publicly since a lot of their sales in the North were in loyalist areas. It would also bring them into conflict with the British Government. The company above all did not want to be involved in a political controversy.

Reaction of Embassy Washington:

I outlined the above developments to Martin Burke in the Embassy in Washington. His initial response was surprise and said that there had been no publicity over a boycott recently. He would check with the Consulates in Boston and New York. He felt that the AOH could seriously damage Guinness sales through their clubs and connections. He felt that it might be useful for Guinness to speak to Nick Murphy who was receptive to reasonable argument.

RB.

R. Bassett,
Anglo-Irish Section.

12 JANUARY 1988

c.c. A/Sec. Gallagher
Secretariat, Belfast.

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