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**Speech by the Taoiseach,
Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D.,
to a Friends of Fianna Fáil Luncheon
in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Boston
on Friday, 22nd April, 1988**

*Immigration
N.9 (per employer)*

An Taoiseach,
Charles J. Haughey T.D.
President of Fianna Fáil.

I am happy to be back in Boston, one of the great Irish cities of the world. It is a city which those who live on the West coast of Ireland especially regard as their own. I warmly welcome your presence here today as an expression of your keen interest in Ireland and your support for the progress now being made under Fianna Fáil.

When I first addressed you two years ago, I said that what we needed in Ireland now was to formulate and implement an urgent programme of national economic recovery. In Government Fianna Fáil are now successfully implementing such a programme. I would like briefly to set out what our objectives are and how we are seeking to achieve them. I would also like to show how Americans who would like to assist us in our work can do.

So when we came into office last year we took over an economy which was in deep trouble; no growth, a large budget deficit, and a steadily rising national debt. We acted immediately and decisively. Our first objective was to restore the public finances as a basis for stimulating investment, economic growth and employment.

The firm action we took has brought an almost miraculous improvement in a very short space of time and confidence in the Irish economy both at home and internationally has been restored.

With the exception of the high unemployment which still persists the basic elements of the Irish economy are now healthy. The trends are all good and even the unemployment situation has begun to improve in recent months. Sound management of the nation's

finances has brought back investor confidence; interest rates have fallen by 5½ percentage points; the rate of inflation is down to 2% per annum and the Irish pound is extremely stable within the European Monetary System.

The economy grew by a satisfactory almost 4% in 1987; exports boomed to such an extent that we had a surplus on our foreign balance of payments. Figures published for this year so far show that the economy is still improving steadily.

While bringing order into the public finances we are at the same time stimulating growth in selected sectors by specific measures. We are placing major emphasis on high-technology industries and services and the full exploitation of our natural resources. By availing of the latest scientific research and advances in biotechnology, we plan to build a high-quality specialised food industry based on farm produce grown in a clean natural wholesome environment. We intend to make far better use of our marine resources through maritime based industries and marine leisure activities; to expand our forestry programme as the basis for a major timber industry.

US oil companies are again exploring for oil and gas offshore and we are actively encouraging onshore mineral exploration.

An important initiative undertaken by this Irish Government is the creation of an international financial services centre in Dublin. There are a number of valuable tax and other incentives, specially designed office accommodation and an excellent telecommunications service available to firms establishing in the Centre. It is going very well with quite a number of prestigious international financial institutions coming in.

A major expansion in the Irish tourist industry, in line with international growth trends, is another strategic aim of the Government's programme. A comprehensive and imaginative promotional campaign has been undertaken for this season, the key element in which is lower access air fares.

Half of the Irish population is under 28. While other countries may experience labour shortages, Ireland will still have a growing educated, skilled labour force. A high proportion of our young people are computer-literate and trained in different technological skills by our comprehensive structure of third-level institutions. Ireland is now producing first class chemists, engineers, computer scientists and professional people of every kind, ideally placed to participate fully in the new high technology, science-based manufacturing and service industries. While it is true that we do unfortunately suffer a serious loss every year of these talented people to other countries we still have available a completely adequate number to meet all our needs.

Ireland will for the foreseeable future continue to be a strongly export oriented economy. Fortunately through membership of the European Community we have access to a huge European market of 320m people, from which all barriers to trade and commerce will be removed by 1992. With our highly trained adaptive workforce and valuable investment incentives Ireland is now a very attractive base inside the European Community for investment by US firms. This is a good time to invest in Ireland.

In fact in a number of cases valuable international markets have already been developed from an Irish manufacturing base by U.S.

companies. A large number of electronics firms for instance have established in Ireland as have most of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. Typical of another new type of creative type industry coming to Ireland is Sullivan Bluth Studios from America which specialise in creating animated films.

The new generation of Irish in the United States can as their forebears have done contribute greatly socially, culturally and in the new era, scientifically to this great Republic. But they cannot do this to their full potential if their status remains unclear and uncertain. We attach great importance to this issue.

As soon as we came to office, my Government sought to improve the status and welfare of the new wave of young Irish people in the U.S.. It is encouraging that the legislation proposed by Senators Ted Kennedy and Alan Simpson has been passed by the Senate. Congressman Brian Donnelly has been working actively to ensure that similar legislation is passed by the House of Representatives. At city level, Mayor Flynn has ensured that city health, welfare and legal services are available to all immigrants, irrespective of their status. The Mayor's office is working closely with our Consulate in providing advice and counsel. The Irish people are immensely grateful for the efforts of these real friends of Ireland to help our young people, and I would like to take the opportunity of this visit to express my personal thanks and appreciation.

I am sorry to have to report that the situation in Northern Ireland has not improved. In fact since the beginning of 1988 there has been a serious and marked deterioration in the situation. Violence and confrontation continue, a large section of the population lacks

confidence in the system of administration of justice, there is widespread discrimination in employment and regular harrassment of the nationalist population by the security forces. There is now an increasing body of opinion that believes that a way forward must transcend the existing political framework of Northern Ireland.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement has the status and carries the obligations of an international agreement between two sovereign governments. As I said on the last occasion I was here, we would welcome any improvement in the situation of the people of Northern Ireland that could be brought about through the Conference set up by the Agreement, and since coming into Government, we have sought to achieve progress and reforms in that way.

We have also continually stressed that public confidence in the rule of law and in the administration of justice is vital, if the tensions that lead to violence are to be reduced. Unfortunately, since the beginning of this year, there have been a succession of events following rapidly on each other which have seriously undermined confidence in the administration of security policy; the decision on the Stalker/Sampson Report, the dismissal of the appeal of the Birmingham Six, who are widely believed in Ireland and elsewhere to be innocent, the shooting of an unarmed civilian at Aughnacloy, the killing of three Irish people in Gibraltar. All the while the campaign of violence by paramilitary organisations continues.

The issue of fair employment is still unresolved. It is unacceptable that unemployment among Northern Nationalists should continue to be two and a half times that among Unionists. There is a pressing need for far-reaching legislative reform, that must have a clear and

discernible impact. The United States has valuable experience to offer in this field, and I would like to thank those Americans who have taken up this cause and focused public attention on the need for urgent action.

The Fianna Fáil Government in the last year has taken on the formidable economic and political challenges facing it and has set in motion an economic programme for the nation which is succeeding and is providing a sound basis for future prosperity. Many experts are already predicting that the successful pursuit of current policies will lead to strong and sustained growth in the 1990s.

We are working steadily on solving the immediate problems so that we can fulfil the centuries old dream of a united country sure of its own values and purposes, cherishing its old traditions while contributing creatively to our modern world; a country whose successful economy can provide adequately for all her people.

We have shown a clear determination to achieve the political progress that is necessary to bring peace to Ireland and a final resolution of the divisions within our island. We will, of course, achieve all our objectives more speedily if we can count on the united and active support of the Irish-American community.

For well over a century Boston has offered a new way of life and opportunity to Irish people who have come here seeking a new start in life.

The Irish have made an enormous contribution to every aspect of the life of this city; in politics, in education, in business and commerce.

In the last few years there has been a renewed inflow of Irish people into Boston, and I think the time is now opportune for a major new development in the relationship between Boston and Ireland; perfecting and expanding existing connections and creating a range of effective new ones.

Boston city and the State of Massachusetts are currently leading the US economy in a number of areas and we in Ireland wish to develop a much closer association with this dynamic economy to our mutual benefit.

Already a number of developments have taken place which indicate that a closer, mutually rewarding relationship is both realistic and attainable. I warmly welcome the initiative of Mayor Flynn in setting up Boston/Ireland ventures to assist on a commercial basis investment by Boston businessmen in the Galway area and I hope you will all go and visit the trade exhibition of Galway products, services, tourism and educational facilities at the World Trade Centre here at the end of May this year.

A major consortium from Boston has shown a great interest in bringing their experience of urban renewal and waterfront development to Dublin and participating in the programme of urban renewal and development which we are promoting for our capital city.

We would like to see a great influx of tourists from Boston and Massachusetts into Ireland this year. We are making a special effort to make this a great year for Irish tourism. I want to ask the Irish-Americans in this region to assist and support us in our efforts. Already a great headline has been set by the decision, the historic

decision, to have the American League football match between Boston College and Westpoint Academy held in Dublin in November. This is the year for Irish-Americans to show their loyalty and affection for Ireland in a practical way. They can be sure of a relaxed vacation in an attractive uncrowded atmosphere and will receive a warm welcome. This year Dublin will be one thousand years old and I can assure you that this is the year to visit this grand friendly old city as she celebrates her Millennium. To encourage Americans to come across, greatly reduced air fares on the Atlantic route are now available.

There is a great deal of contact at personal and corporate level between Ireland and Boston. Irish people gravitate to this great city easily and naturally seeking employment, doing business and arranging social and cultural events of mutual interest. I suggest the time has come when we should try to provide better structures through which these interests and contacts can be pursued more effectively and consistently and I would be glad to follow up any proposals or suggestions along these lines which anyone would wish to put forward.

The Irish-Americans are members of our extended Irish family who have found a new life in this great country. They are part of our cultural and historical experience as a race. We wish them to see Ireland as their mother country; a nation respected internationally whose interests in this modern world they can freely and openly support; a place to which they can come to find their roots and a culture from which they can draw spiritual and moral sustenance.