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POL.14/3/12/3
POL.14/14

June 20, 1977

The Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin

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24 MAY 1977

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VISIT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE SDLP :

On Thursday, May 19, Mr. Hume visited Boston and

1. Mr. John Hume, Deputy Leader of the Social Democratic & Labour Party in Northern Ireland, visited New York from Tuesday, May 17 to Thursday, May 26. The main purpose of his visit was to address the Ireland Fund Dinner on May 18. In addition, he had scheduled a meeting with Governor Carey, the main purpose of which was to discuss the possibility of raising funds for Northern Ireland. Mr. Hume was joined by Messrs. Patrick Duffy and Eddie McGrady of the SDLP for this latter meeting which took place on the weekend of May 19/20, Messrs. Duffy and McGrady having arrived on Thursday, May 18.

2. The Ireland Fund Dinner was held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City on Wednesday evening, May 18. The attendance was about 675, as opposed to 515 last year, and we are informed that an amount in the region of \$100,000 was raised. This included donations from businessmen who, while not able to attend, nevertheless made a contribution. The main speakers were Mr. Hume and Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts. Lady Valerie Goulding spoke briefly on behalf of the Ireland Committee of the Ireland Fund. Mr. William Shea, a well-known businessman who was Guest of Honour, also spoke briefly as did Mr. Art Rooney, a well-known Irish-American businessman who made the presentation to Mr. Shea. Mr. Rooney and his family have been associated with the Ireland Fund since its inception.

3. Mr. Hume's speech, a copy of which the Department already has, was very well received by those present and, together with the speech of Senator Kennedy, was as the Department will be aware from reports by the Press & Information Officer, extensively covered in the local media. Senator Kennedy's speech, which was somewhat longer than Mr. Hume's although well received, received a less enthusiastic reception - not because of any objections to what he had to say on Northern Ireland but due to the fact that, not surprisingly, many of the wealthy businessmen who had taken tables are strong supporters of the Republican Party here and the Kennedy's have never been very popular with conservative Republican businessmen.

4. On Thursday, May 19, Mr. Hume visited Boston and returned to New York on Friday, May 20. On the evening of Friday, May 19, Mr. Hume attended, together with Messrs. Duffy and McGrady, a meeting organized by Governor Carey at which the Editor of the Daily News and several local businessmen, including the President of General Tire Company, Mr. Tom O'Neill, were present. Mr. Hume was also accompanied by Mr. Joe Fallon, an Irish-American lawyer and member of the Lindsay administration who has been advising him on fund raising since Mr. Hume's visit here late last year. The reaction of Mr. Hume and Mr. Fallon was that the event was not a success. Mr. Hume told us that he had been asked, apparently by Dr. Kevin Cahill, confidant and advisor to the Governor, not to look for money and he apparently did not do so, confining himself instead to an explanation of the situation in Northern Ireland.

5. On Monday, May 23, Mr. Hume departed for Washington and returned to New York on Wednesday, May 25. On the evening of Wednesday, May 25, Mr. Hume was Guest of Honour at a reception given by the Deputy Consul General which was attended by local Irish-American community leaders and representatives of the media, including the New York Times and Daily News. Mr. Jimmy Breslin of the Daily News also attended and he spoke at some length with Mr. Hume and did, we understand, undertake to do a column on Mr. Hume and the SDLP in Northern Ireland. Breslin, while he has not been as extensive in his criticisms of Governor Carey as has Mr. Pete Hamill also of the Daily News, commented unfavourably on the Governor's speech in Ireland. Also attending was Mr. Robert Towbin, a wealthy businessman, who subsequently indicated to consular officials that he was interested in making a contribution to the SDLP. We have put him in touch with Mr. Fallon.

6. In general, I think Mr. Hume has concluded that there is no immediate prospect of major funds arising from the initiative taken by Governor Carey - apparently what the Carey people had in mind was a fund which would not un-naturally, apply to various parties or groups in Washington, DC, Northern Ireland. Mr. Hume is apparently pressing ahead with his effort to get a specific SDLP fund-raising group organized here and he had various meetings with Mr. Fallon. I understand from Fallon that they are now pressing ahead with registration under the Foreign Agents' Registration Act which is a necessary preliminary to the raising of any funds other than for charitable purposes here.

CONSULATE GENERAL

7. Among the Irish-American community generally, we find that Mr. Hume is the best known Northern Ireland figure and, with the exception of those who are completely committed to NORAID, they react very favourably to him as they did on this occasion. The only unfavourable comments were, as one might expect, contained in the 'Irish People' and even they were muted by that newspaper's normal standards.

Department of Foreign Affairs

LIST OF DEPUTY LEADER OF THE SDLP :

Consul General

1. Mr. John Hume, Deputy Leader of the SDLP Democratic & Labour Party in Northern Ireland, New York from Tuesday, May 17 to Thursday, May 19. The main purpose of his visit was to attend the Ireland Fund dinner on Wednesday, May 18, which was scheduled at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York. Mr. Hume was joined by Patrick Duffy and Eddie McGrady of the SDLP. This latter meeting which took place on the evening of May 19/20, Messrs. Duffy and McGrady having arrived on Thursday, May 18.

c.c. Mr. Michael Lillis, Counsellor, Embassy, Washington, DC.

GOC/nps

The Ireland Fund Dinner was held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City on Wednesday evening, May 18. The attendance was about 675, as opposed to 150 last year, and we are informed that an amount in the region of \$100,000 was raised. This included donations from businessmen who, while not able to attend, nevertheless made a contribution. The main speakers were Mr. Hume and Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts. Lady Valerie Goulding spoke briefly on behalf of the Ireland Committee of the Ireland Fund. Mr. William Shea, a well-known businessman who was knight of Honour, also spoke briefly as did Mr. Art Kavaney, a well-known Irish-American businessman who made the presentation to Mr. Shea. Mr. Kavaney and his family have been associated with the Ireland Fund since its inception.