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10 June 1997

UNDER
SEC
10216
25 JUN 1997
INT SEC

cc. (for) Mr Boyker, NIO
2. Mrs Vaneall
Mr Shackell

Mr Anthony Cary CMG
Chancery
Washington

SAH

ASST/
SEC
333/6
20 JUN 1997
C.C.R.U.

23/6

cc. Mr Thomas
Mr Popple
Mr Watkins
Mr Flaccade
Mr Beeton

in caption
26.6

Dear Anthony,

REACTION TO PRIME MINISTER'S COMMENTS ON THE IRISH POTATO FAMINE

1. I thought it might be worth recording that Frank Sheridan, the Irish Consul General here, told me on 6 June that he had been amazed at the reaction in Chicago to the Prime Minister's remarks on the Irish Potato Famine. He said that members of the Irish community had stopped him in the street to say what a bold move it was and what a significant effect it was likely to have on the Peace Talks. Frank then added that in his view, if the British Government could now bring itself to make a similar statement about "Bloody Sunday", two of the major tensions in UK-Irish relations would have been much relaxed. There was, said Frank, a case to answer on Bloody Sunday.

(2) Mrs Kear

SAH

23/6

2. Since we were both enjoying some pictures at a new gallery that has just been opened in The Wrigley Building, I did not pursue the discussion. I doubt whether I could have made much impression on the Bloody Sunday argument anyway. I also found it hard to avoid the thought, oft expressed by the Unionists in Northern Ireland, that once you have satisfied the Irish on one point, they immediately pocket that and want something more. But the reaction on the Potato Famine is interesting, and indeed encouraging. You should know about it.

*Mrs Hodge
Michael*

*Mr Hodge
Famine file*

Michael Hodge
HM Consul General

cc. Mr P Priestley, NAD London
Mr D Lamont, RID FCO London