

No. 123 NAI DT S4529

Extract from a memorandum from Joseph P. Walshe to Diarmuid O'Hegarty (Dublin)
(954/33)

Dublin, 8 December 1927

PROPOSED VISIT TO AMERICA

I have been instructed by the Minister for External Affairs to suggest the following points for the consideration of the Executive Council:

1. It has been frequently said by friendly and influential Irish-Americans in the course of the past few years that we cannot expect Irish-Americans to take an interest in the Saorstát if we persist in ignoring their existence. There is no doubt whatever that the great body of Irish-American opinion worth having is passively on our side and it only requires a little nursing to become active. The Vatican is at present drawing huge revenues from Irish-American millionaires simply because it never loses a chance of flattering their vanity. The Pope recently sent a special envoy to New York to marry the daughter of an illiterate Tipperary man who had amassed five millions in a little over twenty years. It is well known that this individual and a considerable number of similar types are ready to invest their money in Ireland if given the proper encouragement and publicity. It is time to begin a definite campaign which should include a complete change of attitude in our press towards the United States of America.

2. A short visit from the President or Vice-President to Washington, Chicago and New York with no other public object than to make a few speeches at specially arranged banquets about the independence and development of the Saorstát would provide a splendid opportunity of getting in touch with most of the influential Irish-Americans. They want tangible evidence of our State's existence and nothing will bring it home to them more definitely than seeing the President or Vice-President received by President Coolidge in Washington and honoured by the people who run the United States. The opportunity is now put into our hands by The Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago. They wish to invite the President or Vice-President or Minister for External Affairs or any Minister who is available to go to Chicago at their expense. They mentioned St. Patrick's Day as an appropriate occasion, but they would arrange for any date to suit our convenience. If an agreement is reached by the Executive Council a date can be arranged during the present recess, which seems to be the most suitable time. The formal invitation would be sent immediately on receipt of a wire from us. Mr. Kevin Kelly, Secretary of the Association, saw the President and Mr. McGilligan when he was in Ireland six weeks ago.

[matter omitted]

[signed] S.P. Breathnach

Rúnaí