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Inter-Party Committee on
Northern Ireland.

Agreed Terms of Reference.

With a view to contributing to a peaceful settlement of the Northern Ireland situation it has been agreed to set up an inter-Party Committee to establish the common ground between the parties represented on the Committee on the constitutional, legal, economic, cultural, social and other relevant implications of a united Ireland and to make recommendations as to the steps now required to create conditions conducive to a united Ireland.

Statement by the TaoiseachInter-Party Committee on the implications of Irish Unity

The terms of reference of the Inter-Party Committee on the implications of Irish unity have been agreed by the leaders of the three main parties in this House. They are as follows -

With a view to contributing to a peaceful settlement of the Northern Ireland situation it has been agreed to set up an inter-Party Committee to establish the common ground between the parties represented on the Committee on the constitutional, legal, economic, cultural, social and other relevant implications of a united Ireland and to make recommendations as to the steps now required to create conditions conducive to a united Ireland.

The following are the names of the members nominated by the party leaders to constitute the Committee:

Representing Fianna Fail: Deputy Michael O'Kennedy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Deputy Patrick Smith, Deputy Vivion de Valera, Deputy Frank Carter.

Representing Fine Gael: Deputy Thomas F. O'Higgins, Deputy Richie Ryan, Deputy Patrick Harte.

Representing Labour: Deputy James Tully, Deputy Conor Cruise O'Brien.

It has been agreed that the Chairman will be one of the Fianna Fail representatives.

The Committee is an informal committee consisting of members of this House: it is not a special nor select Dáil Committee. Secretarial services for the Committee will be provided by my Department and, in the course of the Committee's deliberations, it can call on the assistance of the Inter-Departmental Unit, which acts as a clearing-house for the

activities of Departments generally in relation to the North.

The formulation and implementation of policy is the responsibility of the Government. The consideration of legislation is a matter for the Oireachtas. In setting up this Committee we are acknowledging that there are difficulties to be resolved in attaining Irish unity and that these require careful study and, above all, a concerted approach by the three major parties. This Government and its predecessors without exception have declared their abhorrence of violence and their opposition to the use of force as a means of achieving Irish unity. This is not just the policy of the Government: it is fully shared by the two main opposition parties in Dáil Éireann.

The task of the Committee will be to identify other areas of the common ground we occupy and to give expression to a common view so that we can all work together constructively to bring our aims to fruition.

So that we might better accomplish that task I expect that the members of the Committee will report back to the leaders of the respective parties, to keep them informed and to seek their guidance where necessary.

It is expected that the first meeting of the Committee will be convened in a fortnight or so.

4 Bealtaine, 1972.