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Title: Statement issued by the Government Information Bureau on behalf of the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, concerning the SDLP [Social Democratic and Labour Party] document, 'Towards a New Ireland'.

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Press Release

Asked to comment on the SDLP document "Towards a New Ireland" the Taoiseach said that the proposals put forward by the SDLP accord with the view of the Government that it is futile to try to obtain a political settlement in Northern Ireland which failed to respond adequately to the desire of the great majority of the Irish people, including a very substantial minority of the people of Northern Ireland, to achieve Irish unity, by agreement, in independence. He had expressed this view publicly on many occasions as well as in his discussions with the British Prime Minister and others; there can be no realistic advance towards permanent peace in the North if the views of up to 40% of the population there on this vital matter continue to be ignored. At the same time, he said, the SDLP proposals indicate quite correctly that the way forward is by peaceful means, by discussion and by the creation of interim institutions.

The Taoiseach said that he had also read with interest the proposals and suggestions made by other political parties and organisations in the North and had noticed that in most cases the idea of closer intra-Irish links had been put forward.

He said that the Government are prepared to enter into the necessary negotiations with the British Government and with the political leaderships of both communities in the North in a spirit of frank exchange and mutual assistance. He believed that the required statesmanship will be found among all those concerned, including the Opposition Parties here and in Britain, to enable the achievement of harmony in the North, in Ireland as a whole and between the new Ireland and Britain.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION BUREAU

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