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DÁIL QUESTION addressed to the Taoiseach
by Deputy Neil T. Blaney for answer
on Wednesday, 11th October, 1978.

QUESTION:

To ask the Taoiseach the progress, if any, that has been made, arising from recent meetings between members of the Irish and British Governments, towards securing a declaration of intent by the British to withdraw from Ireland.

REPLY:

My views on the desirability of the British Government's declaring its interest in the unity of Ireland by agreement, in independence and in a harmonious relationship between the two islands, are well known and established. I believe that a British declaration on those lines would remove a major obstacle on the road to peace and help to bring about reconciliation between all the people living on this island.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and I have availed of the occasions of our meetings with members of the British Government to emphasise this point of view and the difference between our respective Governments on the issue has been clearly and frankly acknowledged.

Without taking from the rights of the majority in Northern Ireland we would hope to persuade the British Government of the merits of the policy which we have put forward. We will, I can assure the House, continue to pursue our objective of encouraging the evolution, in the long term, of political structures which will embrace the whole of Ireland. In the short term we will continue to impress upon the British Government the need to seek a way out of the political stalemate which currently exists in Northern Ireland.