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QUESTION NO. 9.

**DAIL QUESTION addressed to the Taoiseach by
Deputy Tomas Mac Giolla, for answer on
Wednesday 27th January, 1988.**

QUESTION:

To ask the Taoiseach if he has had any discussions with the leader of the SDLP, Mr. John Hume, prior to Mr. Hume's meeting recently with Mr. Gerry Adams; if his approval was sought for this meeting; if his approval was given; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

REPLY:

I have meetings with representatives of the SDLP from time to time as part of the normal process of consultation on Government policy in relation to Northern Ireland.

I have the greatest respect for the integrity and judgement of the leader of the SDLP. The SDLP is an independent political party and no question of the kind of approval mentioned by the Deputy would arise.

Note for Taoiseach's information

1. The meeting between John Hume and Gerry Adams took place on 11 January, 1988. Both sides issued almost identical statements after the talks. They said that the meeting was at the request of a third party who was interested in creating political dialogue. The statements were reported in the press on 12 January - see press cuttings attached - and said that both sides agreed to report back to their parties and to develop further dialogue if it were thought to be productive.
2. The Taoiseach met John Hume on 8 and 15 January for private discussions. A report (attached) in the Irish Times of 22 January states that "official sources confirmed that Mr. Haughey had been advised of the Adams meeting in advance and had not disapproved of it".
3. The line taken in the reply in relation to the independence of the SDLP is similar to that expressed by the then Taoiseach, Dr. G. FitzGerald on 27 November, 1985 when he was asked in a Parliamentary Question to urge the SDLP to take its seats in the Assembly - relevant Dáil debates are attached.
4. In February 1985, John Hume attempted to meet I.R.A. leaders but the meeting broke up after only a few minutes when Mr. Hume refused an I.R.A. demand that part of the meeting be video recorded.

