

1

SECRETARY OF STATE DOORSTEPPED AT RE-START OF MULTI-PARTY TALKS - 9
SEPTEMBER 1996

Well I hope that this lovely weather is a good augury for the talks which are resuming today. We decided at the end of July that we would resume on 9 September, we had every recognition that there were substantial difficulties that would confront us, I think a certain amount of valuable discussion has taken place between the participants in the time that has gone past since then and I am hoping that there will be a realistic assessment of course of the undoubted difficulties but nonetheless a recognition of what I know to be the wish of the people of Northern Ireland by an enormous majority that this process shall be given every effort to make it succeed by all who are taking part, the Governments, the parties. So that's the spirit in which we and I believe all the participants here should be approaching this and I think that we can reasonably expect that it is the spirit in which every body will.

How do you see the position of the two Loyalist parties today?

Well there is a procedure which we agreed in the rules of procedure in July by which complaints of this character shall be dealt with and so I am sure that if this complaint is formalised then that is the way in which it will be dealt with.

How soon do you think you will make a decision once the complaint is made Sir Patrick?

Well I think that has to depend upon the evidence. What happens is that the Governments will once the matter has been referred to them by the Chairman, the Governments will have regard to the views of the parties and then take whatever action is appropriate.

Sir Patrick, would you consider the talks to be in limbo until that decision is arrived at?

Well its obviously a serious development, I don't want to say anything to diminish the seriousness of it, equally there is a

88/857463/424

procedure which we have agreed by which complaints of this kind shall be dealt with and I think it shows the progress that we did make between June and July that that by itself a pretty difficult issue to decide was decided, was agreed and so we will see how that now operates.

What's your reaction to the Irish Times article this morning which says there is very little, there is only two out of three people that believe this process can go on?

Well I think it's remarkable and I think we should not lose sight of the fact that I think I further believe that it can come through to success. I think these are questions don't you what are very much a matter of the question, that the way the question is asked. If you ask people, do you think that this should be given every effort I think you will find the huge majority saying yes. So I think that if I make the distinction between people who are pretty sceptical about whether it can come through to success but on the other hand nevertheless want to see all the parties and the Governments giving it their very best effort and a huge majority want to do that and I think we are all going to do that. So I think we better go in now. Thank you very much indeed.