

FURTHER CONVERSATION WITH MR SPRING :4 NOVEMBER

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I said it would help if I had a fuller account of the conversation with Mr. Hume which the Taoiseach and he had had yesterday.

Spring said the object had been to try to steady up Hume following the communique. He was told that the Governments had had to distance themselves from Adams and that they now needed some space to carry forward the role which they both agreed existed for them. They were not being helped by Hume's briefings. I said that I had picked up an account of a report suggesting that Hume was saying, after the meeting, that the Taoiseach had said that it was all down to the Prime Minister, who was unable to accept the Hume proposals.

Spring denied this and said that there had been no opening up of the two Governments' common position. Hume had been told that they had had to take the course they had "because of political expediency and necessity". On being pressed as to this, he said it had related to the need to distance himself from Adams, the likely impact on the Unionists, and the Governments' wider response - by which I got the clear impression he was referring to the Prime Minister's need to keep his show on the road.

Hume had said that in the House of Commons he was being pressed by Conservative MPs, among others, for an explanation as to why his proposals/initiative were being rejected. "Why aren't the Governments going for it?" And similarly throughout the community in Northern Ireland. Spring said that what matters now is the message Hume gives after his meeting with the Prime Minister. The more he can be assured of the continuing role of the Government, the better.