

of simmering fears

THE following is the text of Mr James Molyneux's speech in the House of Commons:

On 20 March I publicly invited non-paramilitary parties, groups and individuals to assist me in designing a blueprint for stability. I have undertaken to forward the conclusions to the Prime Minister and to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, but I can report to the House that I find a widespread desire for the restoration of accountable democracy to the people of Northern Ireland.

It should be noted that such an objective was shared by a large percentage of what is sometimes called the minority, including many who said that they normally voted for the SDLP, but who, like many SDLP councillors, are keen to see in place democratic structures within which they can participate to render a real service to the citizens of Northern Ireland — which after all is a praiseworthy aim for an elected representative.

I was able to report my conclusions and recommendations to my party executive at the end of September. Unfortunately, the following day saw an unsettling statement on what has become known as the Adams-Hume plan. In the intervening eight weeks there has been a progressive hardening of attitudes in the ranks of the professional and middle classes, and that is always a very bad sign in Northern Ireland. Many of those groups, have, in the past, taken no part in politics; but are now in such a state of anxiety that they disbelieve any assurance, and suspect betrayal in every sentence they read or hear. I have no means of knowing how long such simmering fears can be contained but I do know that something must be done to reduce the fever, and the two governmental machines must very carefully weigh their words and actions if a crisis is to be avoided.

On 20 March I also suggested that the British and Irish governments should set about removing that standing reproach implicit in the Irish claim to the territory of a part of the United Kingdom. I have long held the view that this breach of international law could be more easily put right by the two sovereign governments. But I was mistaken. For in the intervening eight months they appear to have made no progress whatever. I have underestimated the strength of Republican opinion in the South which surfaced in the weeks before and then during the annual conference of Fianna Fail or "soldiers of destiny" to use the English translation.

That impassable barrier was described with great honesty by Prime Minister Reynolds when, through a television interview on Sunday, he patiently explained that if he were to hold a referendum on the removal of articles two and three, he would be defeated. We have no right to question his judgment. Nor should anyone assume that the approval of his electorate would be given in return for a British surrender to the demands of Mr Adams —



Mr James Molyneux: Advocates "patient continuing in well-doing".

such a cave-in would merely transfer the force and meaning of Articles 2 and 3 to Ulster shoulders.

The disastrous juxtaposition of discussions on political progress with the price demanded by the IRA in return for a halt to murder, means, in effect, that Her Majesty's government is being required to do a deal, not with Mr Reynolds, but with Mr Adams.

No member of this House can doubt the capacity of the Northern Ireland parties to co-operate and work together for the common good

No amount of diplomatic verbiage can conceal that uncomfortable fact that Dublin is merely the conduit.

In the light of Mr Reynolds' weekend revelation of that stark reality, there is now a large body of opinion in Ulster — and I have detected signs of it in London — which is convinced of the impossibility of any Irish government freeing itself of the embarrassment of being the one European Community member which lays claim to the territory of another member-state.

It has been put to me that rather than waste the opportunity for peace, there are many who would prefer to use their energies and talents in drawing together the very strands of what, in the

aftermath of recent atrocities, has proved my contention that we have in Northern Ireland one community, not two.

That is the real message of the thousands who marched for peace in recent weeks. Those people are not demanding surrender to terrorist demands any more than Londoners expected Churchill to surrender to Hitler, so that our capital city could be spared daily and mighty slaughter on a massive scale.

By far the greater number of Ulster people want us to give a lead in rebuilding democratic structures. No member of this House can doubt the capacity of the Northern Ireland parties to co-operate and work together for the common good. We have demonstrated our willingness to do just that in spheres of agriculture, health, industry, energy and environment, and how the news industry hate us for behaving in a way that puts our Great Britain counterparts to shame.

So, we expect neither praise nor sympathy from those who prefer pictures of blood-letting and street violence.

It is probably for that reason that there is now a conspiracy of silence over the steady advance made during the past three months by Sir Patrick Mayhew and Michael Ancram, who is the minister for Political Development. Yet it is their endeavours, supported as they are by the Prime Minister, which will succeed where high drama will fail — as it always does.

With our co-operation they can be successful in supplying the essential ingredient which will stabilise a dangerously volatile situation. Their low-key discussions over the past three months will have enabled them to identify the common ground between the parties in Northern Ireland and, what is just as important, that between the strands within the greater number in Northern Ireland. That ministerial team will not be at variance with their colleague, the Foreign Secretary, who in the debate last Friday said: "We must be able to deliver what we undertake and not to undertake what we cannot deliver."

It is patient continuing in well-doing rather than bursts of misplaced optimism and enthusiasm which must be a prerequisite for peace. I am confident that something resembling the Strand One model structure for a reinstatement of durable accountable democracy can be accepted — just as the concept was widely agreed to during last year's talks.

I am further convinced that trust between the four main parties thus achieved, would enable them to reach out the hand of friendship to the sovereign Irish nation on our southern frontier. Our ambition would be to develop co-operation on matters of mutual interest and common concern. I close with a sincere invitation to all citizens of the British Isles to set their hands to the task of laying solid foundations for a real and enduring peace.