

happened very quickly. If there were anything in these suspicions, then he would do whatever was necessary; he did not want people like that within a million miles of his force; but nothing had happened to disturb his view of the incident itself, and he believed that the full seriousness of the incident had not become clear until Hamill died several days later; until then this would have looked very much like any other Saturday night fight of the kind that happened everywhere.

5 The Chief Constable had sent the ICPC recommendation for neglect of duty disciplinary charges against Constable Neill to Counsel, and he would be guided by Counsel's advice, though he himself did not think on present information that the charges would have 'a snowball's chance'. He was advised that Constable Neill was an outstandingly sound officer. But 'if there should be an inquiry, so be it'.

6 I am sure, however, that this attitude of resigned acceptance would not extend to any idea of an inquiry while the current criminal investigation is in train, since the Chief Constable emphasised that his main concern was not to impede this, and that the DPP and ICPC were now fully involved. Thus, when Mrs McKee had made her 20 June statement he had immediately decided that she should be treated as a witness rather than a suspect, and he had not suspended Atkinson (who was on prolonged sick-leave), though he had asked to be told if he tried to resume duty. Though he was determined to press the criminal investigation as far as he could, however, the Chief Constable would not be at all surprised if the latest statement was also withdrawn.

7 I asked what had precipitated the new criminal investigation. The Chief Constable said that when the Coroner had given 'the gem' to Robert Hamill's family solicitors he himself had 'pushed and pushed', and the re-interview of Mrs McKee followed directly from that. ('The gem' is presumably the information that statements identifying the murderers had been withdrawn.)

8 The Chief Constable recognised that at some point he would have to tell the Hamill family solicitors about the Andrea McKee statement, but he was not ready for that yet since it could lead to others (eg Michael McKee) being put on their guard. I mentioned that the Prime Minister had been asked by the Taoiseach to see Diane Hamill, and that he would presumably not want the first public acknowledgement of the new investigation to pop out soon after a meeting at which he had been unable to refer to it. [This could affect the timing of any meeting with Diane Hamill, and I know that Mr [REDACTED] has this under consideration.]

Meeting with chairman of ICPC

9 This was around an hour and a half over a sandwich lunch. The chief executive, Mr [REDACTED] supported Mr Donnelly and Mr [REDACTED] was with me.

10 Mr Donnelly's views were virtually the diametric opposite of the Chief Constable's on every point. Far from expressing any scepticism about Diane Hamill, for example, Mr Donnelly saw her as a deeply impressive person who was owed a public recognition that her family had suffered a dreadful wrong, and that in some broad sense the police were responsible for it.

11 I thought that Mr Donnelly was at all points very eager to expand the discussion into wider - even diffuse - perspectives. He certainly sees the Hamill