

PREM 19/1943

Confidential Filing

Security of Economic  
Statistics.

SECURITY

JUNE 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
<del>13.6.79</del>							
<del>22.6.79</del>							
<del>11.9.79</del>							
<del>3.3.80</del>							
<del>23.4.82</del>							
<del>4.5.84</del>							
<del>6.8.84</del>							
<del>13.2.86</del>							
<del>20.8.86</del>							

PREM 19/1943

810



Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1 9NF

Telephone Direct Line 01-213.....

Switchboard 01-213 3000  
6460

*MUSA*

David Norgrove Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

20 August 1986

*Dear David*

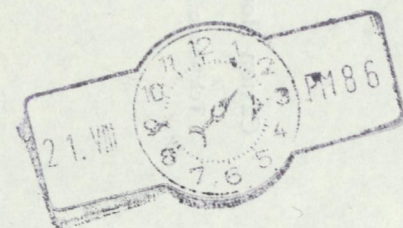
I understand that you keep a list for security reasons of officials who receive advance notification of sensitive statistical data from this department.

You may wish to know that we are adding Jonathan Hill, the Paymaster General's political adviser, to our internal circulation list for advance notice of the RPI, unemployment statistics, and the Index of average earnings.

*Yours sincerely  
Caroline Slocock*

Caroline Slocock  
Private Secretary

MEMORANDUM



jb



pps please.  
at top

Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1H 9NF

Telephone Direct Line 01-213 ...6460.....  
Switchboard 01-213 3000

David Norgrove Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

13 February 1986

NBRM

Dear David

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THE STATISTICAL SERIES PRODUCED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT

A review has recently taken place of the security classification applied to pre-publication data from statistical series produced by the Department of Employment.

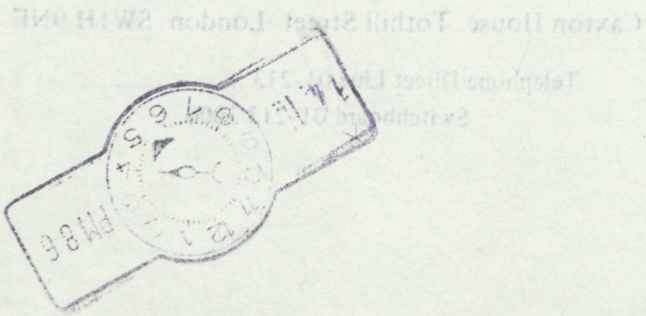
at top

Three series are covered by strict arrangements to guard against disclosure, as laid down in a letter from Tim Lankester on 22 June 1979. Pre-release data from these series are only seen by a named list of Ministers and officials. However, the security classification is not stipulated and we have discovered that there is no uniformity of approach, either between the departments involved, or even within this department. At present the unemployment figures are classified secret and the RPI and earnings index are confidential. We can see no justification for the difference in approach and, having considered advice from our security officer, propose to classify all three series as personal and confidential. The change in classification of the unemployment figures will be introduced for the February figures, which will reach you on Monday, 24 February.

*John Lambert*

JOHN LAMBERT  
Principal Private Secretary

Security; Econ Stats June 79



COMPUTER



Je v

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

MR. FLAXEN,  
CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

Thank you for your minute of 2 August about the advance release of index of production data. The Prime Minister was content that in certain months you should send figures incorporating unpublished index of production data to the Director of Statistics in the Department of Employment as proposed.

(TIM FLESHER)

6 August 1985

JK

COVERING CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister ①

Agree this arrangement?  
(Since the 1979 we have added  
Ministers without portfolios to  
those receiving RPI and  
unemployment figures)

G065

MR A TURNBULL, PS (ECONOMIC AFFAIRS) PRIME MINISTER

cc Mr Dworkin (DE)  
Mr Mansell (CSO)

AT  
5/8

*Yes*

ADVANCE RELEASE OF INDEX OF PRODUCTION DATA

At present CSO circulates figures for the monthly Index of Production (IoP) in advance of publication to a restricted number of Ministers and senior officials in the Prime Minister's Office, the Treasury, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Bank of England and within the Cabinet Office.

We would like the Prime Minister's agreement to adding the Director of Statistics in the Department of Employment and his key officials to this list.

Each month the Department of Employment press notice on manufacturing earnings and employment includes information on productivity and unit wage costs which are compiled by CSO. Naturally, the most up-to-date information on production is used in the calculation of these measures.

Since these figures are published in a Department of Employment press notice, DE ministers need to be briefed on them. In those months of the year when the Index of Production figures are published in advance of this briefing there is no problem. However in some months the press notices are published on the same day or within a day or so of each other, and then advance notice of the productivity and unit costs figures would be helpful to DE, together with the underlying production figures.

I would be grateful if you could approve the arrangement whereby in certain months we send figures incorporating unpublished IoP data to the Director of Statistics in DE for use in ministerial briefing. The confidentiality of the data in advance of publication would be stressed.

You may wish to refer to the authority for the present arrangements - a minute from Tim Lankester to Tony Battishill on 22 June 1979 - and a copy is attached.

*DW*

D W FLAXEN

Central Statistical Office

2 August 1985





10 DOWNING STREET

cc Sir S. Scott  
Mr. Boneham  
Mr. Le Chevalier  
~~Mr. L. ...~~  
Mr. Mansfield

From the Private Secretary

22 June, 1979.

CABINET OFFICE
A ...1977.....
25 JUN 1979
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No .....

Dear Tony,

Security of Economic Statistics

You will be aware of the importance which is attached to the avoidance of premature disclosure of key economic statistics which could cause not only political embarrassment but also in some circumstances speculation on the foreign and domestic exchanges. The statistics involved are the trade figures, money supply, unemployment, retail price index, earnings index and the index of industrial production.

The Prime Minister therefore wishes to draw your Minister's attention to the current strict arrangements for guarding against the disclosure of these statistics in the usually short period between their being available within Departments and subsequent publication.

Pre-publication copies of the statistics are to be sent by originating Departments to the following Ministers and their Permanent Secretaries:-

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <u>Trade figures</u>      | Prime Minister<br>Chancellor of the Exchequer<br>Secretaries of State for Trade and for Industry                |
| <u>Money supply</u>       | Prime Minister<br>Chancellor of the Exchequer   |
| <u>Unemployment</u>       | Prime Minister<br>Chancellor of the Exchequer<br>Secretaries of State for Employment and for Industry           |
| <u>Retail price index</u> | Prime Minister<br>Chancellor of the Exchequer<br>Secretaries of State for Employment for Industry and for Trade |

/ Earnings

CBO
C 7063
24 JUN 1979

CONFIDENTIAL

Earnings

Prime Minister  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
Secretaries of State for Employment and for Trade

Industrial  
production

Prime Minister  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
Secretary of State for Industry

Copies should also go to the Governor of the Bank of England, the Secretary of the Cabinet, the Head of the Government Statistical Service, and the Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise (trade figures only).

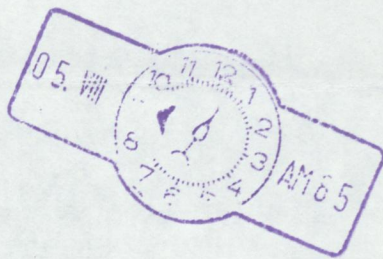
Only those in paragraphs 3 and 4 above have discretion to circulate figures to others in their Departments (whether Ministers or officials) on a strictly 'need to know' basis. No Press copies are to be released ahead of publication even under embargo.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of all those mentioned in paragraphs 3 and 4.

*han. ev.*

*T. Laker.*

A.M.W. Battishill, Esq.,  
H.M. Treasury.



File



10 DOWNING STREET

1. Mr Tugham - for info
2. Mr Turnbull - return.

We agreed we would try to live with new arrangement for a couple of months but if it proved to be unworkable then Mr Turnbull would approach HM/T for a relaxation.

He has assured HM/T that 10/10 press office only receive an outline of the figures for guidance early in the day & our account would give them out in advance

Sheeragh Wallace.

(4.57)



Sheenagh

PA spl

AT 415

H M Treasury

Parliament Street London SW1P 3AG

Switchboard 01-233 3000

Direct Dialling 01-233 5627

F. Cassell  
Deputy Secretary

4 May 1984

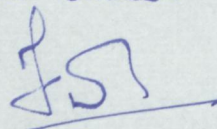
A Turnbull Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

Dear Andrew,

We spoke last month about the circulation of the provisional money supply figures ahead of publication and you said you would consider whether it was necessary for the No 10 press office to be told the figures in advance of their publication.

Given the high market sensitivity of these figures we have taken further steps in the Treasury to restrict the list of people with advance knowledge of them; I understand that the Bank have taken similar action. So far as our own desk press officers are concerned the figures will not be circulated to them until 2 pm on the day of publication (ie half an hour before publication). If on reflection you still feel that your own officers must be told the numbers in advance, I hope that you will at least be able to follow a similar timetable.

The next figures, of course, are published next Tuesday.

Yours sincerely  


F CASSELL



H. M. Treasury  
 William Street, London SW1R 3AG  
 Telephone: 2743 2000  
 Telex: 2743 2000

4 MAY 1984

12 2 3  
 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

Seawing

✓  
MR

We checked with Cabinet  
office to get more details  
of our letter sent in 1979  
(It was not clear from their  
letter).

They said it would be easier  
to send us a copy, as  
it dealt with many types  
of Statistics.

OTW

010



MAP

CABINET OFFICE  
*Central Statistical Office*

With the compliments of

Clare Wilson.

Great George Street, London SW1P 3AQ  
Telephone 01-233





✓  
MA

CABINET OFFICE

Central Statistical Office

Great George Street, London SW1P 3AQ Telephone 01-233 6117

From the Director: Sir John Boreham, K.C.B.

23 April 1982

Our Ref F1/23

Dear Richard.

INDEX OF PRODUCTION - MONTHLY STATISTICS

You wrote to say that your Secretary of State would like the other Ministers in your Department to receive advance copies of the Index of Industrial Production each month. I have arranged for this but Sir John Boreham has asked me to make sure that all your Ministers are reminded that the arrangements set out in the No.10 minute dated 22 June 1979 were deliberately strict so as to guard against leaks before publication. The Government must be forever on guard, he says, not to give any grounds for suspicion either that it is unable to protect sensitive material or that the substance and timing of statistics could be influenced for short term political gains.

I am copying this letter to Clive Whitmore and Shirley Carter.

Yours  
Claire Wilson

CLAIRE WILSON  
Private Secretary

Mr R Riley  
Private Secretary  
Department of Industry  
Ashdown House  
123 Victoria Street  
SW1

On advance copies

CONFIDENTIAL



Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1H 9NA

Telephone Direct Line 01-213 6400

Switchboard 01-213 3000

T Lankester Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

R  
43

3 March 1980

Dear Tom,

ADVANCE CIRCULATION OF KEY ECONOMIC STATISTICS

... I enclose for your information a copy of a minute sent by the Permanent Secretary to all Department of Employment recipients of advance information on unemployment, earnings, the retail prices index and the CSO forecast of the index. A copy also goes to John Wiggins (Treasury), Sir Douglas Wass (Treasury), John Beverley (Bank of England), Peter Unwin (CSO), David Wright (CO), Ian Ellison (DI), Stuart Hampson (DT), Godfrey Robson (SO), Joe Pilling (NIO), and Gordon Craig (WO).

Yours sincerely

ANDREW HARDMAN  
Private Secretary

15

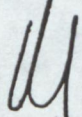
ADVANCE CIRCULATION OF KEY ECONOMIC STATISTICS

1 In 1978, following a number of apparent leaks, stricter arrangements were made for the circulation in advance of publication of certain key economic statistics. These included figures of unemployment, earnings, the retail prices index and the CSO forecast of the index. The arrangements were confirmed on behalf of the Prime Minister by her office in June 1979.

2 I am writing to remind all recipients of the importance of maintaining the strict security of these figures.

3 There have recently been some press references, giving figures which were close to the outcome in advance of publication. These may reflect no more than capable and intelligent speculation by specialists, but are a warning of the continuing danger of there being further leaks.

4 I must stress that the figures are provided to you in advance on a personal basis and that only Secretaries of State and their Permanent Secretaries can authorise the provision of advance figures to others in their Departments (whether Ministers or officials). Such provision must be confined strictly to those who need to know for operational purposes.

  
K BARNES

29 February 1980

4 MAR 1980



cc. Mr. Whitmore



M  
4E

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Press Secretary*

3 March, 1980

*Dear Ken*

Superficially, my conspiracy theory re the Daily Mail seems to have broken down. In spite of a reasonably accurate but not detailed account in The Guardian (attached), I could not find anything in the Daily Mail. Perhaps your note of February 22 influenced behaviour.

I look forward to seeking you on Friday.

B. INGHAM

Sir Kenneth Barnes, K.C.B.

Enc.

United Nations has any commitment to release American hostages for the UN Commission investigation of Iran's actions against the de Shah. The element led to the confusion situation felt in America the hostages issue.

**cks go on**

are investigating two suspicious fires in it is thought they are the continuing campaign of arson by Welsh strikers which would bring 1 of attacks on second of 21 since mid-December 4.

**gage threat**

ION of tax relief on es is advocated in an sts' report, and the societies want the lor to abolish stamp on house purchase. pages 4 and 12.

**er at Fairey**

MANAGEMENT of Holdings Ltd has re- with anger to indi- that the National ise Board may reject a £19.5 million by Ham- nk for the engineering Page 13

**s cleared**

UIRY into the case of fessor who killed him- ter an outbreak of x which came from his ology department has no evidence of im- behaviour by the Page 3.

**t wary**

UGH Egypt and Israel. exchanged ambassadors, mer's application of the reaty between the two es is being grudgingly Eric Silver explains ge 11.

**oslavia deal**

LAVIA has taken a tep toward closer rela- ith the EEC with the on of a commercial tion agreement. Page 6

**INSIDE**

- ..... 12
- views ..... 9
- s and Finance ..... 13
- ed Advertising ..... 14
- ords ..... 19
- n Women ..... 8
- ews ..... 2-4, 20
- ..... 10
- is News ..... 5-7
- News ..... 15-17
- O RADIO ..... 18
- AINMENTS ..... 18
- VAL ..... 19

**weather**

Y dry after fog clears. back page.

Although officials of the Iron and Steel Trades' Confederation would make no comment afterwards, the workers were told that the plant would have to close permanently if the strike went ahead.

The decision was not unexpected, Mr. Sirs, the ISTE general secretary, said last night. The union was aware that the strike was not receiving the kind of support in the private sector that it had against the BSC.

He thanked all the private sector workers who had come out, but said that the union was unlikely to take any action against those who had not.

Half the 1,000 ISTE members at Sheffield's other large private company, Firth Brown's, have already voted to return to work today and a

package. Later Mr Sirs will be attending a meeting of the TUC steel committee with the corporation, but without much hope of there being any moves towards a settlement.

Mr Sirs said that he thought that the strike could last for some time more. In spite of the fact that much had been made of the ISTE's refusal to pay strike pay, Mr Sirs declared that the strike was costing the unions thousands of pounds in administration and organisation.

The only concession which the corporation is likely to make today is an offer to put back the timetable of redundancies. The original date for agreement had been set by the BSC for March 31, but the duration of the strike has jeopardised this plan.



**Weather halts oil battle**

From George Coats in Athens

Bad weather and high seas yesterday prevented anti-pollution teams from tackling a mile-long oil slick which threatens some of the most unspoilt beaches in Greece.

The threat followed the sinking on Saturday afternoon of a Greek oil tanker, the Irene Serenade. It sank after explosions in its stern had set it ablaze, and began spilling its cargo of 102,000 tons of crude oil into the sea less than two miles off the port of Pylos in the South-western Peloponnese.

The tanker sank shortly afterwards leaving the oil slick which a Greek Merchant Marine Ministry official described yesterday as a black river in the sea.

Anti-pollution teams, including one from the Netherlands, arrived at the scene but have been able only to place a floating barrier in an attempt to contain the slick.

"We have all the materials and equipment we need to hand in Pylos, including an airforce helicopter," a merchant marine spokesman said. "All we need now is for the weather to calm down."

The tanker is an ecological time bomb which can deposit its cargo up onto the nearby beaches at any time, just as the tourist season is beginning. It had on board more than enough oil to pollute the entire Gulf of Navarino, one of the most beautiful regions in Greece. A plan to site an industrial complex in the area was dropped after a national outcry a few years ago.

**Latest jobless total to be around 1.5M**

By our Labour Editor

The latest batch of unemployment figures tomorrow will be around the 1.5 million mark and will bring little hope to the Government that a reduction is on the way.

Even though the number of schoolleavers out of work is diminishing, the hard core of unemployed is moving steadily up, particularly in the North, Scotland and Wales.

The figures will lead to further pressure from the TUC, and from the Opposition for the Government to closely examine its manpower policies, due to be reconsidered at the end of the month.

The unions will be demanding that they be renewed, and will say that job creation has allowed at least 200,000 people to be kept off the register.

Mr Len Murray, the TUC general secretary, said last night that the unions would not be fooled by talk of bring-

ing down the Government. They wanted to say to Mrs Thatcher that they did not like her policies, which had to be replaced by policies which bind the wounds of the nation.

Mr Murray explained that the country's problems could not be solved by the "public school" policy of the short, sharp shock or the carrot and stick solution.

Speaking to Dover, Kent, Trades Council, he said that the carrot had been the tax incentive, and the stick was becoming bigger, rougher and sharper.

Referring to the TUC's one-day national strike on May 14 against the Employment Bill proposals Mr Murray declared that the unions must not allow themselves to be pushed by the Tory party's inadequacies into accepting simple solutions.

"We, too, must learn the lesson of unity and understand that we can only assert our rights and challenge inadequacy and oppression if we stand together," he said.

From in-Lak Pres the U their To cop trium hocke The Pinlan day, of the pic ensure hocke ley in "Se presid Herb Mich winn The e vited House ferryn burgh Bef Soviet called good "You our so Wi

**Test cricketers s**

By our Sports Staff

The West Indian cricketers staged a 10-minute strike yesterday to protest against the umpiring in the Second Test against New Zealand in Christchurch.

Clive Lloyd and his team refused to take the field after the tea interval in response to umpire Fred Goodall's refusal to give the New Zealand captain, Geoff Howarth, out caught behind the wicket.

The players eventually emerged from their locked dressing room and agreed to carry on after hurried con-

sultations between their manager, Willie Rodriguez, and New Zealand officials.

But they spent the rest of the day engaged in what looked suspiciously like a work-to-rule, moving slowly and producing an extraordinary number of wide deliveries and bouncers.

Not surprisingly, they did not take another wicket. Howarth, 68 when the West Indies thought he was out, finished the day on 141 and New Zealand were well in control of the match.

The First Test, when New Zealand beat the West Indies for the first time in 11 years,

was a ments Lloyd ted th claime "aide land a contr Mike kicked groun "Las fused had replac proble added haviou ings."



Department of Employment  
 Caxton House Tothill Street  
 London SW1H 9NA  
 Telephone 01-213 3000

*MJ Dwyer*  
*Henry W...*  
*22<sup>nd</sup>*

Sir Kenneth Barnes KCB  
 Permanent Secretary

22 February 1980

PERSONAL

*Mr. Whitmore*  
*you will recall*

Bernard Ingham Esq  
 10 Downing Street  
 SW1

*Ingham*

*Dear Bernard,*

You may remember dropping me a line at the end of January about references in the press to the unemployment figures which could have been a leak.

... With the February figures imminent, you may like to know that I have put round the attached reminder to those who get advance copies of the figures.

I look forward to having lunch.

*Yours ever,*

K BARNES

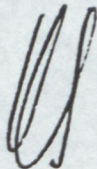
*K Barnes*

## SECURITY OF ECONOMIC STATISTICS

1 The February unemployment figures will be circulated shortly and this is a reminder of the need to maintain strict security.

2 Last month there were references in 'The Guardian' and 'The Mail' which gave grounds for concern. (See attached extracts.)

3 Although intelligent outside commentators could have guessed that the January figures would show a substantial increase, the detailed reference to the increase of Scottish school-leavers is striking even although this is a regular occurrence and in no way confidential. It is not the sort of point that we expect journalists to make without prompting.



K BARNES

22 February 1980



# Why the jobless total is rising

By MICHAEL EDWARDS  
Industrial Editor

AN alarming increase in unemployment, taking Britain's workless total towards 1,400,000, is expected to be announced today.

At the same time job opportunities at the labour exchanges are diminishing rapidly.

The situation is likely to worsen over the coming months as the recession deepens—and as the national steel strike bites into industry's productive and export capacity.

The Government will argue that it has consistently warned that excessive pay deals can only lead to lengthening dole queues.

## Casual

Last month's workless total of 1,355,458 has been inflated by three factors:

Firms have shed casual staff taken on for the Christmas spending spree;

Thousands of Scottish school leavers, who traditionally leave a term later than in England, have been thrown on to the labour market;

And some employers have been forced to reduce their staff to meet the cost of heavy pay settlements.

Job creation measures are at present keeping more than 230,000 off the dole—but this figure will drop as some temporary employment schemes are phased out.

GUARDIAN MON JAN 21

# Jobless figure again edges toward 1.5M

By Keith Harper,  
Labour Editor

The January unemployment figures will start rising uncomfortably tomorrow towards 1.5 million again, causing the Government some foreboding about the rest of the winter.

The figures, to be published by the Department of Employment, will be swollen by the inclusion of the number of Scottish school-leavers. But they cannot be excused as the underlying trend upwards, which began to reveal itself in December, is likely to become more marked.

Mrs Thatcher and her Ministers have had a reasonably easy time in the Commons so far on the question of rising unemployment. A combination of increasing inflation and unemployment will give Mr Callaghan the opportunity to harry the Government over its economic strategy. The unemployment total this month is expected to be only the precursor of graver troubles later this winter and into spring.

Tomorrow's figures will

bring cold comfort to Scotland and the North. As the winter progresses Ministers, particularly Mr James Prior, the Employment Secretary, who has hitherto enjoyed good personal relations with the unions, will come under increasing pressure to say how they intend tackling the problem.

Today Labour Party and TUC leaders will be discussing their own economic strategy. Before the meeting will be a paper from the Labour Party calling for reflation, strict import controls and revitalisation of the National Enterprise Board.

The paper is an expression of well-aided party policy, but the TUC's approach is milder. On import controls, for instance, it proposes controls where indigenous industries are under threat.

Last month, a survey by a firm of City stockbrokers projected a rise of total unemployment to well over the 2 million mark within two years. The survey estimated that total unemployment could rise to 1.87 million this year and to 2.2 million in 1981.

CONFIDENTIAL



*Security*

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 0: 233 8319

*From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir John Hunt GCB*

Ref: A0177

11th September 1979

*R*

*MS*

Security of Economic Statistics

Tim Lankester wrote to you on 22<sup>nd</sup> June setting out the arrangements for protecting the confidentiality of certain key economic statistics before publication. The same arrangements should now be applied to the new Tax and Price Index.

The first issue of the index was published on 17th August. Advance copies of future monthly issues will be circulated by the Central Statistical Office to the same Ministers and their Permanent Secretaries as now receive advance copies of the Retail Prices Index. The Ministers are: the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretaries of State for Employment, for Industry and for Trade. Copies will also go to the Governor of the Bank of England, the Secretary of the Cabinet and the Head of the Government Statistical Service.

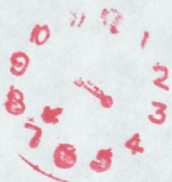
I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of all those mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

**M. J. VILE**

(M. J. Vile)

A. M. W. Battishill, Esq

12 SEP 1979



CONFIDENTIAL



c.c. Trade  
Industry  
Employment  
Bank of England  
Cab. Off.  
CSO  
C+E

Security

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

22 June, 1979.

Security of Economic Statistics

You will be aware of the importance which is attached to the avoidance of premature disclosure of key economic statistics which could cause not only political embarrassment but also in some circumstances speculation on the foreign and domestic exchanges. The statistics involved are the trade figures, money supply, unemployment, retail price index, earnings index and the index of industrial production.

The Prime Minister therefore wishes to draw your Minister's attention to the current strict arrangements for guarding against the disclosure of these statistics in the usually short period between their being available within Departments and subsequent publication.

Pre-publication copies of the statistics are to be sent by originating Departments to the following Ministers and their Permanent Secretaries:-

<u>Trade figures</u>	Prime Minister Chancellor of the Exchequer Secretaries of State for Trade and for Industry
<u>Money supply</u>	Prime Minister Chancellor of the Exchequer
<u>Unemployment</u>	Prime Minister Chancellor of the Exchequer Secretaries of State for Employment and for Industry
<u>Retail price index</u>	Prime Minister Chancellor of the Exchequer Secretaries of State for Employment for Industry and for Trade

/ Earnings

CONFIDENTIAL

# CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

Earnings

Prime Minister  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
Secretaries of State for Employment and for Trade

Industrial  
production

Prime Minister  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
Secretary of State for Industry

Copies should also go to the Governor of the Bank of England, the Secretary of the Cabinet, the Head of the Government Statistical Service, and the Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise (trade figures only).

Only those in paragraphs 3 and 4 above have discretion to circulate figures to others in their Departments (whether Ministers or officials) on a strictly 'need to know' basis. No Press copies are to be released ahead of publication even under embargo.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of all those mentioned in paragraphs 3 and 4.

T. P. LANKESTER

A.M.W. Battishill, Esq.,  
H.M. Treasury.

# CONFIDENTIAL

*be*



CONFIDENTIAL

*S.R.*  
*Ms. Jim Finis*  
*for my*  
*signature*

Ref. A09829

MR. WHITMORE

*12.*

Security of Economic Statistics

In his minute of 13th June Mr. Stowe asked us to provide a draft Private Secretary letter reminding those concerned about the importance of this matter.

I attach a draft accordingly.

*John*

(John Hunt)

21st June, 1979



CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY  
TO THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE PRIVATE SECRETARY  
TO THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

Security of Economic Statistics

You will be aware of the importance which is attached to the avoidance of premature disclosure of key economic statistics which could cause not only political embarrassment but also in some circumstances speculation on the foreign and domestic exchanges. The statistics involved are the trade figures, money supply, unemployment, retail price index, earnings index and the index of industrial production.

2. The Prime Minister therefore wishes to draw your Minister's attention to the current strict arrangements for guarding against the disclosure of these statistics in the usually short period between their being available within Departments and subsequent publication.

3. Pre-publication copies of the statistics are to be sent by originating Departments to the following Ministers and their Permanent Secretaries:-

Trade figures

Prime Minister, Chancellor  
of the Exchequer,  
Secretaries of State for  
Trade and for Industry

Money supply

Prime Minister, Chancellor  
of the Exchequer

Unemployment

Prime Minister, Chancellor  
of the Exchequer,  
Secretaries of State for  
Employment and for Industry



CONFIDENTIAL

Retail price  
index

Prime Minister, Chancellor  
of the Exchequer,  
Secretaries of State for  
Employment, for Industry  
and for Trade

Earnings

Prime Minister, Chancellor  
of the Exchequer, Secretaries  
of State for Employment and  
for Trade

Industrial  
Production

Prime Minister, Chancellor  
of the Exchequer, Secretary  
of State for Industry

4. Copies should also go to the Governor of the Bank of England, the Secretary of the Cabinet, the Head of the Government Statistical Service, and the Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise (trade figures only).

5. Only those in paragraphs 3 and 4 above have discretion to circulate figures to others in their Departments (whether Ministers or officials) on a strictly 'need to know' basis. No Press copies are to be released ahead of publication even under embargo.

6. I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of all those mentioned in paragraphs 3 and 4.



CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

*bf 20/c 175*

SIR JOHN HUNT

Security of Economic Statistics

Thank you for your minute of 5 June, which I have shown to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister is content with the present arrangements for confining the distribution of key statistics to the irreducible minimum. She would, however, think it timely for her to issue a reminder, on the setting up of the new Administration, of the importance she and her colleagues attach to security of these statistics. This could perhaps best be done by a Private Secretary letter: you may like to let us have a draft.

*K.R.S.*

*pe*

13 June 1979

CONFIDENTIAL



Prime Minister.

CONFIDENTIAL

We have progressively tightened up on distribution of key statistics in advance of publication.

Ref. A09703

MR. STOWE

Yes - excellent ref.

I don't think we can cut back on this: but a fierce reminder of the need for security would be timely. KRS 2/11

Security of Economic Statistics

This minute seeks the Prime Minister's approval for the continuance of the current arrangements for protecting the confidentiality of certain key economic statistics before publication. The sets of figures involved are overseas trade, money supply, unemployment, retail prices index, earnings and industrial production index.

2. Last year there were a number of suspected leaks of certain of these statistics in advance of publication. Because of the risks not only of political embarrassment but also of speculation on the foreign and domestic exchanges we tightened up the handling of these statistics and restricted their circulation in the usually short period between them becoming available and the day of publication.

3. At present Permanent Secretaries of originating Departments (or the Governor in the case of the money supply) are required to satisfy themselves that those contributing to the preparation of the figures, or with access to them are kept to an irreducible minimum.

4. Pre-publication copies are sent only to the following Ministers and their Permanent Secretaries:-

<u>Trade figures</u>	Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretaries of State for Trade and for Industry.
<u>Money supply</u>	Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer.
<u>Unemployment</u>	Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretaries of State for Employment and for Industry.
<u>Retail Prices Index</u>	Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretaries of State for Employment, for Industry and for Trade.
<u>Earnings</u>	Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretaries of State for Employment and for Trade.
<u>Industrial Production</u>	Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary of State for Industry.



CONFIDENTIAL

5. Copies also go to the Governor of the Bank of England, the Head of the Government Statistical Service, the Chairman of Customs and Excise (trade figures only) and to me.

6. Only those in paragraphs 4 and 5 above have discretion to circulate the figures to others in their Departments (whether Ministers or officials) on a strictly 'need to know' basis. No Press copies are released ahead of publication, even under embargo.

7. Of course, there is no practicable way of eliminating all leaks as a balance has to be struck between minimising the risks and preserving the usefulness of the advance figures, but the present very limited circulation lists, despite inconveniences to a few individuals, have led to a considerable increase in security and there have not to my knowledge been any recent serious leaks of the figures.

8. I should be glad to know whether the Prime Minister is content for these arrangements to continue.

(John Hunt)

5th June, 1979



Inches 1 2 3  
Centimetres 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

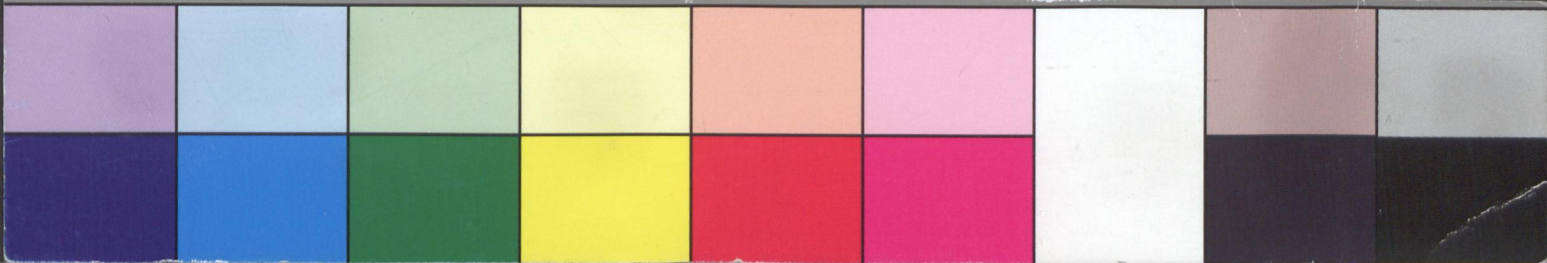
# Colour Chart #13

Blue

Cyan

Green

Yellow



A 1 2 3 4 5 6 M 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 B 17 18 19

Grey Scale #13

