

# LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11.00 date: 5/12/79

## PRIME MINISTER'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Prime Minister is working at No 10 this morning. At 11.45 she is attending the Memorial Service at St Margarets, Westminster for Baroness Skrimshire (formerly Betty Harvie Anderson MP).

At noon the PM will be the guest of the Parliamentary Press Gallery at lunch; copies of the advance text of the speech will be sent to the Lobby later this morning. We confirmed the speech will be substantial.

The PM will be in the House this afternoon for the statement on Rhodesia. There will be a meeting of Ministers this afternoon. Details of those attending will be given later.

This evening the PM and Mr Thatcher will host a reception for about 180 people - guests from the arts, academic, show business, Government and journalism.

At 2200 the PM is in the House for a three-line whip on the Government's expenditure plans for 1980/81.

## IN THE HOUSE

Two Written Answers of substance:

No 129 - Patrick Jenkin to ask the SS/DHSS whether he has completed his review of the Central Health Services Council and the Personal Social Services Council and if he will make a statement - we confirmed that this was announcing the winding-up of two Quangos.

No 133 - Patrick McNair-Wilson to ask the SS/Energy what proposals he has for further off-shore petroleum licensing.

## LOST MoD DOCUMENTS

We confirmed the documents had been lost, had been recovered and had been passed back to MoD who were investigating. The documents were not highly classified. We had no further details. MoD should be contacted.

## RHODESIA

We could offer no guidance on when the announcement might be made naming the Governor. There will be a statement in the House this afternoon but we had no details of the content. There was no guidance to offer on the need for a mediator but we underlined that negotiations between all parties are still going on and there is contact at official level throughout the day. It was important to ensure that the momentum achieved so far was maintained.

## CONSERVATIVE BACK-BENCH MPs

We did not know whether any action would be taken against the Conservative back-bench MPs who had not voted with the Government last night on immigration. We would let the Lobby know later if there was any information on this.



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The morning Lobby was repeated.

## ADDITIONAL POINTS

### RHODESIA

There will be a further plenary session at 5.00 pm today which will be followed by a press conference given by Nick Fenn.

Details of the cease-fire could be expected within 3/4 days.

The Governor will be named shortly - not today. We did not know in what form the announcement would be made.

### BACKBENCHERS: CHIEF WHIP

We had no details of any briefing which the Chief Whip might have issued to Backbenchers on (i) expecting them to toe the Government line; (ii) not joining specialist groups which hitherto they had been free to do.

We knew the Lobby wanted the Chief Whip to attend the Thursday briefings. We had this in hand and hoped to arrange for him to attend regularly after the Christmas recess.

We confirmed that the Prime Minister was willing to attend the Lobby from time to time; the problem was finding the time!

### MR LYNCH'S RESIGNATION

There was no official statement from the Prime Minister who had only <sup>heard</sup> the news at about 1300 hrs. We did not want to comment. As guidance, we said the Prime Minister had been sad to hear the news; she had always enjoyed working with Mr Lynch.

JL