



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

26 July 1982

Mr. J. Robertson

Thank you for your further letter of 21 July.

There is, of course, a Lobby and it is well-known that my staff brief its members as well as other journalists. But while my officials properly draw attention to Questions to which substantive Answers might be expected, they do not disclose the terms of the Answer in advance of the Member's receiving it.

In this unfortunate case, my officials were working against the background of almost daily questions about when an announcement would be made. And the media, I am told, had reached the conclusion that it was inconceivable that the Government would fail to meet the wishes of the next of kin.

Consequently, when my staff acknowledged that a substantive Answer might be expected to your Question that afternoon, journalists apparently felt justified in writing a positive story.

/I am

RKJ

I am very unhappy whenever Answers to Members' Questions are anticipated by the media. Our aim here remains to respect the right of the Member to have an Answer to his Question first.

Yours sincerely
Robertson

George Robertson, Esq., M.P.