

(F)

Prime Minister

Having had brief conversations with a number of people, including the Home Secretary, the Paymaster General, the Chancellor of the Duchy and the Government Chief Whip, I have sought below to draw up terms of reference for the work you have in mind for me.

As I understand it from Henry James he believes firmly that it is not part of the work of the Number Ten Press Office to promote Government policy, other than to provide the Press and the Lobby with information and factual briefing. This being so there is by definition a wide area over which our policies will not be promoted or defended.

In practical terms this means that there will be increasing focus on the Paymaster General who has no information staff.

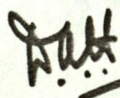
I understand from the Home Secretary that he will do the regular Thursday briefing at the House of Commons, but would not wish to involve his own information section in this task.

The Leader of the House has had an information officer attached to his staff, but as the briefings will not fall within the Leader's brief it is not likely that such an appointment is necessary.

There is obviously need to keep in close touch with the Chief Whip and the Chancellor of the Duchy, but as this is essentially Government business with a strong political flavour, it might more easily be handled by someone with a political sense.

In the knowledge of the above I have tried to distill the needs of the various elements in presenting your Governments policies and make the following observations for your consideration:

1. It might be helpful if I became a temporary civil servant in the title of Director of Information, Paymaster General's Office.
2. I would have an office and secretary in the Paymaster's suite of offices.
3. I would maintain the closest liaison with the Home Secretary regarding Lobby briefings, and keep in regular contact with the Leader of the House and the Chief Whip.
4. I would keep in daily contact with Henry James and his staff regarding news development
5. As a civil servant I would be able to attend Lobby briefings in a watching brief capacity.
6. Finally, but most importantly, I would seek to keep you appraised of trends, moods and feelings in the media and Press with a daily note on political points and potential hazards.



Derek Howe

8th May 1979