

## PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

At 0945 the PM said goodbye at Kensington Helipad to President William Tolbert of Liberia (at end of his four day official visit). Cabinet met at 1015 (Lord Carrington in Brussels, Lord Soames in Salisbury; Mr. Paul Channon present, presumably deputising for Lord Soames).

## PM'S PQs THIS AFTERNOON

She was due to stay to hear the business statement and S/S Defence's statement on TNF.

2 3-line votes this evening: 1900 hours: on Opposition motion to reduce S/S Industry's salary by £10,000 (his salary is £19,650).

2200 hours: Civil and Defence Estimates.

## Statements, PQs:

In addition to the business statement <sup>and that</sup> on the theatre nuclear forces, the PM would answer a written PQ at 1600 hours. (Mr. Julian Critchley on the Mutual Defence Agreements)

## PRESS NOTICE

We have issued a press notice on the PM's trip to Washington and New York. (See separate Press Office Bulletin for details).

## POINTS FROM QUESTIONS

### I. The Mutual Defence Agreements:

We shall not be taking any decision on the replacement of Polaris until the new year. This was a very important decision and Ministers were naturally taking their time to consider it carefully. It was certainly possible that in Washington there would be some discussion with the Secretary for Defence about what was available.

### II. Strikers and their Families:

We were again in the position of not being able to disagree with the existence of the document and we did not want to guide people away from it. However, we drew the Lobby's attention to the manifesto, page 71:

"Strikes are too often a weapon of first, rather than last, resort. One cause is the financial treatment of strikers and their families. In reviewing the position, therefore, we shall ensure that unions bear their fair share of the cost of supporting those of their members who are on strike".

In other words, Ministers are examining how to fulfil their manifesto commitment. The paper mentioned by the Mirror is presumably discussing options and ideas. No decisions had been taken.

In the House last Thursday the PM said:

" .....(We are still looking for the quotation) .."

We did not know whether or not there would be a full blown leak inquiry. This was an internal paper (i.e. not a Cabinet or Cabinet Committee paper). It was fairly recent (i.e. last month). The issue had not yet reached the stage of Ministerial meetings and we were nowhere near the end of the road.

III. Mrs. Koshaggi and the prominent politician:

No report had been called for by the Prime Minister: nor was one needed. We refused to be drawn on whether or not the Prime Minister had been informed of the name of Mr. X. We left people to draw their own conclusions.

IV. Steel strike:

The Guardian story that the Dept. of Industry has advised the Government against interlocking in the proposed national steel strike because the longer it goes on the more money the taxpayer will save is totally false. There is no "confidential minute". It is for BSC to manage its own affairs.

V. Leak inquiries in general:

We had no progress to report - and indeed no comment - on the leak inquiry announced by the PM last week. Naturally, all leaks were a cause of concern. You needed trust in the system. We were neither compulsive nor obsessive about secrecy. But ~~our~~ people - Government and organisations - needed to be able to conduct their affairs, while policies were being formulated, with a certain amount of privacy.

VI. Forthcoming statements:

We thought that the Lobby could bank on statements about airports policy and nuclear power next week; probably Bingham, too. On Bingham, we explained that the Zimbabwe Bill dealt with the issue of sanctions breaking in Rhodesia itself. The Bingham statement would deal with the external issue and could be ~~to~~ "close the book" on it.

VII.

PAC Report:

We knew nothing about any follow up to the PAC Report issued today which criticised Sir Jack Rampton. That was presumably a matter for others.

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# LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 4.00 date: 13/12/79

## PRIME MINISTER'S ENGAGEMENTS

This morning's briefing was repeated.

## KOSHOGGI ('Daily Mail' story)

No report has been called for (by Downing Street) - nor was one needed. We repeated, we were not aware either of any report having been sent. An inquiry? - certainly not to our knowledge.

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