

BRIAN CONNELL INTERVIEW

You have agreed to give Brian Connell an hour's on-the-record interview tomorrow morning from 9.30 am. You will recall that he last interviewed you for the 'Times' to mark your first anniversary of Government. He has now severed his connections with the 'Times' and has been commissioned by the 'Sunday Telegraph' to produce for next Sunday an interview up to 3,500 words - equivalent to about a page and a half.

2. He records the interview and then faithfully transcribes the outcome. While he is a good, sensible and sympathetic editor, his style of interview benefits from fairly crisp answers. He makes the point that he will switch off if you would care to collect your thoughts aloud.

Approach

3. I have discussed his approach with him today and it is the expected one:

- i You are now approximately 3/5ths of the way through your Government, with something like 20-26 months left - what do you think you have accomplished? And what remains to be done and what do you hope still to be able to do?
- ii Unemployment: Did you ever think unemployment could reach 3m? If unemployment is costing £12bn a year, why can't we divert some of that into subsidising employers to take on those who would otherwise be unemployed?
- iii Economy in general: Mr Pym is pessimistic; Mr Ridley ebullient; Mr Macgregor enthusiastic about new businesses being formed. Where do we stand? Can you clear up the confusion? And how much does the Reagan Budget worry you?
- iv Without anticipating the Budget, where can encouragement be given to enliven economic activity?
- v Pay in the public and private sectors: the problem of different performance seems to be unresolved.
- vi Your reaction to the SDP and the Alliance? How do you see their policies, or lack of them? What trouble can they cause for the Conservative Party?
- vii Your reaction to your Presidency of the EC last year; and what can be done on the Budget/CAP/our contribution/fish when we seem to be in a minority of one?
- viii How do you feel yourself after three years? Is the Cabinet united? What lessons have you learned from the last three years?

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Opportunity:

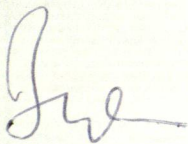
4. This is, of course, an opportunity to rally an essentially friendly readership to your cause. Brian Connell, not having seen you for some time, will judge you by your confidence, ebullience and command. He will also afford you the opportunity to bring out the extent to which you care about people - the tone of the interview will be very important - and how you see the world. I believe it is important to present yourself as not wholly weighed down with the economic battle but actively and confidently concerned with broader international issues.

5. In short, Mr Connell will be looking to see how you have developed as a Prime Minister over the two years since he last interviewed you. A cool, calm and collected approach would be best.

Briefing

6. Given that you are highly tuned because of Question Time etc, I have not troubled you with much briefing but I have thought it sensible to attach briefing on:

- i cost of unemployment and problem of diverting unemployment money into job subsidies to remove people from register; and
- ii copies of speeches by Mr Pym, Mr Ridley and Mr Macgregor; also one by Mr Brittan at the weekend on the argument that we could more cheaply create jobs for unemployed than keep them out of work.



B. INGHAM

9 February, 1982.