

Broadcasting/Press

(F)

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

cc. Mr. Whitmore
Miss Stephens
Mr. Ryder -
Mr. Reece
Mr. Gaffin

Note of a meeting with the Prime Minister on January 10, 1979, to discuss future television programmes and requests for interviews from journals.

The Prime Minister had before her my note of January 4 setting out the requests so far received for 1980. The outcome of her consideration was as follows:

TELEVISION

- (i) The Prime Minister felt that she ought to do more substantial television interviews and agreed that at the CCO christmas party she had offered Granada an opportunity to interview her in March or thereabouts. (n.b. - I have written to Granada confirming the prospect of an interview round about March and suggesting they get in touch with me around mid-February. They have the 25-minute programme "Reports Politics" on March 3 or 10 in mind. I have asked them to let me know their ideas about interviewer and subjects to be covered).
- (ii) Having then patronised two commercial companies, the Prime Minister agreed that she should do a BBC interview, preferably with Robin Day. This might conveniently take place on or around the Government's first anniversary. (n.b. - she has no taste for "Panorama" and I have recently written to them rather coldly turning down offers for March). Unfortunately, the Government's first anniversary falls on a weekend; this will make for a timely BBC Radio "World this Weekend" interview but we shall have to think about TV opportunities.
- (iii) The Prime Minister confirmed that she would be willing to do a "Nationwide" TV interview at the appropriate time.

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- (iv) Under the heading of television, I raised with her the possibility of doing a Jimmy Young radio interview at the appropriate time. I said that this might be regarded by some as being too populist, but I took the view that Jimmy Young listeners needed to be cultivated; he was an excellent interviewer who gave his subject every opportunity to develop his/her points.

JOURNALS

- (i) The Prime Minister decided that she would like to keep faith with the Sunday Telegraph who were to have interviewed the Prime Minister last autumn but had to cry off because of Ivan Rowan's illness. I am getting in touch with the Editor saying that, within a couple of months or so, we shall be offering him the opportunity of a fresh interview.
- (ii) After this, the Prime Minister agreed to be interviewed by Brian Connell, on behalf of the Times. This might usefully take place around the time of the Government's first anniversary.
- (iii) The Prime Minister further agreed that she would give the Sunday Times an interview later in the year, perhaps immediately before the Recess. She took on board the fact that Harold Evans, the Editor, is becoming somewhat restive - "paranoid" as he puts it - over his inability to get an interview with the Prime Minister.
- (iv) The Prime Minister also agreed in principle to a major interview with the Daily Mail at some appropriate time to be arranged.
- (v) She accepts, however, that such interviews will have to be well spaced and carefully timed. It is, therefore, clear that we have the makings of a very full (perhaps over-full) major interviews diary for the better part of 1980.

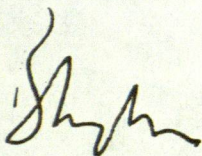
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(vi) In the course of the discussion, I emphasised the importance of conducting interviews with the utmost economy of her time. I would have reservations about a fairly intensive programme of interviews if they involved time-consuming re-writing. It seemed to me that, given the interview was tape-recorded, we should leave it to reputable journalists to transcribe, contenting ourselves (where possible) with checking the text. The Prime Minister recognised that re-writing interviews, while improving the language, was nonetheless time-consuming and agreed to consider my suggested approach.

OTHER POINTS

The Prime Minister agreed that we should pass a request by Tom Arms, Diplomatic Correspondent for Thomson Newspapers, for an interview for a TV series to Lord Carrington; Thames TV Eye should fall by the wayside for the present; and I should turn down, on her behalf, a request to present the Royal Television Society awards on February 28, 1980.

A decision on a request, via the Paymaster General, for an interview by the Editor of the Illustrated London News in March remains unresolved. I shall be pursuing separately.



B. INGHAM