

PRIME MINISTER

*Please copy  
to the Chancellor  
ms*

*MUS 24/2*

BUDGET PRESENTATION

I promised you a note on the above subject.

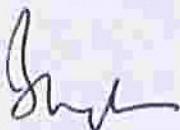
- The first point, bearing in mind previous occasions, is for the Chancellor to get off to a good start and to avoid words which offer the Opposition a horselaugh. Those behind him will be willing him to do well - they are now beginning to feel the need for him to do so - and it is very important we scrutinise very closely the first 2-3 pages for traps.
- Second, and as an extension of this, he needs the sort of opening which perks up his supporters and rocks back the Opposition. Norman Tebbit did this very effectively by quoting Benn extensively in the Second Reading of the Employment Bill. In short, the Chancellor needs, if he can, to stamp his dominance on the occasion at the outset or very early on.
- Third, he needs to control the presentation of his Budget. How does the Government want the overall Budget to be seen? And how can that overview best be conveyed in simple, pithy terms? Thus what we need is a catchword. NB: In devising one, we must try to avoid words like "recovery" which now almost invites ridicule.
- Fourth- and this is the point you mentioned - some goodies should be thrown in first and early. But the reason for doing this is not simply to condition radio or tv commentators and the listening audience; or for that matter to get the most positive evening newspaper headlines; it is also necessary to help the Backbenchers who need to be fed the ammunition with which to dominate the other side. Nothing, apart from downright opposition, is more damaging to wider media presentation than for the Chancellor to be received in silence or sullenly by his own side.



- Fifth, it is highly desirable that the facts and arguments should be presented simply and in plain English without jargon. This is important not merely because of the radio audience but because it minimises opportunities for Opposition ridicule.
- Sixth, some light and shade <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ much needed. But this is merely another way of saying that this is a most important Budget for both the Chancellor and the Government, and the better the performance and presentation the better the product will be regarded.
- Seventh - and finally - the peroration requires the closest attention for it is in these last few paragraphs the Chancellor needs to bring people back to:
  - theme; catchword;
  - overall objective;
  - hope and reward for perseverance;
  - Government determination to see it through, confident that in spite of all the siren voices it is right to be steadfast

Such a presentational plan does, of course, dictate the structure of the speech. It therefore should be agreed before drafting begins.

It might also be helpful, taking account of the need for tight security, if a limited number of us could, at the appropriate time, have an opportunity to contribute to its presentation. If the broad approach set out above is agreed and followed the needs of security and presentation could perhaps be met by a session on the Sunday or Monday before the Budget. The fateful time for leaks will be the end of the preceding week when the Sunday newspapers will be pulling out all the stops.



B. INGHAM

23 February 1982