

PRIME MINISTER

IRN INTERVIEW

You have agreed to give Peter Allen, Political Editor IRN, an interview tomorrow afternoon at 1530 for 15 minutes. This reinstates the interview with him which had to be cancelled earlier in the Falklands crisis.

Mr. Allen is very appreciative that you have honoured your commitment to give him an interview at the earliest possible date after that cancellation.

The interview will be net-worked throughout the country and local radio stations have decided to scrap their 1700 news and take your interview in full instead, following it up with the rest of the news. In other words you will be able to get your message over to, among others, a lot of motorists who outside London will be driving home from work.

Mr. Allen intends to deal only with the Falklands. The interview will be recorded at a time when nothing new diplomatically is likely to have emerged. He will, therefore, try to catch up with the state of play diplomatically, economically and militarily and will then follow up with questions in the following areas:

Is there a gap between the Government's principles and what practically can be achieved; this will give you a useful opportunity to set out again our essential requirements and to emphasise - as I find I have to do every day - that the Argentines fired the first shot and invaded.

The Pope's visit: how would you regard his refusal to come to Britain? (I have said you are unlikely to want to get deeply into this).

Any differences between you and your Ministers at this crucial stage - and especially with Mr. Pym?

/How you

How you are coping with this awesome responsibility in which men could be sent to their death.

I am sure you do not need any briefing for this kind of interview. The important thing will be to keep up with the events and for you to strike the right balance between firmness and flexibility; between the search for peace and the willingness to go to war; and between optimism and realism about any escalation in military activity.

I find that journalists are becoming ever more watchful for signs of stress in you. This requires you to avoid sounding so confident that you seem to be positively enjoying the crisis; and equally, to avoid being so subdued as to raise doubts about your stamina and quiet resolution is perhaps the order of the day.

Content to give the interview in the White Drawing Room? Or would you prefer my office?

Bernard Ingham

16 May 1982

17 May 1982

*Clear*  
*2*  
MR INGHAM

cc Mr Scholar  
Mr Mount

PRIME MINISTER'S IRN INTERVIEW: ELECTRICITY MANUALS' BALLOT

The lunchtime bulletins carried news that the electricity manuals have voted to reject their pay offer (worth about 7.1% on average earnings). The Department of Energy have confirmed this to me: the voting was 41,000 against, 32,000 for. The pay offer had been presented neutrally by the unions to their members.

The unions have indicated their intention to take some limited form of industrial action in pursuit of a higher offer, probably starting in about two weeks; they may well direct any action in such a way that the public as a whole are not affected. Management were surprised at the outcome of the ballot - as was I - and the Electricity Council will be considering its reaction to the result this afternoon.

Should this come up in the course of the Prime Minister's interview with IRN this afternoon, I suggest she takes the following line:

"It is disappointing that the electricity workers have rejected a pay offer broadly similar to what the miners have already accepted, and well above what many others, especially those in the public services, have been offered. But electricity workers have proved themselves responsible in the past, and this is hardly the time for them to change that record."



JOHN VEREKER