

PRIME MINISTER

cc. Paymaster General

Censure Debate

July 1980

1. It might be helpful if I gave you a note on how I see Tuesday's debate from my particular public relations/presentation standpoint.

2. The Opposition's prime objective is to fix you in the public's mind as a heartless and recklessly doctrinaire individual and to force a change of policy - to secure a U-turn - involving any or all of the following:

- increasing public expenditure on packages of job creation measures;
- other devices for pumping more money into the economy;
- more extensive import controls;
- meetings with the TUC which could be presented as a decisive move towards consensus economic policies leading to incomes policy and worse.

3. If this is so, you have two prime objectives:

- to convince the public that, far from being heartless, you are acting in the interest of all the people, whatever the short-term effect on jobs; and
- to leave no doubt in anyone's mind before we go into Recess that the Government will stick by its policies. (In my view, it is essential to the success of your policies that the people are convinced that you will persevere with them because you yourself are convinced that they will work).

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4. In the light of this, I suggest that the following positive points need to be made on Tuesday:

- The crucial need for this country is to face up to economic reality.
- Unless we do - and decide to earn our keep - no Government can turn the country round.
- We are paying the price now of a long-standing failure to come to terms with reality: the need to compete.
- We are paying the price now for believing, over a long period, that one device or another can insulate us from the reality of the market.
- You are determined to rebuild this country's economic fortunes on the basis of well-tried and tested virtues - hard work, application and commercial reality.
- To espouse such a policy is not to be heartless, reckless or doctrinaire; it is to be realistic about the chances of achieving better housing, better welfare, better education, etc.
- To re-embrace the failed policies of the past, whatever short-term alleviation they may bring, is the really heartless, reckless and doctrinaire approach because that can only perpetuate our slide into relative penury.
- Far from demoralising the country, it was what the country elected you to do; the country wants to be richer.

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- It is your duty to tell the country plainly the only way in which that increased wealth can be achieved - and how it cannot be achieved.

- You believe that the country will respond to leadership; you are convinced it will not respond to a leadership with a history of capitulation upon capitulation to one sectional interest.

5. It follows from this that you need, in my view, to achieve a balance in presentation of the following:

- sincere and heartfelt concern about the plight of those genuinely out of work, and especially young people;

- full explanation of why present policies are necessary and how and why previous policies have failed;

- manifest determination, as a united Government, to see those policies through, while alleviating, where possible, the worst effects of the transition;

- the rewards to be had from perseverance - a richer country which provides better for all its people.

6. This construction combines compassion with firmness of leadership and offers hope and reward.



B. INGHAM

25 July, 1980