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Pm
The Chancellor
will be writing

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

18 January, 1980

Mr Peterson

My dear Bob,

I thought I should write to you today to let you know why I am having to present my Budget on the day of your enthronement, and to assure you - not that I suppose for a moment that you would think otherwise - that I am not engaged in a dark conspiracy to distract attention from the Canterbury installation. I should have liked nothing better than to witness your great day.

The problem, which I imagine you understand very well already, is that a Chancellor has in practice very little room for manoeuvre in his choice of Budget Day. The sheer mechanics of the operation - the physical production of the speech, final consultations with colleagues and so on - make Tuesday very much the best day, as successive Chancellors have found.

But even if Tuesday is based on much more than tradition, why pick on your Tuesday? Ironically enough my choice has been very much influenced by the dictates of the ecclesiastical calendar. We need to set the Budget date as close as possible to the end of March; delays could mean lost revenue, while advancing the date means that we are without important information about the year just gone. With the Tuesday before Easter, and the two succeeding Tuesdays more or less ruled out, 25th March was in effect our only option.

The problem does become a little easier in years when Easter is late. My impression is that Easter in the Orthodox Church is never earlier than in Western Christendom,

/and that

The Rt. Rev. The Lord Bishop of St. Albans, MC., MA



and that quite often it is two weeks later. So perhaps I and my successors can look for some help from your discussions with your Orthodox counterparts!

Will come good with

As ~

Howe

(GEOFFREY HOWE)

PRIME MINISTER

Lambeth Palace have told me that there is some unhappiness in the Church, apparently very much shared by the Free Churches, that Budget Day and Bishop Runcie's Enthronement at Canterbury coincide on 25 March. People are quicker than they should be to feel that this is something of a slight by the Government to Bishop Runcie. There is also the problem of TV coverage for both events - the Enthronement is at 3 pm - and some churchmen clearly feel that the Budget will distract attention generally from the Enthronement.

In fact, both dates will have more or less dictated themselves, the Enthronement because March 25th is a great Feast (the Annunciation) and the Budget because it has to be a Tuesday and because of the date of Easter this year.

I understand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has written to Bishop Runcie to say how sorry he is that the dates coincide, and explaining why the Budget had to be fixed for 25 March.

It is unfortunate, but I hope that things will calm down.

CVP

18 January 1980

I also am very unhappy - is it possible to change the date of the enthronement? Even if the Budget had been the 24th - we should still have had to be in the House on the 25th because of the opening of the Opposition case.
mb.

The Times
18 January 1980.

Budget on day of Primate's enthronement

By Our Political Editor

Budget day is to be Tuesday, March 25, the day the new Archbishop of Canterbury is enthroned, it was announced in the Commons yesterday. Indicating that he would prefer to attend the enthronement, Mr Norman St John-Stevas, Leader of the House, gave no reasons for the clash of dates.

It was said later by ministers that since the Government intended to have fewer budgets than its predecessor, it was easier for Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, Chancellor of the Exchequer, to announce the date well in advance, an interpretation hardly calculated to impress the new Archbishop.

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Prime Minister

Econ PA

Agree ?



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SWIP 3AG
01-233 3000

PL

14th January, 1980

14/1

PA

Spoke to PM/told Chief Whips office, CDE and TEG that date was to be announced tomorrow 15/1

Dear Tyn,

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DATE OF THE BUDGET

As you will be aware, the Prime Minister has agreed to the Chancellor's proposal that the date of the Budget should be Tuesday, 25th March. As you know, the Prime Minister and the Chancellor last Thursday had a brief discussion about the best date for announcing this, in light of the fact that it coincides with the date of installation of the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Chancellor has now considered this further and has concluded that there is no good reason for holding back on an announcement. In these circumstances the Chancellor feels that it would be sensible for him to tell Cabinet about the date of the Budget next Thursday, 17th January, and have an announcement in Parliament that afternoon.

The usual method for making the announcement in Parliament is for the Leader of the House to give the information in reply to a question by the Leader of the Opposition (prompted by the Chief Whip) on the Thursday Business Statement. It would seem sensible to follow this course next Thursday.

I am copying this letter to John Stevens and Murdo Maclean.

yours ever

John Wiggins

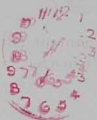
(A.J. WIGGINS)

T.P. Lankester, Esq.,
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10, Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

Why can't it be announced without promulgating?

14 JAN 1969



- ① Supp's Recs app
- ② Comp
- ③ Affairs
- ④ Deten