



RR

Act RR

Box for RTs comments

FROM: THE RT.HON. SIR KEITH JOSEPH, Bt. MP.

Have discussed with Keith Joseph.

I am very much of mind the

KJ/SMC

Rt.Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP.

21st December 1978

Idea. I agree with John Hoskyns

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Margaret,

After reading the Economist's supplement on Merseyside (published on 14th October), Geoffrey, to whom I am copying this letter, had the excellent idea that we might advance two of our purposes if we were to appoint a Task Force to study the application of our policies to Merseyside.

His proposed list of names range across the spectrum, including a successful entrepreneur and a prominent trades unionist. His first thoughts were Peter Walker; Quinton Hazell; Eric Morley; Fred Catherwood; Irwin Bellow; Gardner of the Laird Group; Moss Evans; Teresa Gorman and someone with direct recent experience of Hong Kong.

The idea would be to establish our practical interest in a region which, as Anthony Steen says, has been poisoned by socialism and which contains a number of marginal seats. At the same time, we would be preparing our thinking for what we would need to do by way of dismantling the myriad interventionist bodies and applying our general policy of encouragement and reduced controls to a region.

Geoffrey had it in mind that I should chair the Task Force. He feels that he should not do it himself.

I discussed the idea with Angus Maude and Chris Patten, who were both enthusiastic. They advise that I should have a number 2, such as Kenneth Clarke, who is slightly ~~less~~ more friendly to interventionism than I am.

There are two dissenting opinions. John Hoskyns, to whom Geoffrey copied his original letter, thinks it will be a distraction from our main purposes. The other objection is that Merseyside is notorious for obstruction and our ideas have least chance of flowering in that particular soil.

I agree with Hoskyns.

If, however, the Task Force were to be appointed, say, in February with a remit to report by the end of the year, no result would be published before an election and what would have ~~been locally~~ a fairly frequent amount of visiting by me and members of the Task Force to listen and to learn from local views in a number of the towns.

Emerging locally would have been

Cont./.....



It would, of course, be necessary to have advice. Patrick Minford, Professor of Economics at Liverpool University, is one of the few economists who shares our outlook. Adam Ridley told me that he would be too busy and is not a micro-economist. So I wrote to Patrick Minford and he has recommended strongly that we should be advised by Professor Peters, also of Liverpool, who shares our point of view - and, in fact, Peters has expressed strong willingness to help. We would try to use Mark Lennox-Boyd, a local candidate, as secretary.

If you were to approve of the idea - either with me as Chairman or with another colleague, such as John Nott - then the next step would be for Geoffrey and me to consult our Merseyside colleagues, one or two of whom would, of course, be on the Task Force. If they thought the idea useful, we could then, if you agreed, put a paper to Steering - and if the idea was then approved, we could set up the little staff and issue invitations.

Would you perhaps let Geoffrey and me have your reaction?

Even.

Kerr

8th January 1978

Although I know you have
discussed your letter of 21st
December with Mrs Thatcher I am
attaching her comments for
your records.

With best wishes.

Richard Ryder
Private Office

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP
