

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the Rt Hon George Younger MP

Friday, 8th December

1. The result is not as good as the figures. Many voted with varying degrees of reluctance for the Prime Minister. They cannot all be relied upon another time.
2. Many worries expressed were typical mid-term policy concerns (e.g. inflation, mortgage interest, ambulance dispute, water privatisation). If these problems did not exist, there would probably have been no challenge. However, the fact that the challenge took place has unearthed the significance of these problems. As there are likely to be economic and polls difficulties in a year's time, another challenge is not improbable. We feel everything possible must be done now to head this off.
3. Apart from these current issues, the following points were made by many of the "doubtfuls":
 - a) Members feel the PM is not accessible enough. It is not clear why (she is often in the Lobby), but they clearly feel this.
 - b) They also feel the PM is not prepared to listen receptively to their concerns.
 - c) It is strongly felt (even amongst the greatest supporters) that the reshuffle in the summer went badly wrong and that Nigel Lawson's resignation could have been avoided. It is felt that not enough time was taken to plan how best to approach those being moved.
 - d) There is a widespread feeling that Downing Street advisors are too prominent and have more influence than senior ministers. However unfairly, there is great mistrust of them, and it is thought they "ring fence" the PM from other advice.

- e) It is felt that there are personality tensions within Cabinet and that these must be resolved if confidence is to be restored. In particular, Geoffrey Howe must be seen and treated as the PM's right-hand man.
 - f) The PM is marvellous in paying visits to constituencies. It is felt they would like her to do more, even if it means doing less of other things (e.g. foreign tours).
4. The following are some suggestions for major changes in style which might convince the Party that these complaints have been understood and dealt with:
- a) A major effort by the PM to reduce her diary commitments. Space for thought and for unexpected requirements should be written in to the programme.
 - b) Fewer foreign tours and more home ones. Foreign Secretary should do most of what needs to be done abroad. Failing him, could the Deputy PM perhaps do some of these?
 - c) The passing of more business to Cabinet committees chaired by senior ministers. This would contribute to a).
 - d) Clear rapprochement following recent tensions. Perhaps the Cabinet and wives should dine together socially at least twice a year.
 - e) More unplanned opportunities for chatting to backbenchers (e.g. casual visits to Smoking Room, etc.
 more invitations for Members of Parliament to
 No 10 lunches and dinners even at the expense of
 fewer ministers,
 particular efforts to chat with and listen to those
 known to be of different views).
 - f) An early and visible change in Downing Street top advisors (this would be for their own good too).

- g) While maintaining existing policy over Europe, a major effort to sound positive about closer integration of the right sort. It is the hearts of the pro-Europeans that need to be reached, not their heads. Most of the new generation have grown up as pro-Europeans and have preached it as an ideal. They can be persuaded to be hard-headed on bad policy proposals, provided they believe our leadership passionately believes in Europe too.
- h) When we do join the ERM, we must do it with warmth and enthusiasm.
- i) A new set of aims for the 1990s, different from the 1980s, will be needed. Perhaps a weekend seminar at Chequers with four or five senior ministers could set the tone for this. The PM and Government have been enormously successful in the 1980s. The 1990s will not be the same, but they can be equally successful. We must not let Labour seem new and different while we remain the same.