

CONFIDENTIAL

file Sport BK



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 October 1979

Sports Council

As I told you on the telephone this morning, the Prime Minister has seen your letter to Mike Pattison of 28 September. She has commented that the option set out in the first paragraph was never considered formally nor investigated. In these circumstances she does not think that your observer should mention it. She has added that she had not supposed that observers would take part in the meetings.

Further, the Prime Minister has commented that the general point about small rugby clubs is valid but she has no doubt that one of the Sports Council members will raise it.

I am copying this letter to Richard Prescott, Paymaster General's Office.

N. J. SANDERS

pl

Geoff Needham, Esq.,
Department of the Environment

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

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Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
Whitehall
SW1

28 September 1979

PRIME MINISTER

Are you contact with
this line?

MS

28/9

The option was never considered formally on investigation and I do not think Ministers or members should mention it. Surely observers don't take part? The ground point about small rugby clubs is valid but surely only the sports council members will raise it. No!

Dear Mike,

SOUTH AFRICAN BARBARIANS CLUB TOUR: SPORTS COUNCIL

The Sports Council meets on Monday next, 1 October. It will debate a Resolution on sporting links with South Africa (copy attached) which, if approved as expected, could be followed by an emergency Resolution calling for withdrawal of grants by the four Sports Councils to the Home Rugby Unions (around £200,000 per year).

This option was considered by the Prime Minister and Cabinet colleagues when Mr Monro attended an informal meeting recently at No 10, and was rejected. The Government has no powers to direct the Sports Council, but an Article in the latter's Royal Charter requires it to have "regard" for Government statements of policy. If it seems likely that the emergency Resolution on stopping grant is going to be approved by the Sports Council, Mr Monro has agreed that the Department's observer on the Council should inform members of the Government's position. Briefly, he would say that the Government considered this option but decided against asking the Sports Council to stop grant to the Rugby Unions because such action would not stop the tour from taking place and could be regarded as a spiteful move against the many grass-roots rugby players who had nothing to do with the tour; he therefore hoped members would bear this in mind in reaching their decision.

News of this could leak out and this would be the first time this policy would have been made public. In the circumstances my Minister thought it prudent to put the Prime Minister in the picture.

I would be grateful for confirmation, by 10.00 am on Monday at the latest, that there is no objection to this proposed line of action.

I am copying this letter to Richard Prescott (Paymaster General's Office)

Yours ever,
Geoff Needham
GEOFF NEEDHAM
Private Secretary

SPORTING CONTACTS WITH SOUTH AFRICA

The following Resolution is proposed by Mr John Disley for the Sports Council's consideration at its meeting on Monday 1st October 1979:

"This Council, while recognising the progress made in sport in South Africa towards organisation on a multi-racial basis and fully recognising the autonomy of sports bodies in this country, regrets any action by governing bodies of sport which might seem to contravene the letter and spirit of the Gleneagles and Lusaka Agreements and which could adversely affect this country's scope to compete at international level".

28 SEP 1979

