

PRIME MINISTER

Your Second Anniversary - Media

As a footnote to my earlier minute on your media activities over the next few months, could I add one suggestion arising out of a telephone call this evening from Ronnie Butt?

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He asked whether it would be possible to have an on-the-record interview with you in the foreseeable future. I rather got the impression from him that he would like to make his mark in this way with the new proprietors and editorial regime of the Times/Sunday Times.

The ideal opportunity for this would occur on your second anniversary as Prime Minister - i.e. Monday, 4 May. Content for me to explore for an interview for Sunday, 3 May?

*Butt*

*Yes*

*mb.*

20 March, 1981.

PRIME MINISTER

Ronnie Butt

You have agreed to give Ronnie Butt, Sunday Times, the last of a series of interviews this week to mark the second anniversary of your Government at 3 p.m. tomorrow (Friday). An hour has been set aside for this. Mr. Butt will tape-record the interview and I will accompany him.

Sally Soames is coming along to take a photograph of you at the beginning of the interview.

The article will appear on Sunday on the eve of your second anniversary.

You have already had the benefit of a 'rehearsal' with the Sunday Express and I see little point in burdening you with much briefing.

His Approach

Mr. Butt's approach will be much more philosophical and reflective than that of Messrs. Renshaw and Toner. His point of departure is the Government's achievement over its first two years in sticking to a policy (which many people wanted to abandon) through the depths of a world recession. There has been a price to pay and the Government (no doubt encouraged by the cautious optimism that is being expressed about the economy) must now be thinking about how it is going to win the next election.

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What ought to be done in order to create a popular Conservatism? What is there for the ordinary working chap in capitalism? How can we make the future under the Conservatives more exciting and appealing and achieve a change in attitudes which positively embraces the free enterprise system?

Mr. Butt's review of David Howell's new book in today's Times (see Annex I) is germane to all this.

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In the process, Mr. Butt is likely to pursue such ideas as public expenditure reductions, differential health service charging, encouraging small savings and worker participation in companies.

Mr. Butt is also likely to ask, given that you are "a long-term politician", what you hope to achieve in this Parliament and what you would hope to achieve in a second term. What vision do you have of Britain at the end of your Prime Ministry?

It is against this background that he is likely to pursue you for your views on economic, social and foreign policy and your achievements to date in those areas.

Points mentioned in our discussions include:

Economy:

- How do we sustain any expansion and keep control of pay bargaining in an expanding economy?
- Prospects for further industrial relations reform.
- Public expenditure, borrowing, monetarism.
- Protectionism.

Foreign and EC:

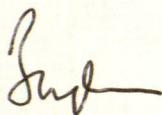
- How do you view your forthcoming presidency and relations with EC partners? How can we reform the EC budget?
- Where do we stand in relation to our Euro partners and the Reagan Administration and indeed in relation to other countries (e.g. India) and Reagan?
- Can we afford Trident? How do you view increasing nuclear pacifism?

It follows from this that he would like a discussion which, while including some stocktaking, reveals your vision of the future Britain, Europe and the world under the influence of yourself and your Government. There is no doubt that from the depths of a recession, he would like to present an appealing prospect of your continued Government.

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From time to time in recent weeks Mr. Butt has canvassed the idea of a special Ministerial team to plan our economic recovery. He has not mentioned this to me in our preparatory discussions, but you should be aware of the article he wrote at Annex II.

It is likely that the interview will be run in conjunction with a profile of you which has been written by Simon Winchester, a newcomer to the Sunday Times from the Daily Mail. Mr. Winchester has done a great deal of research and seen you at work, for example, on walkabout.



B. INGHAM

30 April, 1981