

- 1 CAROLINE STEPHENS
2 PRIME MINISTER

21st

mt.

(I suggest the 21st not the 14th as
you may be overseas during the
weekend and give you more time
to prepare for the speech.
G. 419

BIRMINGHAM CHAMBER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

You will recall that we discussed again at a recent diary meeting the invitation to you from the Birmingham Chamber of Industry and Commerce to address their 1980 Annual Banquet.

You concluded after some debate that it was indeed an important platform - the provincial equivalent in industrial terms to the Lord Mayor's Banquet in foreign relations terms. But you felt the timing was wrong and if they could be persuaded to postpone the Banquet until after next year's Budget (the original invitation had been for January or February) you would feel able to accept.

This is the high spot of the Chamber's year and I am bound to say that I thought it unlikely that they would be able to leave it as late as April, but they are in fact willing to do so.

Dates offered - subject to their being able to hold on to tentative bookings in the Metropole Hotel - are Thursday or Friday 10/11 April: Monday 14 April: Monday or Tuesday 21/22 April.

If you still agree with this project I would rule out 10/11 April because it is a week which includes the Bank Holiday. The 22nd I rule out because it is a Tuesday and you will be answering questions; which leaves 14 or 21, both Mondays. And I go for the earlier of these. A Monday would be a good evening for a speech which would give you a weekend, hopefully of relaxation, to prepare. It would be post-Budget and we shall presumably be seeking ways then of propagating the message of that Budget and the speech always attracts wide attention and world publicity.

~~It could be the day we vote on the Budget.~~ ∴ 21st would

As you know, I strongly advocate this platform, and I won't rehearse my arguments.

[Signature]

mt.

Henry L James
3 September 1979


11

CAROLINE STEPHENS

I know Tim Lankester has already mentioned the concern of the Birmingham Chamber of Industry and Commerce that the Prime Minister had not been able to accept their invitation to address their Annual Banquet next year. I believe you are consulting the Department of Trade again. Might I suggest that the Department of Industry would also be concern

You have seen the letter from John Brown, the President of the Birmingham Chamber, who was also Chairman until recently of the Birmingham Post. I have received another letter today (copy attached) from John Warburton, the Director of the Chamber, which restates the case.

The reception given to the Prime Minister last Friday was near rapturous and I can speak from personal experience of the importance of the Annual Banquet in Birmingham. It is indeed a major affair and attracts a great deal of interest; The COI regularly transmits the major speech direct to BIS New York and it is assured a wide distribution. So I do hope that serious consideration can be given to this.


Henry L James

26 July 1979