

14 11'
Parliamentary Secretary
Minister

Admission of the Press Bill - above

Please see Mr. Pearce's note attached of the extremely unsatisfactory discussion with Mrs. Thatcher.

She seems to be going back on the clear understanding which I thought I had reached with her, and on the undertaking which she gave to the Minister in response to his letter.

At my talk with her I thought I was quite clear. I said that the Bill would have to be one through which an ill-disposed local authority could drive a coach and horses. She said that provided the Bill made some advance - which I said it would - she would be content.

I also said that if she did not like the outline which the Minister would give her that would be her opportunity to reject it. She could then introduce the Simon Bill or any variant of it - and the Government would fight it. She indicated that she did not want that; she would be most grateful for a Government drafted Bill on the lines I had outlined.

I was specific about the schedule (bodies to which the Bill would apply). I said it would be very much shorter than that attached to the Simon Bill. She entirely agreed that that was right.

If she writes to me I would propose to remind her in no uncertain terms of what passed between us. (One thing that passed was that she would not be bullied by the other backers).

PA
Scudley 12-1-60
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12/1

11th January, 1960

Her technique is to say she must have much more than she ^{really} expects to get! But I entirely agree with Mr Pearce's final sentence.

We have got to hold her to what she agreed in her letter of 17th December. I will see her again if necessary. Meanwhile the sooner we can get a draft of this Bill to legislation the better. Then we can enlist the Chief Whip's help. H.B. 11/1