

Prime Minister.

P.M. 1/20

Get L to Ingham. (19)



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

1 February 1982

Agree that:-

a. The Paymaster General should attend Monday's and Friday's media meetings

(Mr Ingham and I have some ideas for sharpening the format of these occasions and cutting down the attendance which we would like to discuss with you.);

b. the idea of appointing a junior Minister should be dropped;

c. the membership of the liaison committee should be as at XI below;

d. you should mention the new arrangements in an early Cabinet meeting?

Information Officers

I do not think

fulfill these arrangements are 2 1/2 p.m. not complete not

Dear Michael,

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 20 January to John Kerr.

In the light of the decision recorded in your letter to re-activate the Lord President's Liaison Committee on presentation, the Lord President met the Paymaster General on Monday, with Mr Ingham and yourself present, to discuss the way ahead. They also discussed, as requested by the Prime Minister, the idea of appointing a junior Minister to work closely with the Prime Minister's Chief Press Secretary.

It was agreed that, as envisaged, the Liaison Committee would contribute most by concentrating on longer-term presentational issues, leaving those of a more immediate nature to be handled, as now, by the Prime Minister's Chief Press Secretary and the responsible Departments in each case. It was suggested, however, that, in order to take fully into account the relationship between the short and longer-term and also to strengthen the important link between Party and Government, the Paymaster General should attend the Prime Minister's media briefings on each Monday and Friday. If this proposal is accepted, the Lord President and Paymaster General consider that, subject to the Prime Minister's views, the idea of appointing a junior Minister need not be pursued. Could you please let me know whether the Prime Minister is content to proceed in this way?

.../..

M C Scholar Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON

On membership the Lord President sees value in leaving the previous composition of the Committee unchanged. It would thus comprise, on the lines of your letter:

X | Lord President (Chairman)
Chairman of Party
Secretary of State for Scotland
Chief Secretary
Secretary of State for Employment
Mr Wakeham (Parliamentary Under Secretary for Industry
and formerly a Whip)
Mr Cropper (Conservative Research Department)
Prime Minister's Chief Press Secretary

Could you please let me know whether the Prime Minister agrees, please?

The Lord President believes that, subject to the Prime Minister's views on the proposals set out in this letter, it would be helpful if the reactivation of the Committee and the need for the co-operation of Departmental Ministers when called upon could be brought to the attention of colleagues. This might most suitably be done by a brief statement by the Prime Minister at a future Cabinet meeting, rather than by circulation of any paper - which has not been and is not planned to be a feature of the Committee's business. Finally, you may like to note that the Lord President proposes to arrange for the Committee to meet weekly in his office at 11.00 am on Wednesday.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Keith Long (Paymaster General's office) and to Mr Ingham.

*Yours ever,
David.*

D C R HEYHOE
Private Secretary