

● PRIME MINISTER'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Prime Minister had a number of internal, official meetings this morning, would be answering questions and listening to the Debate this afternoon and (for operational use only), she hoped to have an audience of the Queen this evening.

CIVIL SERVANTS DEALING WITH THE ARTS

Asked about the stories that Ministers might be dissatisfied with the way the Arts were being handled by officials, we said that we did not really understand the story. We were not aware of any difficulties, nor had Mr. St. John-Stevas made any complaints that we knew of - in fact we had spoken to the Chancellor of the Duchy's office just before the meeting and the subject had not been mentioned.

CRITICISM OF OTHER CIVIL SERVANTS

Equally, we found the stories about appointments at the Department of Industry a little odd and thought it a mistake to construe the appointments in the Information Division at Industry in the way some papers had done since the weekend. We reminded Lobby that John Woodrow had been selected before the Election for the job of Chief Information Officer at Industry, that there had been some necessity to move Information Personnel when the Department of Prices was disbanded after the Election but that the process leading to Mr. Woodrow's appointment was one which had started before the Election and which it had been agreed should be completed. A suitable job, at the right level, would certainly be found for Mr. Garrod. The important point was that neither Sir Keith Joseph nor any other Minister had expressed any criticism or anxiety about particular officials currently working in their Departments.

H.M. AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON

We apologised to the Lobby for guiding them yesterday about the appointment of a new Ambassador to Washington in a way that later turned out to be wrong. Late last night the FCO had made an announcement that Sir Nicholas Henderson had been appointed to replace Mr. Jay.

DOCTORS AND DENTISTS REVIEW BODY REPORT

Again, we apologised for leading the Lobby to think that there would be a decision on this report this week, but the evidence available to us at the time suggested that a decision would be made this week. We now thought a decision next week more likely.

BOYLE REPORT ON MPS' AND MINISTERS' PAY

This report had not yet been received at No. 10.

RESIGNATION HONOURS LIST

Again, this had not yet been received at No. 10, but questions about it should, more properly, be addressed to the office of the Leader of the Opposition.

CIVIL SERVICE RECRUITMENT FREEZE

We said it was likely that the Government would offer advice to local authorities recommending them to make economies on staff, etc. wherever possible - the Government could only advise, not instruct, local authorities on this matter. The same was true of the nationalised industries and "QUANGOS" where it was quite possible that the Government would ask them to take a hard look at their manning levels.

The three-month freeze on recruitment in the public service announced by the Government yesterday would be across the board, although there would obviously have to be one or two exceptions for jobs that it is essential to fill. Any recruitment during this period would need the approval of Departmental Ministers. The Government's objective in the longer term would be to refine the process of making economies in the public service and the Civil Service Department would be asked by Ministers to identify areas where economies could be made in the future.

PRESS NOTICE

Appointment of Lord-Lieutenant of Dunbartonshire.

ANSWER OF INTEREST

Norman Fowler on heavy goods vehicles.

CVA

PRIME MINISTER'S ENGAGEMENTS

This morning's briefing was repeated.

RHODESIA

Elaborating on the Prime Minister's statement during Questions, we confirmed that an official British emissary would be going to Africa for talks with representatives of the front line states as well as with other Commonwealth countries in Africa. We did not yet know who this emissary would be or when he would go but it was likely to be soon. The announcement would come from the FCO.

In addition, the Government had it in mind to send an official to Salisbury to keep in contact with Bishop Muzorewa et al. Again, the emissary had not yet been chosen or the time of his departure to Salisbury decided.

Questioned about possible contact with the Patriotic Front leaders, we reminded Lobby that the Prime Minister had said at Question Time that she had no statement to make on this. Looking ahead though, we would hesitate to rule out the possibility of discussions with the Patriotic Front.

We said it was likely that the recent elections in Rhodesia, combined with Lord Boyd's favourable conclusions about them, could facilitate a return to legality in Rhodesia. This would be the first step in achieving a solution to the Rhodesian problem. The second major step would be an act of recognition. It was important to make a distinction between the two. We could not be specific about the timetable for a return to legality or for recognition. Much would depend on the extensive programme of consultations which would have to take place now.

Asked about the absence of any mention during Prime Minister's Questions of the Anglo-American initiative, we said that the Prime Minister might have thought it unwise to say anything about this whilst Lord Carrington's talks with Mr. Vance were in progress.

COHSE/NUPE

We said that there were no meetings planned between the leaders of these two unions and the Prime Minister. Mrs. Thatcher was leaving these negotiations entirely to Mr. Prior to conduct.

OPEN GOVERNMENT

During a brief discussion on open government, we mentioned the half-day courses on "Machinery of Government" run by the Civil Service Department and offered to help organise the inclusion of any Lobby journalists, if they so wished. One or two said they were interested and will be in touch.