

UNW SPEECH

Prime Minister

TUESDAY'S DEBATE

1. You have, already, a copy of the letter dated 25th November, signed by 25 of our backbenchers.
2. Herewith a disturbing note of today's date from Michael Jopling, with whom I lunched today.
3. I said to Michael that I thought that Geoffrey and Leon should decide which of the now 45 people they should see on Monday, and that if they have not done so already, Geoffrey and Leon should clear their diaries for ~~that~~ that day.
4. Clearly neither will have any time at all on Tuesday to see our backbenchers.
5. I also suggested to Michael that it would be helpful if he could engineer an invitation from the original 25 who are meeting at 6.00 p.m. on Monday, to Geoffrey. Michael and I share the view that, in reality, Leon would be a more effective Ambassador at that meeting than Geoffrey. If an invitation to Geoffrey was forthcoming, then it would be possible for him to plead an unbreakable engagement so that Leon could go instead. On the other hand, you may think that it would be impossible to suggest to Geoffrey that Leon would be a more effective Ambassador, although I believe that that is the case.
6. Michael takes the potential rebellion on Tuesday rather more seriously than I do, although of course we must do everything in our power to

minimise it.

7. Michael, though an outstanding Chief Whip, does not share our conviction. Like the original 25, he, in his heart, favours reflation and foresees the deepest difficulty for our Party if the Budget is not reflationary. I take the opposite view. In my opinion, the gravest danger for the Party and country is if we follow our predecessors, and lose our nerve.
8. Michael is leaving this afternoon to speak in Norfolk. Geoffrey will be back in No. 11 soon after 3.00 and is seeing the Sunday Lobby at 3.30 p.m.
9. Would you like to see him when he gets back and before the Sunday Lobby?

4.12.81

IAN GOW



Government Chief Whip

12 Downing Street, London SW1

The Prime Minister

I am becoming increasingly concerned about the debate on Tuesday following the Chancellor's statement of this week. We have got far more dissidents than I expected, and some of them are very unhappy indeed. The unhappiness centres around the 25 Members who signed last week's letter to me of 25th November, of which you have a copy. They are meeting between 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm on Monday, and with the exception of Robin Squire, I understand they are very seriously contemplating a mass abstention. Others whom I hear are particularly unhappy and whom I guess could also abstain are: Latham, Forman (who is a PPS), St John Stevas, Mawhinney and Ted Heath who has told Timothy Kitson that he will abstain.

Others who have expressed their unhappiness to the Whips include:

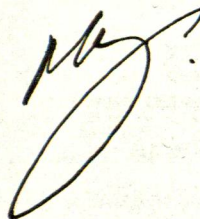
P Mills
N Baker (PPS)
Best (PPS)
 P Bottomley
 Tapsell
Higgins
 Haselhurst
 H Fraser
R Shepherd
Aspinwall
Fry
 Adley
 Miller
 Ancram
 P Fraser

I think the 25 have come to the conclusion that the package is deflationary, hence their attitude.

A number of them are also anxious about the 2% shortfall.

I think we are facing a very serious situation which we must discuss on Monday.

I am copying this note to the Chancellor.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'M' followed by a large, sweeping loop that extends downwards and to the left.

4 December 1981