

WEST MIDLANDS  
BACK BENCHES  
10.30 A.M.



15/12/1982

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

SPAIN  
36.7%  
66.0% EFFECTIVE TARIFF

1. HAN MILLER
2. PERCY GRIEVE
3. PATRICK CORNACK
4. JILL KNIGHT
5. JOHN HEDDER
6. DON BEAUMONT - DAMP.
7. JOHN BAKER
8. JIM PAIN
9. DAVID GILBERT BROWN
10. DAVID HUNT
11. EDMOND BULMER
12. COLIN STEPHENSON
13. EARL COCHRAN
14. JIM MILES

1.5  
22.5  
VANILLA - SPANISH TARIFFS

PERCY GRIEVE

SPANISH TARIFFS - HIGH BECAUSE OF  
SPAIN'S OPPOSITION TO SOIN E.C.

BEAUMONT - DAMP.

SENTENCE OF PEOPLE BEING LOST OFF WHAT  
UNTIL CHRISTMAS. STILL MUCH MORE REDUNDANCIES  
TO COME WITH BOSTON PART OF WORLD  
RATE RELIEF FOR FINANCIAL - WHAT ABOUT  
MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY RATES

JIM PAIN

VANILLA IN SPAIN  
270,000 UNITS P.A.

2



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Small facilitating firms investment scheme  
still motor industry based - abolition  
V.A.T on company vehicles.

DAVID GILBERT BLUM

TAKE OFF CAR TAX

ROOFS coming out FACTORIES

WITHDRAW ASSISTED AREA STATUS FOR OTHER  
OR GIVE THAT STATUS TO -

ESMOND BULLER.

degree of helplessness. Not enough to

say that we have put out some into B.C.

PATRICK CORNACK

People are beginning to lose hope. have  
faith - the West Midlands.

Sometimes the best when we have lost it.

We must inject some hope. Reg. Capital markets.

(3)



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

JILL KNIGHT

RATES

SPANISH TARIFFS

MORALE VS LOW.

DREADED PICTURE OF ASIAN.

TRAIN MILLS

Closure of plant in ben road

questioned.

COLIN STEPHENSON

SPAIN.

SPANISH

JOHN HEDDERLEY

EAST RATES.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

P.M.

1. He had asked whether figures really are  
from note M — a doubt.

2. SOA — Until October a balance with  
You — now an adverse balance  
Have to negotiate through E.C.

P.A. note to Dargy — in final form —  
Can't wait until accession to solve this  
problem. Problem is a combination of things.

H.M.

Compacts done at least at.

1988 — 95% completion

1989/90 Compacts not done.

MILLS



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Revised. Dat. P.L. Tom and Mary — Offer

have led to pay.

COMPONENT 2000 02 industry

VISIT FROM P.M.

BU D 6PT 1-2-5-1000 COST

CONFIDENTIAL

14th December 1982

I confirm that the Prime Minister is looking forward to seeing you and other Conservative Members of Parliament from the West Midlands in her room at the House tomorrow evening.

Would you be kind enough, please, to let me have a list of those who will be there?

It is not yet certain at what time the vote will be. If it comes at 10.00 p.m., would you please come to the Prime Minister's room after the vote?

If the vote does not come until after 10.00 p.m. (in that even the most likely time for the division will be 11.30 p.m.) would you please come to the Prime Minister's room at 10.30 p.m.?

IAN GOW

Hal Miller Esq MP

✓ ccc Caroline Stephens

① Mr. Cole ✓ A.S.C. 13/12  
② Mr. Gow

22.10 H/c  
Wednesday.

C. 13/14

(F)

Caroline

HAL MILLER AND THE WEST MIDLANDS CONSERVATIVE MPs

1. Peccavi.
2. Yesterday, in the House, I let the Prime Minister escape as I had to see JEP.
3. Hal Miller got at her. She agreed to receive him and the other (18) Conservative West Midlands Members of Parliament.
4. They want to talk about Spain and Steel and "a fair deal for the West Midlands".
5. They want no other Minister there, save the Queen's First Minister.
6. Could you please give them 40 minutes before Christmas?
7. They have already seen Peter Rees (who is a hero) and Patrick Jenkin (who is less of one).

Rees

10.12.82

PI IAN GOW

W. Mids. meeting Wed 15th

after 10.15 Vote.



with the  
compliments of

In case the PM has not  
seen details - as a loyalist  
I thought she should be  
warned! Yours ever

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Lionel Muller



DECEMBER 12, 1982

## WORKSHOP OR WORKHOUSE?

IT was once the workshop of the nation. Now too much of the West Midlands is in the demoralising shadow of the workhouse.

Further evidence of the region's manufacturing decline has come with the news that it became, in terms of output per head, the poorest in England last year. Since then, its unemployment rate has leapt ahead of the national average, and the past week has added substantially to the melancholy toll of lost jobs.

Everybody now realises the principal causes: the well-intentioned but disastrous Whitehall policy during the "good" years of forcing firms to expand elsewhere and denying new industries access to the region, and the consequent impact of world recession on a workshop with weakened foundations.

But simply bewailing the follies of the past will not stop the Midlands becoming even more of a wasteland. Action, of a positive nature, is now desperately needed.

The suggestions advanced on this page by Mr. Anthony Beaumont Dark are the kind of measures that deserve urgent consideration.

His view that we should not write off the Midlands' traditional "metal bashing" expertise, but look at ways of up-dating it, has the ring of sound sense, too.

During the decades of prosperity the region gave richly to Britain — in tax revenue, export enterprise and job creation. It also gave its life-blood, albeit reluctantly, in the forced transfusion of work to the then depressed areas.

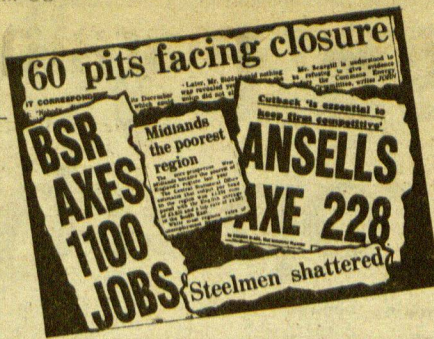
Now the Midlands, in its hour of need, should get something in return.

We still have the skills, and a determination sharpened by hardship. What we need are the weapons to fight back.

So far the message does not seem to have got through to the Whitehall mandarins and ministers. Now, as we report today, it is to be taken to the very top.

If there is one thing above all others that Mrs. Thatcher has demonstrated, it is that once she is convinced of the correctness of a policy she pursues it with unswerving determination.

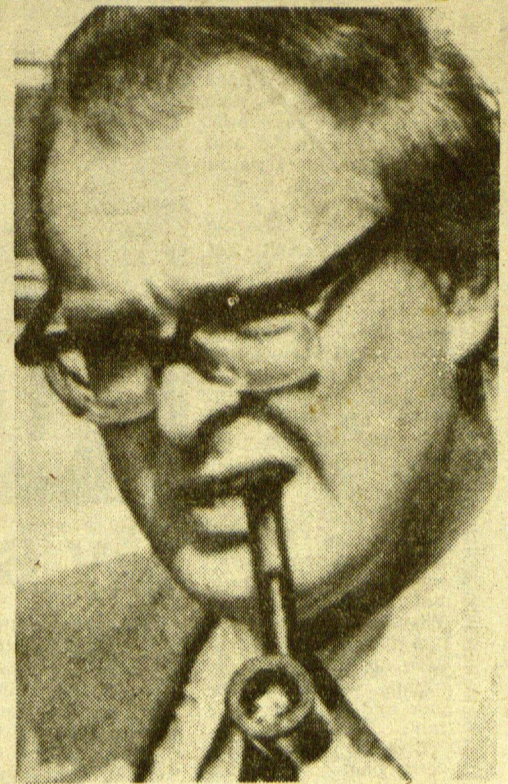
Let us hope that when Midlands MPs go to see her at No. 10 their wooing will be passionate enough to win the lady over to their case.



With the Midlands  
on the precipice...



# Wanted: 5-year plan to stop the rot



Anthony Beaumont Dark, MP  
"Give Midlands a proper chance".

THE once inconceivable has become sadly true. The West Midlands is officially the poorest region in the whole of England.

The extent of decline has just been revealed in the Government's latest industrial output statistics.

A decade ago the figures would have generated a shock wave of reaction. But in a week in which Midlanders had also to cope with the news of over 1,000 BSR redundancies, bringing the job loss total to more than 5,000 in the last month, the impact was muted by more tangible disasters.

And still there is no sign of the special help the region so sorely needs to get back on its manufacturing feet.

What can be done to stop the rot? Outspoken Conservative ANTHONY BEAUMONT DARK, MP for Selly Oak, Birmingham, has never been afraid to be controversial, either inside his party or in public.

Here he talks to CLIVE EDWARDS about the new initiatives that he is urging, to save the people and the products of the Midlands from the industrial scrapheap.

"SUCCESSIVE Governments have shown a lack of foresight over the problems of the Midlands.

"They have always thought we were crying wolf, and they have told us we mustn't be selfish."

Anthony Beaumont Dark delivers his verdict with a certain wry smile. In his days as a local politician before he became a Conservative MP, he can clearly remember being rebuked for "selfishness" when appealing for aid for Midlands industry.

"Needless to say the Minister who told me that came from up North," he adds.

For years, Government aid has flowed unceasingly to traditionally run-down areas like the North and Scotland, while the "unselfish" Midlands has done without — and economic problems in the region have gone from bad to worse.

Now no-one can accuse the Midlands of crying wolf.

The slide towards economic disaster has been dramatically confirmed. The West Midlands is the poorest of all England's regions.

Starved of Government attention, we have ended up with lower productivity and income per head than even Scotland.

"I never thought it would be quite as grim as this," admits Mr. Dark.

"The Government has to realise that industry has its back not against the wall but against the precipice. Once it falls over the edge there will be no saving it; it will die."

That may sound like strident criticism from one of the Government's own MPs,

but the figures in the Central Statistical Office's Economic Trends show the need for urgent intervention.

In 1981 people in the West Midlands produced per head £3,234, compared to a Scottish figure of £3,524 and the average of £3,635 for England as a whole.

The statistics for income per head paint the same depressing picture — £3,587 in the West Midlands, below Scotland's £3,788, and the English average of £3,972.

### Bribed

In human cost the fall of the Midlands is most obviously reflected in growing dole queues. While the rates of unemployment in other regions get closer to the national average, the West Midlands is way above it.

By last year it had jumped to an appalling 21 per cent more than the national average.

"Back in the 1930s we had an unemployment rate of two per cent when the rest of the nation was ten per cent or more. We had growth industries then in cars and iron and metal-bashing," reflects Mr. Dark.

Who then could ever have imagined that the West Midlands would end up so sadly in need of care and protection?

Mr. Dark traces the decline to two major causes.

"Forty per cent of the blame lies with the labour problems of the past, but the major cause was that other areas were getting bribed and companies were being bribed to go elsewhere than the Midlands.

"Because of Industrial Development

Certificates all our potential growth industries were encouraged to leave. We're now left with the mature industries that are ex-growth, and we've been left stranded."

Spelt out in the Government figures, that means we are dependent on slow-growing industries like cars and Mr. Dark's "metal-bashing," which account for 14.5 per cent of our output, while the rest of the country depends on them for only 5.6 per cent.

The persistent refusal by Governments to label the West Midlands in need of help as a development area has meant that growing industries always got a better deal to settle elsewhere. Millions of pounds in EEC grants have poured into the areas that are now officially better off than we are.

The question, now that we have ended up at the bottom of the pile, is just how can we start back up again?

Anthony Beaumont Dark believes there is a way out of our problems and that the people of the West Midlands have the strength to take it.

"The worst thing we can do now is to put a notice up saying 'The Midlands' Despairs' as though we are an infectious area.

"We are in an unhealthy state, but we are not in a terminal phase."

The greatest cause for hope, he believes, is in the way Midlanders have tackled their own labour problems and changed their attitudes.

"For a long time there were over-weak Governments and over-powerful unions.

### Realistic

"But now I believe we have never had a more realistic approach. Industry and workers have done a tremendous job in making themselves more competitive and in accepting inevitable job losses without more wasteful strikes."

There is clearly a willingness to work, and no-one can doubt our ability to struggle against the odds — but what the Midlands now urgently needs, and deserves, is some concerted help from the Government.

Mr. Dark's solution is a far-reaching five-year plan for the region, and he hopes a meeting with the Prime Minister herself will make sure it gets a proper hearing.

"Firstly, I believe the Government should de-rate industrial manufacturing companies for five years, to give them a real breathing space.

"The money for this should come from central Government funds. I believe any money the Government has to spare should be used in this sort of way to help create and save jobs.

"De-rating industry would also stop the nonsense of companies like BL taking the roofs off thousands of square feet of factory space in acts of industrial vandalism, just to avoid the rates burden."

Mr. Dark's next priority is to channel Government and EEC funds in the direction of our beleaguered industry.

"We have done very badly for lack of EEC aid, and I think we should be changed to an assisted area so that we can call on EEC funds," he says.

## LET'S FACE IT

## Try an experiment . . .

THERE is something very odd about words.

A long time ago, before I entered the Ministry, the vicar of a large church wrote to me: "God means you to be a priest."

Months later, I was taking part in a service in a new suburban church in Birmingham when the lady pianist, whom I had never seen before, came up to me and said: "You are to be a priest."

And then I opened the Bible and time after time the words that sprang out of the page at me were: "Thou art a priest for ever."

I used to walk round the gardens of Birmingham Cathedral hour after hour questioning what all this could mean. But in the end I became a priest. All because of a few words.

The Bible calls Jesus the Word of God. Jesus Himself said that if we abide in Him and His words abide in us, we can ask whatever we will and it will be done for us.

I used to think that we ought to read the Bible, apply our modern interpretations to it, and then believe what we felt we could believe.

Now I know that approach is wrong. We are to read the Bible and believe. Full stop — BELIEVE.

I write these things today because one of the things we are supposed to centre on during Advent is the Bible. And it is certainly a reminder that most of us need.

In my church we often leave Bibles around for months or even years and feel quite happy they will not disappear. But you try leaving a valuable vase or ornament around and see what happens.

People value ornaments, but they think nothing of the Bible. And yet, as we are so often told, it contains the words of life.

I daresay that you who read these words have quite a bit of spare time. You may even be one of that increasing number of citizens who are unemployed. And, if you are, you will be feeling pretty depressed about it, certainly if it has been going on for long.

However much time you have, I would like you to try an experiment. The odds are that it will be some

time since you seriously read anything out of the Bible.

So what I would like you to do is sit down and then, however little your belief may be, ask God to direct your reading. Then take one of the Gospels — perhaps Mark is the most straightforward — and read a chapter or two each day for several days, praying each time before you read.

What I think will happen is this: some phrase or sentence will suddenly come alive for you. It will strike you as if never did before. It will almost be as if the letters have turned into capitals compared with the rest. And you will find yourself thinking of those words in a special way.

When that happens, almost certainly it is God's word for you. It may comfort you, or guide you, or change you. But it will certainly do something. And you will know that today, in this year of 1982, in this rather depressed place called the Midlands, Almighty God has spoken to you. C.T.



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD  
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2BB

From the Minister

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP  
Secretary of State for the  
Environment  
Department of the Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 3EB

6 December 1982

SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE	
TO: [unclear]	Copies to [unclear]
FOR: [unclear]	[unclear]
DATE: [unclear]	[unclear]
APPROVED: [unclear]	[unclear]
PLEASE: [unclear]	[unclear]

*Handwritten signature: [unclear]*

I know you are already aware of my concern that the agricultural implications of on-site tipping of colliery waste should be fully and properly taken into account in evaluating the current application for deep-mining in the Vale of Belvoir.

I appreciate that the National Coal Board has been able to reduce its requirement for agricultural land compared with the earlier application relating to mining in this area. It is nevertheless clear that the fundamental problem of spoil disposal has still not been resolved. This is not surprising as we are, of course, awaiting the advice of the Working Party specifically set up to examine this question. I understand that this Working Party is making good progress and I am firmly of the view that it would be against our policy for the protection of agricultural land if this latest application were determined before its work has been completed.

I now understand that Leicestershire County Council have indicated that, subject to certain conditions, they would have been prepared to approve this application. I am therefore writing formally to request that the application for planning permission to deep-mine at Asfordby, Leicestershire, be called in for your own determination.

✓ I am copying this letter to Nigel Lawson.

C/120/210/15  
Mr. [unclear]  
PS/12/15  
Mr. [unclear]  
Mr. [unclear]  
Mr. [unclear]  
Mr. [unclear]  
Mr. [unclear]  
Mr. [unclear]  
(on file)

01-211 6402

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP  
Secretary of State for the  
Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1

14 December 1982

*Dear Secretary of State*

ASFORDBY

I have seen Peter Walker's letter of 6 December.

The following points are pertinent to the agricultural arguments:

- i as a result of your earlier decision, the NCB have amended their plans to reduce the amount of agricultural land used for tipping by 26%;
- ii the Board are investigating with Leicestershire County Council a scheme for disposing of 10% of the Asfordby spoil in local disused quarries and on local derelict areas. This would facilitate the reclamation of land for agricultural use;
- iii the land used for tipping will be restored progressively to agriculture. Under the new proposals, only some 12 hectares of land, 14% of the tipping area, will be out of agricultural use at any one time;
- iv the land in question is only Grade 3 agricultural land;
- v the Board have given your Department fresh estimates of the cost of remote tipping. These show that the extra cost of remote disposal to Bedfordshire would be in the region of £210 million over 50 years, whereas the Inspector estimated the loss to agriculture resulting from tipping at Asfordby as less than £1m.

While it is true that the Working Parties looking into remote disposal and underground storage are unlikely to report finally until July, I understand that they have not found any evidence which

calls into question the Board's economic and technical reasons for adopting local disposal at Asfordby.

I do not believe, therefore, that there is any serious case on agricultural grounds for you to call in the project, or to delay a decision until after the Working Parties have completed their work.

I am sure that both you and Peter Walker appreciate the strategic importance of new low cost, high productivity pits such as Asfordby. Norman Siddall has made it clear to me that he attaches the highest importance to obtaining approval for Asfordby as quickly as possible. This will undoubtedly help to ensure that the moderate miners of Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire do not align themselves with those threatening strike action over closures and cuts in investment and recruitment.

I would, of course, be happy to discuss with you and Peter Walker at an early date the agricultural and wider energy, employment and general economic aspects of the Asfordby application, although I believe that it is essential that a decision is reached quickly.

I am copying this letter to Peter Walker.

Yours sincerely  
Nigel Lawson

pp NIGEL LAWSON

(Approved by the Secretary of State  
and signed in his absence)

Small exporting investment scheme  
for 1/2 weeks.



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Spanish Tariffs.

Hal.

37% - effective tariff 66%

Negotiated in 1970.

Complete inside country.

West Midlands. - lowest GDP per head.

D.Li 30% components  
abroad

Small firms exporting great.  
Tied imports - Ford }  
Vauxhall }

42

~~40~~ 40  
20 20  
to



1. Seymour  
class

For track  
components  
Spain

S.F. Innovation

Machine	Tools
80.	95-
81	90.

Industrial Costs - N.I.S. - Warr.

Perig - L.F.C. - Spaw. - Pressure -

10's



Sp. VAT. '04.

Reli- relief.

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

James, 270,000. p.c. Vanshall

Back to good - figure.

Asst

Lismond - Degree of  
hopelessness.

Carpet - One project

Jim - Rate - low.

WDA.

Telford Newtown

L. Rev. Corp.

£16 Round Ode Street Works.  
£28.33m £1/2 - in cash for next shop.

for shop

7.11.82  
(Backbenchers  
from W. 7.11.82)

17th December, 1982

Thank you very much for having handed to me last evening your manuscript notes of the Meeting with the Prime Minister on 15th December.

Those manuscript notes I now return, together with a photocopy, which you may wish to give to David Hunt.

The Prime Minister thought that the Meeting was a most valuable one; thank you for your initiative in having set it up.

IAN GOW

Hal Miller, Esq. M.P.  
House of Commons



With-und me up

cc David Hunt - by 1/11

Meeting of West Midlands Conservative M.P.s  
with The Prime Minister, Wed. 25 December

Notes on Case Presented.

Present

H.D. Miller	Bromsgrove + Redditch
D. G. Bewan	Birmingham Yardley
A. Beaumont	Dare
J. Blackburn	Birmingham Selly Oak
E. Bulmer	Judley West
F. Cockeram	Kidderminster
J. Cornack	Ludlow
Rogierve Q.C.	Staffordshire South-West
J. V. Middle	Solihull
J. Knight	Northfield and Tamworth
N. Hilly	Birmingham Kidlington
J. Ramsey	Mendham
C. Shepherd	Rugby
	Welford

Apologies

N. Judgen	Wolverhampton South-West
R. Shepherd	Aldridge and Greenhills
J. Stokes	Halswood and Stourbridge

West-Midlands Situation

$\frac{1}{2}$  Political  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  Moral and support in the region were beginning to slip after the Northfield by-election. More than half the Government's majority came from the 11 marginal seats won in the West Midlands in 1979. The electorate <sup>in the region</sup> was unusually volatile. The political

for the next government  
battle had to be won in the West Midlands. The decline in morale followed a worsening of the economic prospects.

### Economic

The region in fact had the fastest rising rate of unemployment in the country and unemployment was higher than in Scotland or Merseyside. There were further heavy redundancies to come. The region depended on manufacturing industry more than any other and had the lowest GDP per head, excluding Wales and Ulster. The industrial structure was the most adverse of all the regions, being concentrated in 5 sectors with poor prospects.

[Source - CSO Economic Trends No. 349 Nov: 82]

### ii Action Sought to Improve Competitiveness

3 Despite the obvious qualifications of the region for assisted area status and developing demand even in CBI circles for this treatment Members had not supported calls for regional aid. They rather sought to improve the ability of regional industry to compete and supported the steps the government had taken to make industry more productive. But in the light

of declining orders more needed to be done to help the industry compete internally with other regions and firms benefiting from regional development agencies and enterprise zones. Help was also needed to enable effective external competition, Spanish tariffs being an obvious example.

#### 4 Spanish Tariffs

Spanish tariffs on motor vehicles and components such as forgings and castings made export impossible. For cars they were levied at 36.7% on 108% of CIF value. When ICG (compensation tax) and other fees and dues were taken into account, the effective barrier totalled 66%. The Secretary of State for Industry had stated <sup>moreover</sup> the tariff disparities were grotesque and described the position as untenable. But it did not appear from a meeting with the Minister that any action was being taken or that there was any timetable for action. The situation would become

even more unacceptable with the advent of the Vauxhall Nova (5 car) in 1982 with a UK content of only 74% per vehicle.

5. Tied imports

This would further increase the percentage of the UK market taken by tied imports (i.e. imports by Ford, Talbot and Vauxhall). These imports had risen from 1.5% of new car registrations in 1975 to 22.5% for the first 11 months of 1982. Imports from other manufacturers including Japan had only risen from 31.8% to 35.3% in the same period. There was a need to stem tied imports.

[N.B. Source: SMMT]

6. Industrial costs

The balance of the budget judgement should be toward reducing industrial costs. In this connection rates on industrial premises were a heavy burden and rates on empty properties led to roofs being removed while new factories were being built elsewhere. There

were also discriminatory taxes on the regions' products, eg. VAT on company cars and the special car tax (which could be replaced by 9p. per gallon on petrol duty at 1991 levels of car sales and petrol consumption).

7. Industrial Aid

While general regional subsidies were not sought, specific government aid for certain sectors had been most helpful eg. the Small Engineering Firms ~~Investment~~ <sup>Investment</sup> Incentive Scheme. If another tranche of this could be found and a similar scheme instituted for the component industry it would be a great help. The intention of Bh to source up to 30% of its components abroad posed a grave threat to the region but some of the component firms simply could not meet the challenge without a scheme for modernisation and rationalisation.

Morale Booster

8 Confidence in the region was declining and banks were doubling their provision for bad debts. It was not perceived that the Government understood or was concerned about the situation in the region. A demonstration of concern by the visit over 2 days by a high-ranking Cabinet Minister would help. But it was also necessary to demonstrate that the Government was prepared to act in defence of the national interest. This was seen to be happening in agricultural and fishing policy, but not for industry where the closure of Round Oak Steel to save jobs in Sheffield had been widely resented. As a result, <sup>Not of Spanish tanks, the steel cartel, tried unjustly!</sup> there was a declining public acceptance of our continued membership of the EEC which could have important political consequences. Action was needed to restore confidence and support for the Conservative Party, particularly among the