

PRIME MINISTER

Lord Mountbatten's funeral is fixed for Wednesday 5 September.

A contingency plan for Lord Mountbatten's funeral was drawn up in 1974, and the then Prime Minister (Sir Harold Wilson) approved this allocation of seats for the political parties:-

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| <u>Government</u> | 16 (8 Ministers and wives/husbands) |
| <u>Opposition</u> | 4 |
| <u>Liberals</u> | 4 |

I have spoken to Sir Eric Penn in the Lord Chamberlain's Office, and I am sure they would wish to meet your wishes over any variations to this within, I expect, a fairly tight problem of working out the seating.

Separately, 4 seats were provisionally allocated to the Lord Chancellor and the Speaker, and their wives, representing Parliament.

The Lord Chancellor is due to be in Belfast on 5 September, to swear in a new Judge, the first time a Lord Chancellor has visited Northern Ireland to do this. Lord Hailsham feels that this is a most important commitment, and one which Lord Mountbatten might have wished him to carry out in the circumstances. If you agree, he would like to be in Belfast that morning.

If Lord Hailsham is away, his Parliamentary seat might naturally be taken by Lord Soames as Lord President. ✓

Would you wish the following Ministers to have seats:-

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Yourself ✓ | 2 |
| Home Secretary ✓ | 2 |
| Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary ✓ | 2 |

Chancellor of the Exchequer ✓ 2
 Secretary of State for Defence ✓ 2
 Secretary of State for Northern Ireland ✓ 2
 Chancellor of the Duchy ✓ 1
 Secretary of State for Industry¹ (Lord Mountbatten
 had close connections with, in particular
 the electronics industry).

See 21.10.79 for Ireland

The allocation of 4 seats each to the Opposition and the Liberals seems badly lop-sided, as I imagine Mr Callaghan, Mr Healey and Mr Roy Mason at least would all wish and expect to attend, whereas the Liberals could surely be limited to Mr Steel. Shall I ask for ^{perhaps 6} 6 seats for the Labour Party, and 2 for the Liberals? *2 for minor parties*

I have consulted Mr Stowe, who advises against asking for seats for any of the Ulster Unionists, or for the other minority non-national Parties.

Would you wish one of the Private Secretaries to accompany you next Wednesday? - *Not if D.T. comes.*

CVP

*With respect, I think we
 should have to offer a seat
 to the leader of the U.U.'s
 and the S.N.P.*

28 August 1979

Copied to Secretary of the Cabinet.