

CHAIRMAN

SIR MICHAEL SWANN, F.R.S.

PPS in Private office

BROADCASTING HOUSE

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8th November 1979

Dear Mrs Thatcher,

Can I thank you most warmly for sparing so much time the other day for things that must be amongst the least of your worries.

I'm sorry that the fact of the meeting leaked into the Press - the more so in that I had told our people that I wanted nothing said about it. But for once it seems not to have been our fault. The meeting was evidently mentioned at a Lobby briefing, whereupon Lobby Correspondents started ringing up, relating it to the External Services cuts. I think our Press Office was rather thrown by this, but answered reasonably sensibly in the circumstances.

Thank you for listening so sympathetically to our various financial woes. We really do think that we are in for terrible trouble over the ITV pay rise. It is going to put quite lowly people almost on a level with our 5 Directors. And unless there is something to offset the monopoly i.e. competitive advertising or a recasting of the levy, or both, I can see nothing but decline ahead. The facts of the levy are that increased expenditure - on salaries, Morecambe and Wise, Olympics, or what have you only cost the companies 17%. No wonder we are always outbid.

Thank you also for listening about the External Services. I already realise you have asked some relevant questions, and I am most relieved, and grateful, that the cuts to the vernacular services may yet be avoided. Mansell has had discussions with the F.C.O. already, and will have more. There are difficulties, not least with my Board of Governors. But I believe a way can be found.

Last of all, you asked about Pete Murray. I have made some infinitely discreet enquiries - so discreet indeed that I may not have the full story. But it appears that he sat on the platform on 29th April, and made a speech very critical indeed of the Labour Party. There is however an old, and very firm rule, that staff, or regular presenters, are not allowed to engage in political activity (left, right or centre). So he was indeed reprimanded, and quite rightly I think. But it isn't true that he has been punished by not being used since the affair. On the contrary, in place of "Open House", which I gather he felt he'd had enough of, he is going to do a 3½-hour

programme on Saturday mornings, and a 3½-hour one on Sunday mornings, and he is reported to be delighted.

Yours sincerely

Michael Swann,

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street,
London,
S.W.1.

P.S. I, and the Governors are furious at
Lime Grove's latest escapade.
Deliberate flouting of our rules, I think.
Some people - its not quite clear who as
yet - look like getting into deep trouble.