

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

MR. PETERSON

The Pope's Visit to the United Kingdom

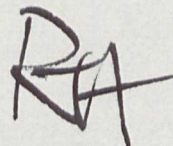
The Lord Chancellor sent me a copy of his minute of 18th March about the possibility that the Pope should be asked to address Members of the two Houses of Parliament in Westminster Hall.

2. The Pope's visit is to be a pastoral visit to the Roman Catholic Church in this country. I think that we need to think very carefully indeed about including in the schedule occasions which are normally associated with State Visits of Heads of State of foreign countries and official visits by distinguished political leaders. So far as I know, the Pope did not address the French Assembly or the Irish Dail on his visits to those countries, where of course the Roman Catholic church is the predominant faith. It would look very odd if the Pope were to address Members of the two Houses of Parliament in a country which has an established church of which he is not the Head.

3. I also have it much in mind that, if there were to be such an occasion it would be impossible to exclude Mr. Paisley, as a Member of Parliament, and he would be almost bound to come and make a nuisance of himself.

4. My private information is that both the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the Duke of Norfolk do not favour the idea.

5. I suggest that the Prime Minister should tell the Lord Chancellor that she does not favour the idea of the Pope addressing Members of both Houses of Parliament and that he should discourage this suggestion.



(Robert Armstrong)

20th March 1981

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