

PRIME MINISTER

LIAISON COMMITTEE

The attached letter from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster seeks your approval for a letter re-establishing the old Liaison Committee which he would like to send to the proposed members of the Committee.

I have shown the draft letter to Bernard Ingham, and he and I have only one comment on it. The proposed terms of reference, which are the same as those for the original Committee, do carry something of a party political flavour, and Mr. Ingham feels - I think, understandably - that this might put him as a civil servant in a slightly difficult position. We could get over this minor obstacle quite simply by changing the last few words of the terms of reference to read as follows:

" to sustain public confidence in the Government".

Are you content with this small change?

Yes. I think the reference to constituted would have to be deleted.

If you are, a small consequential amendment will be needed *it is* to the beginning of paragraph 2 of the draft letter. This is *not-* something I can agree with Mr. Pym. *means any.*

not.

AMW.

31 March 1981

N.D. We shall be in difficulty (on reflection) because M.P.'s are not bound to the first side. not.



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

30 March 1981

Dear Margaret,

LIAISON COMMITTEE

Following our recent talk about this subject, I attach the draft of a letter which I would like to send to those concerned, together with a list of the planned composition of the Committee. This does not include John Harvey, since I am not sure whether you have yet had a chance to talk to him.

Are you happy for me to proceed on the lines now proposed?

Yours ever

Francis Pym
FRANCIS PYM

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON

Enc

DRAFT

I have been giving thought during the past few months to the arrangements needed for the effective and coordinated presentation of Government policy. It seems to me that our existing arrangements are less than satisfactory in this respect and I see an important gap to be filled here. In the past, throughout the 1950s and again in 1970-74, a Liaison Committee with members drawn from Government and the Central Office operated for this purpose. It provided a regular public relations link between Government and the Party and I believe that there is a need for similar arrangements today.

I therefore propose, with the Prime Minister's agreement, to revive this Committee with its original Terms of Reference, which were:

"to give guidance to Members of Parliament, candidates and others on the interpretation of Government policy and to take such action as in their opinion is necessary to sustain public confidence in the Conservative Administration."

The purpose of this letter is to ask if you would be so good as to agree to serve as a member of the Committee. I attach a note of its proposed composition. I realise the very many demands that there already are on your time, but I do hope that you will be able to accept.

I am keen for the Committee to begin its work as soon as possible and I therefore plan to hold the first meeting

on [] to discuss the way ahead. I hope that this will be convenient. Thereafter, I envisage that the Committee should meet weekly.

I look forward very much to hearing from you.

Chairman The Rt Hon Francis Pym MC MP
 The Rt Hon George Younger MP
 The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP
 Norman Tebbit MP

Whip

Lord Thorneycroft

Alan Howarth

Bernard Ingham

Joint Secs Conservative Research Department
 Private Secretary PMG side