



Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street, London SW1

PM has seen

MAD 9/vii

PRIME MINISTER

BBC EXTERNAL SERVICES

I am becoming increasingly alarmed at the Party's reaction to these proposals. In spite of very hard work by the Whips in trying to stop our backbenchers signing Early Day Motion No 492, I am afraid that about 40 have already done so. Many of the names on the motion can only be described as heavy-weights in the Party. Another alarming feature is that whilst we have been successful in keeping off many of those who signed the Early Day Motion opposing our previous plans, a great many new names have appeared this time. Again, things have been made more difficult by the absence abroad of Nick Ridley, the Minister in charge.

After this week the Opposition have only one remaining Supply Day and it may be that they will use this issue for part of their day. In those circumstances I think we should find it very difficult to hold the line.

I am copying this to Peter Carrington and Willie Whitelaw.

8 July 1981