

Institutes

Prime Minister

1. Herewith letter dated 27th January from Ralph Harris.
2. Although his is, in some ways, an attractive suggestion, your diary for the next few months is really horrific.
3. Do you agree that we should do nothing further about this at the present time, please?

I meet so many of them  
 on one occasion or another  
 that I do not think a Hansen  
 would add to

1 February 1982

  
 IAN GOW

knowledge.  
 not

from Lord Harris of High Cross



Ian Gow, Esqre, MP,  
c/o 10 Downing Street.

as from: 2 Lord North Street.  
27th January 1982

*Dear Ian*

At yet another lunch last week two more business men joined the swelling chorus in praise of the Government (or rather the PM) for maintaining the market pressures that have compelled them and others to tackle long-tolerated slackness. (Maurice Macmillan was present and visibly impressed.) It is now a monotonously familiar story. What was notable was that the 2 business men were Sam Toy of Fords (who admitted having earlier had doubts about MT) and Hector Laing who always expresses personal affection but sometimes implies things should be done somewhat differently!).

Turning to the future, both agreed the Govt should resist siren pleas from CBI etc to expand. But they expressed concern that a critical stage was approaching which called for some change:  
a) in presentation (showing heart as well as head); and b) in the emphasis and mix of policies, especially with an eye on unemployment.

Hector thought it would be good for the PM to sit down (and listen) for what I understood to be a one-day seminar with 6-10 business men who shd be invited to express their ideas with a candour not inhibited by the deference many supporters (like me perhaps) are suspected of displaying! **!!!**

I can see that some good could come from such a meeting, especially if it were structured rather more than the (useful) exchange with the 16 signatories of The Times letter. The outcome wd depend on choosing, say, 10 good men. From those (attached) suggested by Hector, I would go along with Sieff, Hodgson, Arnold Hall, Trevor Holdsworth, and possibly Alan Lord, Tuke or even C. Hogg (whom I've never met). But I wd be wary of Peter Matthews, Adrian Cadbury, Cleminson. Benson and Caldecote. In their place I'd sooner have Basil Collins (Cadbury's) Ronnie Halstead, Dick Marsh and one or two others to reflect a balance.

Do you think such a meeting might merit some priority in the PM's programme over the next month or two? A private aim cd be to exert some needed pressure back on the CBI, in which case Cleminson might just be included!). I leave you to judge whether to pursue.

*Regards as ever*

*R.P.*

---

Suggested industrialists to meet with Prime Minister

Copy to  
Ian Gow

Marcus Sieff

Maurice Hodgson (ICI)

Peter Matthews - Vickers

Christopher Hogg - Comtroll

Alan Lord (ex-Treasurer / Amstrop)

David Scholey (BSC?)

Sam Toy - Fords

Adrian Cadbury / Basil Collins

James Cleminson (CBM / Richard)

Victor Rothschild

Arnold Hall

Henry Benson

Anthony Tuke (RTZ)

Trevor Houldsworth (GKN)

Robin Caldecote

I agree that six would be about the right number, and of course the Prime Minister may see a number of these people anyway, and know their views well.

(I know these are not all industrialises, but that is a minor detail !)

7 September 1981