



PRIME MINISTER

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Content for Mr Jenkins to appoint  
Stephen Sherborne as a political adviser  
and speechwriter?

Salary?

Yes no

WM  
27/5

I have been concerned for some time about the presentation of policy by this Department. We have all heard the criticism from our supporters that our policies may be alright but that we do not present them as well as we might. I have taken a number of initiatives within the Department to try to get this right and I hope that we will be able to do better in future.

2 There is, however, one matter on which I need your agreement. Do I Ministers make a great many speeches to influential audiences all over the country. Speeches are perhaps the most important form of communication which we deploy, and the sheer number of opportunities which we have to spell out Government policy means that it is vital that we make the most of them.

3 After some eight months' experience in the Department, I have come to the conclusion that we must have more support for speech-writing. In particular, we need someone who can take the, often admirable raw material which officials provide and mould it into speeches which will catch the ears of the media. Of course, this is a role for Ministers themselves but the number of speeches we make, and the other pressures on our time, mean that we find we cannot devote the attention we should to this task.





4 I have discussed this with Cecil Parkinson and he has been sympathetic and helpful. He suggested that, following the example of one or two other Ministers, we might secure the services of a special adviser who could devote the great bulk of his time to helping Ministers to work up speech material and to improve the projection of our policies. He felt that someone who had an understanding and sympathy for the main thrust of our policy would be the most suitable kind of person to look for. He went on to suggest to me a number of names.

5 The name that has come top of our list is Stephen Sherborne whom of course you will know. After he left the Research Department, he has been working in industry (Gallaher Limited) but is anxious to return to make a contribution to public life. He is, as you know, a very able man who has had a good deal of experience in this particular role. He has been kind enough to indicate that if the way were open, he would be very willing to join us at the Department of Industry to do the kind of work we envisage.

6 I have discussed this proposal with Sir Peter Carey who is in agreement with it. He has also satisfied himself that the appointment of Stephen as a special adviser would fully accord with the guidance which you have laid down, and that the salary which Stephen would expect could be accommodated without difficulty or embarrassment.





7 As you know, Jeffrey Sterling is already helping as a part-time, unpaid specialist adviser on the financial and other aspects of privatisation and property disposal. Stephen Sherborne, if you agreed to his appointment, would rank as a special political adviser so that there would be no conflict or duplication.

8 Cecil Parkinson has warmly endorsed my proposal that Stephen should be invited to join the Department and I accordingly seek your agreement.

9 A copy of this goes to Cecil Parkinson.

PJ

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27 May 1982

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