

Some of Douglas Warr's
speech

You mentioned "But, Chancellor" and blamed me for the title. Quite right, but my suggestion of protestation was not that of the Chancellor's officials seeking to persuade their chief to do something other than he intended. No it was intended to represent the voice of the spending Minister, pleading with the stony-hearted Chancellor in an attempt to wheedle some trivial sum out of the Contingency Reserve. But if you think that I am uninventive let me confide in you that I have been asked by the BBC to help in the preparation of a programme about No 10. What should the title of that be? "Please Prime Minister?" No, a bit too craven I think for your liking. "Up to a point, Prime Minister"? No, again, with its shades of Lord Copper. What about "Perhaps, Prime Minister". Yes I think that

/conveys the right

conveys the right note of guarded but
co-operative caution which I am sure
characterises the splendid staff you have
around you at No 10.

(c)

I had too another anxiety of which I think you were at the time well aware. The Treasury has a rather splendid collection of Georgian silver. Some of it is on loan to the Secretary of the Cabinet (though how this came about is a source of some mystery to me). Some of it is, I will not say on loan, but on display on the Cabinet table. But there is also a fair stock of the collection in the Treasury itself. When you heard this, your ears pricked up; and I was given to understand that you could be expected during your visit to make a formal request for it to be added to the collection on the Cabinet table. Well Prime Minister this was too much for me. So in my determination to keep the Treasury silver in the Treasury I gave instructions that during your visit it was to be kept out of

/sight and, what's more,

Cont.

sight and, what's more, under lock and key. Robin Butler, who acted as your escort was directed to say (under pain of reversion to Assistant Secretary) that he did not know where the key was. I now know what the monks must have felt when Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries!