

MR BUTLER

PRIME MINISTER

You asked two questions in Cabinet this morning about the Humble Address calling for a mark of Royal favour to be conferred upon Speaker Thomas.

First, the motion for the Humble Address will be first business after Mr. Fowler's statement next Thursday, and it will indeed be debateable. In the past, it has always been passed unopposed. But it is open to the Opposition to speak, and they might well question the revival of hereditary peerages. If so, you could draw on the following points:-

- the motion (Flag A) uses the traditional words asking the Queen to confer a mark of signal favour on the former Speaker. There is nothing new about the motion.
- it has always been for the Prime Minister to advise the Queen on what form that mark of favour should take, but you will naturally consider what has been said by Hon. Members.
- in the past it was always the tradition to confer a viscountcy on the Speaker, and the House will agree that Speaker Thomas was an outstanding Speaker.
- it has always been open to the Prime Minister to recommend the award of peerages of higher rank than a life barony to those who have given outstanding service to their country.

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- the award of hereditary peerages also has <sup>in due course</sup> the advantage of bringing relatively young peers into the Lords who are willing to help with the day-to-day running of the House.
  
- if Alliance members complain, you might say that you understand the Leader of the Liberal Party does not share their views (in a letter he wrote to you in August 1982, David Steel urged you to consider giving George Thomas a viscountcy, though he did mark this letter "in confidence").

Second, you asked about the Speaker's pension. This is fixed by the Parliamentary and Other Pensions Act 1972. A note (Flag B) is attached which sets out some of the details, though it is based on a lower pensionable salary than nowadays. He would now receive a pension in the region of £19,000.

CM

16 June, 1983