

Press



PRIME MINISTER

RADIO 4 "Today" PROGRAMME - NEW LIBERAL MEMBER FEATURE
(MICHAEL MEADOWCROFT)

Conservative Central Office made enquiries about this morning's piece on Michael Meadowcroft, on the "Today" programme.

The feature on Michael Meadowcroft from Leeds will continue through three episodes. All will be devoted to him, none will deal with new Members from any other Party. The intention is to keep the item strictly a personality piece with no political point scoring.

David Davies has remonstrated to no avail and privately suspects that this is a quid pro quo arising from Liberal Party complaints about the treatment that they were accorded on this programme during the General Election.

I have asked Michael Spicer to consider whether he feels a complaint should be made.

Steve

Stephen

25th July 1983



Conservative Central Office

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28th July, 1983

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Dear Mr Holmes

A recurring item in this week's Radio 4 Today Programme has given cause for anxiety here and I would be grateful to have your comments on it.

A three day feature on the experiences of a new Member of Parliament has surprisingly focussed throughout on the Liberal Mr Michael Meadowcroft.

We feel strongly that there should be a greater balance between the Parties. Our Press Office has been in touch with the Today Programme about this and has been told that the intention is to put on a series of "non political pieces". This objective has clearly not been achieved in this week's piece in which Mr Meadowcroft's Liberal connection has been emphasised clearly and frequently. This is not only imbalance; it is also unrepresentative of the intake. Mr Meadowcroft, after all, only represents a tiny proportion of the new MPs.

I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Michael Spicer
Deputy Chairman

David Holmes, Esq.,
BBC

P.M. k see - for information.

8/9/8.

Conservative and Unionist Central Office

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Stephen: I attach a copy of the letter
Michael Spicer has received from David Holmes
in response to his complaint about Today.

WITH COMPLIMENTS

Annie

*Return to
R. W. H. C. O. K. W.*

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from Chief Assistant to Director-General

3rd August, 1983

Dear Mr Spicer,

I have now talked to the editor of Today about the three items on the life and experiences of a new M.P. which ended last Friday, 29th July. I am satisfied that he chose the case of Mr Michael Meadowcroft for perfectly proper and sound reasons. The party of the M.P. chosen seems to me to be irrelevant as no references were made in any of the programmes to matters of a political or party nature. Despite that, however, Mr Meadowcroft's appearances will be registered as Liberal ones when it comes to the compilation of our running tally of Members' contributions.

You will know very well that we keep a close and watchful eye on the ratio of these appearances - a ratio in which the Conservative Party's overwhelming domination of the House of Commons is duly reflected. Need there be cries of hunger from a party which already has half the cake?

*yours sincerely,
David Holmes.*

(David Holmes)

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