

PRIME MINISTER

LIAISON COMMITTEE - DECISIONS REQUIRED

I set out below decisions required at a meeting of the Liaison Committee on March 10 - the day after the Budget. I attach at Annex I a diary to Easter, and at Annex II a list of leader writers/opinion formers whom Ministers might find it useful to influence.

This week will be dominated by the Budget and its reception, and any movement in interest and mortgage rates.

The Building Societies Association is meeting on Friday under pressure to cut the interest on mortgages by up to 1.5%.

It will be important to sell - and to sell hard - the Budget's promises especially as they affect industry.

In practice the media are likely to turn fairly quickly, once the measures have been digested, to their impact upon:

- The economy - are they likely to reinforce recovery?; and
- Politics; is this the turning point in the Government's fortunes? Whether SDP? Impact on Hillhead?

The two points are, of course, closely linked, and the Government will be engaged this week upon the twin exercises of talking up political and economic confidence, at a time when the Labour Party is racked by a new Trot-induced row, having ensured that the Budget measures themselves are properly understood.

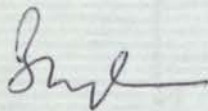
The opportunity to do this will be enhanced at the weekend if a movement in tax rates is complemented by a reduction in mortgage interest.

The Chancellor has a heavy media week with Budget Statement and Ministerial broadcast (Tuesday); BBC TV Question Time (Thurs); and the Jimmy Young Programme (Friday).

DECISIONS REQUIRED

It is against this background that the following decisions are required:

1. Topic for weekend - Budget; but what emphasis?
2. Speaking note - material already available; any need for short additional note giving a steer on where emphasis is to be put?
3. Organisation of major speech/radio/tv offensive for the weekend?
4. Who Ministerially should be in the lead at the weekend for broadcasts? Mr Jenkin and Mr Heseltine? (NB: we could create the opportunity in Sunderland for you to underline any movement in interest rates).
5. Mr Howell to take the lead on the London Transport strike on Wednesday March 10, especially on local radio and tv?



B. INGHAM

8 March 1982

LIAISON COMMITTEE: DIARY TO EASTERMARCH

- 3 NEDC; Queen opens Barbican conference centre; Mitterand in Israel.
- 4 BELFAST SOUTH BY-ELECTION; Liberal PPB.
- 9 BUDGET (Social Security uprating); Dail meets after election.
- 10 Labour PPB on Budget.
- 11 Liberals on Newsnight on Budget.
- 12 YOUR VISIT TO SUNDERLAND; YOUNG CONSERVATIVES CONFERENCE; BUILDING SOCIETIES ASSOCIATION CONSIDER MORTGAGE RATE.
- 13 CONSERVATIVE PARTY LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE, London.
- 14 GLC London fares rally.
- 15 CHILD BENEFIT PAYMENT GOES MONTHLY.
- 16 Glasgow rape case private prosecution decision.
- 17 Sultan Qaboos' visit; Labour PPB.
- 18 TUC Women's Conference, Bournemouth (to 19).
- 19 SCHMIDT BILATERAL, CHEQUERS; INDEX OF RETAIL PRICES; DEADLINE FOR BR/ASLEF FLEXIBLE ROSTERING PROCEDURE.
- 21 LONDON TRANSPORT FARES RISE.
- 22 EC Foreign Affairs Council, Brussels; MRS GHANDI'S VISIT (to 24th).
- 23 UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES.
- 24 TUC General Council; Labour Party National Executive.
- 25 ? HILLHEAD BY-ELECTION; FCO BI-CENTENARY LECTURE, LORD CARRINGTON.
- 26 DEADLINE FOR DE LOREAN RESCUE; FIRST ANNIVERSARY, FOUNDING OF SDP; National Consumer Congress, Guildford (to 28).
- 27 CENTRAL COUNCIL SPEECH; Boat Race.
- 28 ELECTION, EL SALVADOR; Clocks go forward.
- 29 EUROPEAN COUNCIL, BRUSSELS (Mandate etc) with AG. AND FISH COUNCILS (to 30); Two tier motor cycle test starts.
- 30 NUJ Conference, Coventry.
- 31 SDP/Liberal Alliance deadline for seats share out; Conservative PPB.

APRIL

- 1 Gas, electricity and dental charges up.
- 2 Derek Jameson, News of the World.
- 3 Grand National; ACTT conference (to 4th).
- 5 TUC CONFERENCE ON CAMPAIGN AGAINST EMPLOYMENT BILL; EPEA (Engineers' & Managers' Assn) conference, York (to 7th)
- 7 PM'S FCS SPEECH, Loughborough; NEDC.
- 8 EASTER RECESS (? to 19th).
- 9 Good Friday; Co-op Party conference, Ayr (to 12).
- 10 NUT conference, Scarborough (to 15); Labour Party Young Socialists conference, Bridlington (to 12).
- 12 NAS conference, Blackpool (to 16).

LEADER WRITERS/OPINION FORMERS

As a preliminary to agreeing approaches by Ministers, Liaison Committee asked for a note of leaderwriters/opinion formers. The list below is not exhaustive, but is intended to identify those who might be helpful. It goes without saying that contacts with Editors are invaluable.

FT: Sam Brittan; Anthony Harris.

Times: Peter Stothard; Adrian Hamilton; Ronnie Butt.

Sunday Times: Ronnie Butt; Sarah Hogg; Graham Serjeant.

Guardian: John Torode; Victor Keegan.

Telegraph: Andreas Whittam-Smith.

Sunday Telegraph: Ivan Fallon.

Mail: Robin Oakley; Patrick Sergeant.

Express: James McMillan; George Gale.

Sunday Express: John Junor.

Sunday Mirror: Woodrow Wyatt.

News of the World: Derek Jameson; Gordon Leak.

Sun: Kelvin Mackenzie; Peter Rose.

Economist: Andrew Neil.

Spectator: Ferdinand Mount.