

PRIME MINISTER

JOHNSON MATTHEY

I have spoken this evening to the Chief Whip who has also spoken to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Chief Whip says that neither the Speaker nor the Clerk of the House was in the chamber at the time when Mr. Sedgemore made his allegations. The Clerk has subsequently read the transcript. He will be reporting to the Speaker but has said privately that he can well understand why the Chancellor is upset.

The Chief Whip sees two separate issues:

i) The Parliamentary propriety of accusing a Minister of perverting the course of justice. This is something on which the Speaker should pronounce quickly.

ii) The question whether the Speaker should say something on the lines that he deprecates Members making detailed allegations in the House which could be a matter for criminal proceedings if substantiated, rather than passing their evidence to the appropriate authorities.

The Chief Whip thinks we need to be careful in our public comment not to strengthen the Opposition's hand in calling for an inquiry. This could happen if we talk too much about wild and unsubstantiated allegations. *(i.e. They would say that an inquiry was needed to show whether the allegations were wild etc.)*.  
The Chief Whip is trying to get in touch with the Speaker over the weekend and will report to you on Monday.

C.D.P.

MS

C.D. Powell

9 November 1985

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TF }  
C.D. 10/11



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Brian Sedgemore Esq MP  
House of Commons

6 November 1985

*Brian Sedgemore*

*NRBPN*

JMB

Your letter of 25 October suggested that my answer to your questions of the previous day represented an attempt to interfere with the course of justice.

That suggestion is totally unfounded. I told you in my answer that: "If there are any matters for the police to pursue I am confident they will do so".

It is, of course, most important for the pursuit of justice that anyone with information which he believes to be relevant should pass it to the police at the earliest opportunity. I trust you will do just that.

*Nigel Lawson*

NIGEL LAWSON

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