

Prime Minister

ECON POL.

cc Mr Butler

Much on the lines of

the - more specific; of course - points

we have already made to the Chancellor.

He was grateful for them and is making ~~minor~~ changes to reflect

them. Otherwise he will

not change the speech much.

BUDGET SPEECH

I wonder whether I could make a few presentational points on the Budget speech.

The fact is that this is broadcast as it is delivered and dissected as it is going on. There is every opportunity in these circumstances to damn it before even it has been uttered in full - or even in part. Certainly, before the Chancellor has had an opportunity to set out in his own terms his specific measures.

I am chronically against doing things for purely presentational reasons. But, the fact is that the Budget is in part a presentational exercise - and especially so in 1983 with a by-election to follow the week after.

It is therefore important that the Chancellor should exercise the maximum amount of control over the presentation of his Budget.

I suggest the following is required:

- first, a watchword: what word does the Chancellor want to appear in the headlines on Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning which sets the tone: prudent, sensible, practical; budget for recovery, building for the future?;
- second, what do we wish to avoid - opportunist, vote catching, reckless (all of which are unlikely), or over-cautious, too little too late, irrelevant, nothing for jobs etc. The truth is that some of these epithets will be voiced regardless of justice; the point is to avoid a general condemnation;
- third, how will he condition the view taken by commentators as he delivers his speech?: this requires 2 or 3 paragraphs early on - ie. in the first 5 pages given evening newspaper deadlines, and not least those of the Evening Standard.

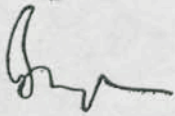


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I suggest a few paragraphs which summarise the purpose, size and broad content of the Budget against which newspapers, radio and tv will have to comment.

Further, it is absolutely essential that the Chancellor throws a particularly juicy bone to his side of the House, and also a particularly frustrating one for the Opposition at an early stage in his presentation; and that his colleagues and PPS orchestrate vocal support at that point. All too often the Government benches have been limp in the face of good news.

I hope this is helpful.



B. INGHAM

11 March 1983