



JU956

Prime Minister

Backbench  
file

I will get Bernard's  
Comments.

F.R.B.

7.2

PERSONAL

PRIME MINISTER

As I look at the arrangements for the better presentation of economic and social policy arising from the considerations of Willie Whitelaw's group I find myself concerned at the blurring of lines between Parliamentary and Governmental activities.

It seems certain that the activities of the backbench teams will soon be perceived as an organised effort. I'm sure a set of briefing notes will be lost and turn up either at PM's PQs or on BBC and the role of civil servants, not least Bernard Ingham, will be questioned.

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Perhaps much of this work could be conducted by John Gummer's people at Central Office with less chance of mud being slung by our critics.

I think it right for Bernard Ingham to keep his group together and indeed for Willie Whitelaw's group to continue too, but the distribution of material might be better through the Central Office net rather than the official one.

NT

February 1985



PERSONAL

De-Mg Ingham



7

PRIME MINISTER

Presentation of Policy

Norman Tebbit has shown me a copy of the personal note he sent you last week expressing his concern that the lines between Parliamentary and Governmental activities might become blurred in the work of my group on the presentation of policy.

2. Of course I appreciate and indeed accept Norman's point; such a risk is inherent in work of this kind. I do not think it necessary at present to make any change to the way in which the group works but I do propose that in future the briefing notes which it produces should be circulated with a covering letter from me, rather than being circulated by Bernard Ingham on my behalf. I can explain to you in person why it would not be a good idea to use the Central Office net for this purpose.
3. I am sending a copy of this note to Norman Tebbit.

Wolk

Privy Council Office  
11 February 1985