



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Press Secretary

LORD PRESIDENT

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY PRESENTATION

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

1. The next meeting of Ministers has two broad objectives:
  - the presentational position immediately after the Budget
  - the follow-up to the Budget and the briefing papers which should be issued up to Easter.
2. I suggest:
  - i. you allow a free-ranging discussion of the presentational problems, if any, post-Budget, but fairly closely related to the ideas for background notes in para 5 of the main paper;
  - ii. you secure endorsement of the ideas for future background papers, related to forthcoming announcements (Annex I), in paras 7/8 of the main paper;
  - iii. you canvass opinions on whether a Senior Minister or Prime Minister, should wrap up and summarise on radio and television immediately before Easter the whole series of initiatives taken over March/April - see paras 10 and 11. (NB: the Prime Minister leaves for SE Asia on April 4);
  - iv. Ministers should examine the list of background notes so far issued (Annex III) and satisfy themselves that the background briefing notes being prepared are generally satisfactory.

Monitoring

3. It is important that Ministers should satisfy themselves that the campaign is having impact. You will therefore wish to invite:
  - i. Ministers to report on the work, impact and evidence for it of groups of MPs;

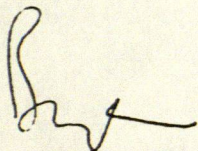
PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL



2.

ii. Ministers to report on whether they believe that as a result of your Group's work there is a sharper presentational cutting edge;

iii. myself to report on my discussions with Chief Information Officers and Regional Directors, COI, on the perceived impact of the campaign.



BERNARD INGHAM  
20 March 1985



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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY PRESENTATION

MINISTERIAL MEETING: MONDAY, MARCH 25, 1985 AT LOAM

1. The main purpose of this meeting is to take stock of presentation after the Budget and to consider whether any special presentational efforts need to be made for the very substantial number of announcements and initiatives being made or taken before Easter.

2. Annex I sets out the list of announcements expected over the next two weeks or so to the Recess.

Budget Follow-Up

3. The Treasury made a special effort to issue a background note on the Budget (see Annex II) to a group of approaching 50 MPs immediately the Chancellor had finished his Budget speech. This same note was made freely available to Backbench MPs through the Whips' Office. Copies have also been sent to Chief Information Officers and to Regional Directors, COI.

4. It was generally perceived that the Chancellor had limited room for manoeuvre. Recognising the constraints, the Budget was on the whole well received, though many commentators indicated that it would ultimately be judged by the movement of unemployment over the coming year. This underlines Ministers' belief that with the coal strike out of the way, public attention would focus much more clearly on unemployment.

5. Post Budget comment has, however, identified a number of issues which Ministers may feel should be given special attention by way of background notes over the weeks (and months) ahead - viz:



2.

1. - the extent to which YTS trainees get jobs (to counter the Daily Mirror jibe that Britain will end up with the most highly skilled dole queue in the Western world)
2. - the social benefit accruing from the Community Programme (too little has perhaps been made of this)
3. - the extent to which enterprise is now being promoted in the UK (taking into account deregulation, training, education and science measures)
4. - how the containment of inflation is crucial to job creation and why more spending and less attention to inflation would damage the prospects of the unemployed; (it is necessary to reiterate arguments, if possible, in a refreshing and striking way).

6. Each of these issues is central to a prime objective of the presentational effort - to present the Government in a more caring light.

Forthcoming Announcements

7. Annex I sets out a tentative agenda for the period to Easter. The highlights are:

- Schools White Paper (March 26)
- Employment White Paper (?March 28)
- 14-18 White Paper (?April 2)

8. Subject to Ministers' comments, Departments have been asked to prepare background notes for circulation to MPs on the schools and employment White Papers.



9. Ministers may care to consider whether, over and above these, background notes on the lines of the four identified in Paragraph 5 above should also be prepared, making reference to the substantial number of relevant initiatives coming forward over the next 2½ weeks.

Bringing Together

10. From the foregoing, it is clear that March/April 1985 is a period of exceptional activity on the economic and social policy fields. This raises the question whether, immediately before the Easter Recess, a senior Minister, and conceivably the Prime Minister, should summarise on radio and television this programme of activity and its purpose. Public and media may well perceive a steady flow of initiatives, but their impact will be much less if they are not brought together in one coherent presentation.

11. There may be a case for a publicity exercise on, say, Wednesday April 3, geared to a Parliamentary Answer.

Background Notes

12. For convenience, the list of background notes so far initiated by Ministers and circulated is at Annex III. Ministers are invited to review the adequacy of its coverage in the light of their considerations of current proposals (see Paragraphs 5, 8 and 9 above).

BERNARD INGHAM

21 March 1985