

Top paper
with H.B.

Prime Minister. (4)
You may like to take up some of these
points with the Home Secretary at your next
18 April 1986

PRIME MINISTER

bilateral.

MEA 15/4.

LAW AND POLICE UPDATE

Yes - I will
not

1. Release of Dangerous Psychopaths

We took up the Daily Express story - also covered in
other parts of the media - that the Government was releasing
dangerous psychopaths who struck again. We have found the
Home Office fully in support of the criticisms levelled at the
secure mental hospital system, which they say releases
prisoners too quickly.

The nub of their complaint is that while Broadmoor takes
a responsible attitude towards these dangerous individuals,
another mental hospital, Park Lane, is controlled by medical
staff with a liberal and naive attitude towards mental
patients. This has led to mistakes being made.

The situation is compounded by the fact that the old
check in the system, namely the discretion of the Home
Secretary, has been removed and replaced under the Mental
Health Act 1983 by the discretion of a Tribunal.

We agree with David Mellor when he says that there will
be more scandals affecting the Government's credibility on law
and order unless we act to correct this system. We risk the
deaths and mutilation of more young people if the release of
psychopaths is not more strictly controlled.

Who
appoints the
Tribunals

The Proposed Solution

We believe the solution is this: at the moment the Tribunals, under Section 73 of the Mental Health Act, are presided over by County Court Judges who effectively nominate themselves and who frequently have liberal attitudes. As in the immediate future it is impossible to return to the old system a new corrective would be to insist that High Court Judges with a reputation for toughness be appointed to preside over these tribunals.

2. 'Pride and Prejudice': Government Pride and Police Prejudice

On the one hand we fondly state - as the Home Secretary did this week - that 'The Government has not stinted the police'. On the other the police feel with some justification that they are prejudiced by the honours system. There are two problems here.

a. Government will have an achilles heel at the next election in relation to the police unless we address the problem of the distribution of resources in the police service. While we have lavished our money on the 'Met', down the road in Sussex the Chief Constable is fuming. He has had a grand total of 6 extra men available for operational work since 1979. He has stated to local MPs and me that Government must not claim it has not stinted the police in Sussex.

- b. Three Chief Constables have independently approached me at informal meetings in the last fortnight expressing their deep unhappiness that the honours system unfairly discriminates against the police. By comparison the services receive many more for hardly more hazardous work. You dealt with this problem in the early 1980s, is it time to return to it?

3. Police Manpower

We support the Home Secretary's proposal made on 11 March concerning police manpower.

4. Crime Prevention

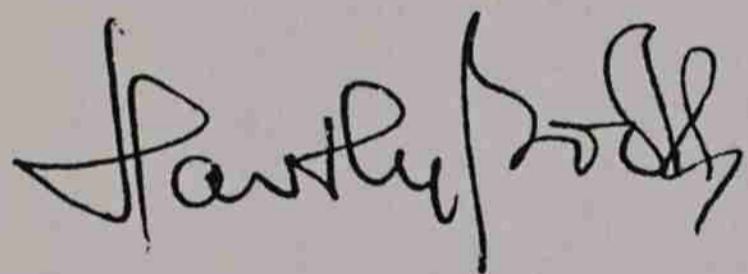
I attach a typical Neighbourhood Watch newsletter (my own). You may be interested that the insurance point you were keen on is being taken up.

The Football League tell us that CCTV is now referred to in all match day programmes to deter violence.

Finally, the scare story in the press this week that planning law prevented an old lady installing crime prevention bars on her window was over-stated. However, we believe listed planning consent for crime prevention equipment should be taken out of the planning system.

5. Conclusion

When you next see the Home Secretary perhaps you would like to take up some of these points, particularly the distribution of resources in the police, the release of psychopaths and honours for the police.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Hartley Booth'.

HARTLEY BOOTH