

(Chief Whip)
Jopling



Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street, London SW1

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22nd August 1979.

Dear Richard

You sent the Chief Whip a copy of Lord Thorneycroft's letter of 2nd August about facilities for MEPs at Westminster.

The Chief Whip had already seen a copy of this letter and had obtained the comments of the Deputy, copy enclosed. He intends to discuss both matters with the Chancellor of the Duchy, who is Chairman of the House of Commons (Services) Committee when both are next in London, but both accommodation and passes are matters which have to go to the Services Committee, so there is no hope of anything firm being arranged during the recess.

I hope this will enable you to send a holding reply to Lord Thorneycroft.

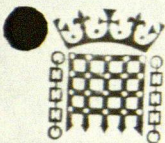
Yours

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Felicity Yonge

Richard Ryder Esq.,
10 Downing Street.



JOHN STRADLING THOMAS, M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
LONDON, S.W.1.

9th August, 1979

Dear Michael,

In view of the fact that there is a suggestion that accommodation should be found in the Palace of Westminster for European Members, I am writing to let you know how difficult the situation is with regard to accommodation for Westminster Members of Parliament. Following the decision of the House to implement the Procedure Committee's recommendations on the setting up of Departmental Select Committees the House authorities are carrying out the necessary works during the Recess to modify some rooms that have been used in the past by very senior Members as office accommodation so that they can be available for new Select Committees. This has created a very real difficulty for Tony Berry and myself on our side and for Walter Harrison who handles accommodation for the Labour Party. A few senior Members are very angry at having been turfed out of their rooms and offered what they consider to be inferior accommodation.

In the circumstances I see no likelihood whatsoever of the Services Committee being able to release any accommodation for European Members although I do, of course, appreciate that we should have the closest possible liaison with them.

With regard to passes to enable them to enter the Palace of Westminster I believe that in fairness to the Police and the Custodians it would be desirable for this to be done, and I have discussed the matter with Walter Harrison who is considering it. It seems to me that from a security standpoint it would be far better for them to be photographed and for the security authorities to have a proper record and at the earliest opportunity I will see if I can get agreement on this matter through the usual channels.

Yours ever,

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling, MP

LT

From
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Thorneycroft

CONSERVATIVE & UNIONIST CENTRAL OFFICE,
32 SMITH SQUARE,
WESTMINSTER, SW1P 3HH,
Telephone: 01-222 9000

2nd August 1979

Dear Prime Minister.

Refer to Michael
Jopling.

I think it right to put before you one or two
brief thoughts about the needs of the European Members.

cc Chairman
Michael Jopling
13.8.79.

These European Members seem to need two things;
passes to allow them to enter the Palace of Westminster and
some space of their own there where they can sit down. Some
efforts, are, I understand, being made to clear the question
of passes through the House of Commons Services Committee.
I hope that the Labour Members of that Committee will not be
considered as having a veto upon this urgent matter.

As to space, no progress has really been made
so far. In the absence of any certainty of being offered any
kind of accommodation at Westminster either by the Commons or
the Lords, the European Members are making enquiries as to
accommodation outside. Any accommodation in this area will
cost a lot of money and will suffer a disadvantage of separating
the European Members both from the Central Office and from the
Palace of Westminster. I feel sure that we will come to regret
it if we leave them only with this alternative.

Against this background, I would urge that
discussions take place with a view to offering them some modest
accommodation in the Palace of Westminster when the House resumes.
If the Labour Party for political reasons remain opposed to all
this, could we consider arranging for a motion to be moved and
be carried through the House.

Yours.
Thorneycroft.

The Prime Minister.



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

R. Ryder's pps
we think.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

10 August 1979

Law Nick

I have just seen a copy of Lord Thorneycroft's letter to the Prime Minister dated 2 August 1979 about the needs of the European Members. In this connection you may wish to see a copy of a note of a meeting between the Chancellor of the Duchy, the Chief Whip, Mr Edward du Cann and Sir Anthony Royle.

On his return from the United States, the Chancellor of the Duchy will probably write to members of OD(E) setting out his views about how the Government should proceed in this matter.

I am copying this letter together with a copy of the note, to Michael Richardson (Lord Privy Seal's Office).

yes and
John Stevens

J W STEVENS
Private Secretary

N Sanders Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
SW1



NOTE OF A MEETING ON 25 JULY 1979 IN ROOM 4, HOUSE OF
COMMONS AT 10.30 PM

Present:

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Mr Edward du Cann
Chief Whip Sir Anthony Royle

Mr J W Stevens

SUBJECT: RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENT
AND THE DIRECTLY-ELECTED EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The Chancellor said that the starting point for both himself and the Chief Whip was their belief that it was necessary to try and establish firm links between both groups of Members as swiftly as possible, but taking account of the fact that there were limitations on the freedom of manoeuvre given that there were different views about how to proceed and about what needed to be done.

Mr du Cann agreed and said that the alternative could be the development of rival empires. There were a number of aspects to be borne in mind:

- 1 MPs themselves would need to decide how to handle the local situation within their constituencies.
- 2 The situation within the Party regarding the establishment of links was proceeding satisfactorily, eg a representative from their Agricultural Committee would attend meetings of the Conservative Group's Agricultural Committee in Europe. There would be other such developments although in his view, Central Office had been slow to recognise what was required.
- 3 On the Parliamentary side there were real difficulties to be overcome and it was essential to remove areas of potential fractiousness. The Labour Party had a block about Europe but in his discussions with members of the PLP they had fully recognised the need to avoid conflict arising between Members and MEPs. As to the provision of

/facilities

facilities for MEPS, Mr du Cann said that considerable progress could be made in 'subtle' ways, ie without over-formalising the seeking of any necessary permissions. As examples he suggested:

- i MEPS could receive Parliamentary papers.
- ii Lord Boyle could be asked to ensure that this new dimension in British politics was taken into account in setting allowances for MPs, eg to allow them to visit Europe, and that allowances generally needed to reflect the new situation.
- iii A flexible approach should be adopted to the facilities MEPS should receive within Westminster. While we should break into this field as soon as possible some matters could be left for later consideration in the autumn - the question of accommodation within the House was particularly difficult. The most immediate issue was the need for a pass to enable MEPS to get into the House; at present they were compelled to go through the 'green card' procedure. It was agreed that, preferably all, but at the very least those MEPS who held official posts, should have access facilities, eg similar to those enjoyed by lobby correspondents.

It was recognised that while it was important to make good progress and in particular to secure the House pass as an indication of sympathy towards the intention to establish good links etc., it was important to avoid the risk of conflict between opposing views by attempting to do too much too soon.

Sir Anthony Royle confirmed his agreement with all that Mr du Cann had said and emphasised that the immediate issue was the question of a pass for MEPS.

The Chief Whip suggested, and it was agreed, that he should arrange for Mr Stradling Thomas to speak to Mr Walter Harrison (they were both members of the Security Committee) on the basis that there was a need for MEPS to visit the House regularly, it was best therefore to know who they were and this could most appropriately be achieved by the issue of a permanent entry pass.

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There was a general agreement that MEPs should retain their existing accommodation in St Stephen's House - although it was recognised that there would be considerable opposition to this. The Chancellor agreed to approach the Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr Heseltine) to seek his support.

The Chancellor confirmed that he would consider carefully the various points which had been made. It would be necessary to consult his colleagues (there was an appropriate Cabinet Committee which had started to consider the matter) and in due course it would also be necessary to consult the Services Committee. There would, however, be advantage in making some selective and informal soundings beforehand.



JWS

26 July 1979