

HARRIS.

23rd February, 1981

Thank you so much for your letter of
17th February.

I am very pleased that you are going
to follow up the unemployment matter which
we discussed on 16th February.

I am most grateful for the suggestions
which you have made about strengthening
the House of Lords.

The Lord Harris of High Cross.

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Prime Minister: 17th February 1981

Dear Margaret,

We will follow up the various requests you raised on Monday, including the unemployment issue.

Meanwhile, on strengthening the Lords: you could dramatise the support you have won away from Liberals and Labour by nominating converts at same time as Mr Foot tries to reinforce his faction in the Lords.

My candidates would be chosen from:

Former Labour, now anti-Soc Dem

Sir Richard Marsh , Paul Johnson, Dr John Murray (who was one of Gaitskell's industrialist advisers);

Former Liberals, now anti-Soc Dem

Sir Max Beloff and Arthur Shenfield (Lib. candidate and former CBI economic adviser). From private words of Jo Grimond, I believe he might be persuaded to join the Lords where he could help dry out the Liberal benches.

All five are powerful speakers who would totally transform the rather weary cross-benches - and would I believe give undertakings to take an active part.

Regards as ever, Ralph

PS: You will recall that Walter Salomon was also once an active Liberal - tho' I'm less sure how effective he would be!