

Prime Minister

IAN PERCIVAL

*You are most kind -
but you would have to see
Quintin first. I am
not sure whether
I would say
doubtless
High Court.
His office may
have some
remarks about
S.G. (C.A. 6:1)
desires.
not*

1. Herewith his letter to me of today's date, plus the letter to which he refers.
2. Normally, I think that it is an impertinence for Ministers (and others) to seek guidance about what you have in mind for them in the next Parliament. However, in this case, I do not think it unreasonable for Ian to seek guidance about the future.

3. I remind you that:
 - (a) Ian will be 62 next month.
 - (b) The boundaries of Southport remain unchanged. Last time, Ian polled 25,953; his Liberal opponent polled 19,426; the Conservative majority was 6,527.
 - (c) Ian is not regarded as a specially assiduous local Member.
3. The harsh reality, as you see it, is, I understand, as follows:
 - (a) You do not have in mind that he would become Attorney General.
 - (b) Even if you wanted him to remain as Solicitor General, he would not wish to do so.
 - (c) Although he considers that he has the "right" to go to the Court of Appeal (see the 5th paragraph of his letter to me dated 6th April) that is not on.

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(d) He could, at a pinch, become a High Court Judge, although, as we both know, Quintin has in mind something more lowly. In that connection, and in Ian's defence, I think it reasonable to point out that a person who is considered of sufficient quality to be Solicitor General ought also to be of sufficient quality to go to the High Court Bench. I have not done any research into this, and will gladly do so, but I suspect that there is no precedent for a former Solicitor General going anywhere else than the High Court, and possibly no precedent for him going other than to the Court of Appeal.

4. I think that it would be painful for you and for Ian for you to have to explain the position to him.

5. Subject to your approval, and, if you think it desirable, after talking to Quintin, might I say to Ian:

(a) It is most improbable that, in the next Parliament, he would be offered the post of Attorney General, and improbable that he would be offered any other post.

(b) You understand that he would not wish to remain as Solicitor General in the next Parliament, even if you were to invite him to do so.

(c) That if he was to decide not to stand again at the next Election, sympathetic consideration would be given (without any undertaking) that he would go to the High Court.

6. Ian thinks that he has a right to go to the Court of Appeal; to suggest that he should become a Circuit Judge or a County Court Judge would be a humiliation; he would hate to be a backbencher; I exclude the Speakership or membership of the House of Lords.

7. This is a very sad case. Ian's assessment of his own ability is greater than the reality; and this is all the sadder because he is "plus royaliste que la reine".



6/4/1983

PERSONAL

FROM: IAN PERCIVAL



6th April 83

My dear Ian,

I have thought a lot about our conversation of last week and want now to try to put some of my thoughts on paper. Some are pretty vague, others inconsistent, but that of course is just why a steer from the P.M. would be so helpful.

I have three basic thoughts:-

- 1). My greatest wish is to continue to work with and for the P.M. in the campaigns still to come. I share in every way her belief in and dream for this country. I want very much to make my contribution to bringing that dream to life.
- 2). At 61, rising 62, I have years of active life ahead. I would like to use them as above. But if I cannot make any more progress in Government I want to ~~to~~ start climbing other mountains while I still have time to get to the top of them.
- 3). I would not wish to continue as S.G. in another Parliament.

The particular question to which I have to address my mind is

whether I should continue in the House of Commons. It may be that in this I could be overtaken by an early Election but let me leave that out for the moment.

What I have to do is to try and assess the pros and cons. This is where the difficulty starts. I just have to take a stab at them.

If I did not stay in the Commons it would open the way for three possibilities.

I could go to the Lords and be in the Government there, or sit on the back benches there and go back to practise at the Bar.

Or I could go on the Bench, presumably I would stick on precedent and reason, to the C. A.

If I did continue in the Commons the chance of going on the Bench could well be lost, because I would be locked-in unless the P.H.'s views as to bye-elections were to change. But here also I might have three alternatives.

They seem to be - to become A.G. if H.H. were to be moved upstairs - or to have some other job in the Government (and there are plenty I would like to do) - or to sit on the back benches and go back to practise at the Bar.

a possible advantage is



that if J.W. were to be given another job I might conceivably have a chance of being Speaker, but no way would I wish to compete against him for it.

What I would now like please is for you to show this to the P.M. and ask if I may have a private meeting with her.

I keep off things like this when she comes to see us but now I would so like to talk with her about them on the personal basis I have been so lucky to enjoy for so long. No disrespect to you. You know how I value our friendship and how thankful I am that you and I can always talk so freely. And as it is a personal request I have written a note to her which I enclose herewith in an unsealed envelope so that you may read it and forward it to her please.

My warm thanks to you

as ever

Jane

PERSONAL



6th April 83

Dear Margaret,

You may recall that about 18 months ago I came and saw you privately. We talked about the future.

Now I would like very much to do so again if I may please, and for the following reason in particular.

I have to give serious consideration to whether I should stand again. First before Easter I had the benefit of a talk with

Van Gou. Over Easter I
have put my thoughts on
paper in the form of a
letter to him. I have asked
him to put that before
you and ask if I may
see you, but think that
I should at least write
this short note personally.

Trudy sends her
love. Do hope you had
some relaxation over
Easter.

Yours ever

John

Percival

PERSONAL AND
CONFIDENTIAL

21st May 1983

Many thanks for your letter of 21st
May, which I have shown to the Prime
Minister.

With every good wish to you and to
Judy for a triumphant result in
Southport on the 9th. June.

IAN GOW

Sir Ian Percival QC

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL.



ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE
STRAND, LONDON, WC2A 2LL

21st May 1983.

My dear Ian,

Having been so completely overtaken by events I have had to rethink the whole matter and I write now to tell you that I would consider it an honour to continue as S.G. if asked to do so.

Many thoughts are condensed in that. I would be happy to discuss them if you wish. But the basics are (a) the steer you gave me, i.e. that that is the only job that would be available to me, and (b) the sudden disappearance of the option which had been the start, and heart, of our discussions, i.e. not to stand again.

Not least of the other considerations is the wish to complete at least two of the special, and I think important, assignments I have - in particular the "legal aid exercise" which has been a very personal business and which has reached a critical stage in negotiations with the profession.

But my purpose in writing is not to go into detail but only so that - as you so rightly stressed - there may be no misunderstanding.

Now Judy and I are off to Southport to get the biggest majority we possibly can - and, I hope, to have a hand in holding and winning some of the Criticals.

I am writing separately to the P.M. wishing her luck and sending her love - but of course not mentioning any of this, so I shall be

obliged if you will please feed it in at the
appropriate moment.

Love from both of us to both of you -
and may both our Liberal opponents suffer a
terrible fate.

Yours ever
John

Please excuse typing - I have of course typed
this myself.



Percival
M

10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER,

1. I AM SEEING I AM
PERCIVAL TONIGHT.
2. HE WILL BE SHATTERED,
BUT IT WILL BE LESS
PAINFUL FOR HIM IF I
SEE HIM ALONE.
3. HERE IS THE LIST.
4. CANDIDATES FOR THE LEADS ARE:-
ANGUS MADE
JOHN NOTI
JOHN PEYTON
JOCK BRUCE - GARDYNE
WALKER-SMITH (CHAIRMAN OF
EX '22 COMMITTEE)
JOHN EDEN
STEPHEN HASTINGS

Personal



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER,

SOUTH POAT FIGURES LAST
TIME - BOUNDARIES UNCHANGED.

C.	25,953
LIB	19,426
LAB	5725
C MAS	6527


6/4/1963.

PERSONAL



ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE

LONDON, WC2A 2LL

01-405 7641 Extn

31st March 1983

My dear Ian,

Thank you so much. It was good to talk with you & very helpful.

However after that I heard the P.M.'s broadcast on Radio 4. Listening to her fighting so valiantly and wonderfully for the country and all of us, against the terrible line of questioning persisted in by Michael Charlton, and so typical of so many who talk & think

as he does, I wondered
how I could possibly be
so small and so selfish
as to be thinking of
myself - and in particular
whether I would really
want to move into the
one world where I could
no longer take any part
in fighting that battle
with you her.

So I must ~~try to~~
think it all out over
the week-end and
try to get a letter to you
on Wednesday.

Our love to you
both.

As ever
John