



cc: Michael Alison

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 October 1983

As I mentioned to you on the telephone, the Prime Minister is likely to be out of the country during the latter part of November at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting during which she will miss probably three Prime Minister's Questions on 22, 24 and 29 November. In addition, her attendance at the European Council in Athens is likely to preclude her from being present for the Questions on Tuesday 6 December. Mrs. Thatcher would be grateful if the Lord Privy Seal could stand in for her on those occasions. If Mr. Biffen agrees, we can be in touch nearer the time to discuss arrangements for briefing him. I should say that the machinery in No. 10 for briefing the Prime Minister for her Questions will be at the Lord Privy Seal's disposal for those occasions.

I am sending copies of this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

Timothy Flesher

David Heyhoe, Esq.,
Lord Privy Seal's Office.

DF

600 *Parliament Procedure for handling
PM's Questions*

*Change to
note pa*



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE,
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

6 October 1983

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 5 October. The Lord Privy Seal agrees to stand in for the Prime Minister at Question Time on 22, 24 and 29 November; and, if necessary, on Tuesday 6 December. As you say, we can be in touch about briefing arrangements nearer the time.

I am copying this to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

*Yours ever,
David*

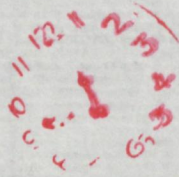
D C R HEYHOE
Private Secretary

T Flesher Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
No 10 Downing Street
London
SW1

WESTERN UNION
FIFTY CENTS



6 Dec 1962



1. MR. BUTLER ✓
2. PRIME MINISTER

I agree
FERB
4.10

Agreed mb

Prime Minister's Questions in your absence

You are likely to miss three Questions days while you are at CHOGM and one while you are attending the European Council Meeting in Athens. It may be best now to nominate your stand-in for those occasions. The obvious candidate in the Cabinet list of precedence is the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, but of course he is likely to be abroad at the same time. Next on the precedence list is the Home Secretary followed by the Chancellor. My feeling and that of Michael Alison is that neither would be ideal; partly because the choice of one or the other would be misrepresented as conveying a political signal and partly because the style of both would lend itself to a rather more combative occasion than was normal when Lord Whitelaw stood in.

We suggest therefore that you should ask the Lord Privy Seal to stand in in your absence. It would be perfectly natural for you to ask Mr. Biffen as Leader of the House to deal with Prime Minister's Questions while you are away and he would find it easier than would Mr. Brittan or Mr. Lawson to play a straight bat. Nor could the choice of Mr. Biffen be misrepresented as conveying any particular Prime Ministerial favour.

We have consulted Lord Whitelaw and he agrees with this advice.

Agree to ask the Lord Privy Seal to stand in for Prime Minister's Questions while you are away in Delhi and Athens?

TF



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vk
Parliament

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 March 1983

As I mentioned to you some time ago, the Prime Minister will not be able to answer Questions in the House next Tuesday, 22 March, since she will be attending the European Council. She would be very grateful if the Home Secretary could reply on her behalf.

You kindly agreed that our briefing team should come to you for lunch. There will be seven of us: Ian Gow, Derek Howe, Michael Scholar, Tim Flesher, myself, Charlotte Stevens (our Parliamentary Clerk) and Sally Hayter (Parliamentary Questions Section). The usual arrangement is that all of us lunch with you and the Home Secretary, except for Charlotte and Sally who lunch in your Private Office and collect last minute briefing. As I suggested to Lesley Pallett, we will arrive at 1245.

I will let you have the folder of questions and draft answers on Monday evening.

The next day on which the Prime Minister will be unable to answer Questions is likely to be 7 June. I hope you will be able to come here for lunch on that day. We can confirm the arrangements nearer the time.

WR

A.R. Rawsthorne, Esq.,
Home Office.

086