

file

cc: Mr Wicks
Mr Powell
Mr Norgrove
Mr Addison

PRIME MINISTER

DRAFT ARTICLE FOR SUNDAY EXPRESS, JANUARY 3

I attach a draft of some 800 words - the quota - for the Sunday Express issue of January 3.

It follows the broad brush approach we discussed in the car last night.

My aim has been to do three things:

- to look forward with confidence and excitement to the future because of the changes wrought in Britain since 1979;
- to remind people briefly the changes which have actually occurred; and finally
- to show how the Government is delivering what ordinary Britons want.

Content?



BERNARD INGHAM
22 December 1987

*"Welfare" tends to mean
supplementary benefit.
Some avoided only
slightly. That's on
very much
not*

DRAFT 750-WORD ARTICLE FOR SUNDAY EXPRESS, JANUARY 3

In contemplating 1988 - the ninth New Year I have celebrated as Prime Minister - I have become aware of one predominant emotion. It is, in fact, a rising sense of excitement about Britain's prospects.

Why? you may ask. What lends 1988 this kind of potential?

The answer lies in the great changes wrought during the 1980s. The transformation in the conduct of our affairs means that, virtually for the first time since the war, our energies as a people are now increasingly concentrated on improving our national ~~lot~~ standing.

And with our growing strength as a country comes increasing influence in a world which in turn holds out the promise of greater stability - of peace with security at a much lower level of weaponry.

This is not to say that we can relax our guard against external threats, whether to our security or trade, or against that most insidious of internal foes: inflation.

It most certainly does not mean that life in 1988 won't have its ups and downs. Or that the political battle in Parliament will get any less fierce, though whether it can get any noisier is open to doubt.

But the fact is that Britain in 1988 is a different country - a country revitalised; a country of rising self confidence; a country which counts for something again.

One glance back to 10 years ago is enough to remind us of how far we have come. Then the issue, both within and without our inflation ridden and industrially riven land, was not whether Britain had a future but whether it was even governable.

All that is behind us.

Getting on for nine years of Conservative Government have brought strength through prudence to our finances; order through firmness and fairness to our industrial affairs; a resurgent industrial performance through the encouragement of individual enterprise; and increasing ^{personal} independence through the spread of property and responsibility to our people. And abroad the years have brought us respect through consistency of purpose.

Now the issue is not whether Britain has a future but ^{how} what we are going to ~~make of it.~~

make the most of it

I have no doubt what the British people would like to see.

First, they like to feel that their country is a constructive force for peace with freedom and justice in the world.

They know that in this Government they have just that - a Government which is able to exercise influence not merely in the European Community and the Commonwealth, but also in Moscow and Washington and elsewhere - for example, on either side of the Arab-Israeli divide.

Second, recognising that our future lies within Europe, ^{British people} they want to see order brought to the Community's financial affairs and its huge economic potential realised.

They know that their government will strive mightily in 1988 to bring sanity to its budget and agricultural production while at the same time looking after the interests of the farmer and the countryside. And they know we shall press forward the development of a single market of more than 300m people. The goal of unfettered trade in goods and services within the world's largest sophisticated market by 1992 is of enormous significance for our industry and commerce, *and for opportunities for young people.*

Third, the British people want a sound basis of steady economic growth on which to build their lives and prosperity. And they naturally want to keep more of the money they earn to spend or save as they think fit.

They know that their Government is determined to keep inflation and spending in check - the twin foundations of steady growth - to reduce taxes and to enlarge opportunities for people to acquire property for themselves and their children.

Fourth, ^{British people} they want to see higher standards in society.

They know that their Government is unrelenting in its attack on the international scourge of drugs, crime and terrorism; uncompromising in its belief that high standards stem from the example set at home and in school; and unapologetic in its efforts through, for example, increasing competition, to raise standards of service to the consumer.

Fifth, the British people want to feel that increasing prosperity will among other things bring better educational opportunities, better health care and ~~better welfare.~~

*greater well-being.
more security in retirement.*

They know that more resources are being devoted to all three. They are also much too astute to fall for the idea that these services are free. After all, the average family pays £114 a week in tax and contributions for education, health and welfare. ^{They also make profits} They are entitled to expect this hard earned money is effectively used.

They know that their Government is moving decisively to ensure that it is.

All this demonstrates why I am tremendously excited by the year ahead. It is a year of opportunity in a land of opportunity. Let's grasp it.