

MR GRAY

MR ADDISON

MR WHITTINGDALE ✓

SCOTTISH DAILY EXPRESS

The Scottish edition of the Daily Express is making a renewed effort to improve its position in Scotland and the Prime Minister has agreed to be interviewed by the editor-designate, George Birrell, on Friday. He is an old hand and intends to be helpful.

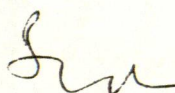
His questions are attached.

The Prime Minister does not need a great deal of briefing but it might be helpful if I could incorporate information with my briefing for Thursday's box as follows:-

State of Conservative Party in Scotland - Mr Whittingdale

Economy and Community Charge - Mr Gray

Health & Social Security and Devolution - Mr Addison



BERNARD INGHAM

12 April 1988

AREAS OF QUESTIONING FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

The intention is to confine questions, in most part, to issues relating to Scotland and broaden them to UK topics towards the end of the interview.

STATE OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY IN SCOTLAND: What are the lessons to be learned from losing half the Tory MPs at the last election ; Which is the way back for the Conservatives in Scotland; Do the "recalcitrant, ungrateful" Scots pose more headaches than the rest of Britain; How does Prime Minister respond to frequent allegations that she is "uncaring" of the Scots.

ECONOMY: How will the Ford debacle in Dundee affect inward investment to Scotland and is it an example of comfortably off workers in the South turning their backs on the unemployed in the North; Has Scotland to resign itself to perpetually high unemployment; What can be done to liberate the alleged enterprise of the Scots who have the lowest growth rate in self-employment and the service industries; What benefits will there be for Scotland from the single European market in 1992 and the Channel tunnel.

COMMUNITY CHARGE: How concerned is the Prime Minister that many Scots are reportedly disenfranchising themselves to avoid paying the new charge; Will the government encounter increased hostility if there are widespread prosecutions; Does the proposed Mates amendment not pose a bigger threat than Labour's attempted wrecking tactics; If it, or any other amendment, succeeds would it not be acutely embarrassing to introduce it in Scotland.

DEVOLUTION: If Stormont remains a possibility for Ulster why not an Assembly for Scotland; Would a reduction in Scottish Westminster MPs be a fair trade-off for an Assembly; Is there concern about the growth in pro-devolution support within Scottish Conservative ranks.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY: With the NHS being the most emotive of all domestic issues would meeting in full the terms of the nurses pay review not assuage public opinion; Is there scope for further significant hospital services being put out to competitive tender; Does the Prime Minister accept the government's own social security advisers claim that the benefits system lacks flexibility and would leave many claimants, especially the young, worse off.

PERSONAL: After 9 years in government does the Prime Minister feel enough has been achieved and what now are the priorities.