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PRY MINISTER

I am proposing in this note that you vary slightly the arrangements for contacts that you have with backbench colleagues. It seems to me that between now and the next election we must avoid at all costs any allegation that you are "out of touch" with grass roots opinion. I am loath to add to your burdens and my proposals do not add greatly to demands on your time. In so far as they add slightly I hope you will agree that from now on you should for political reasons reallocate some of your priorities.

Dinner in Members' Dining Room. This means a lot to colleagues. I suggest it should be brief and early, between 7.45 and 8.45 pm., so that you can return to your boxes. There is no need for you to stay for any vote. I would like Amanda to mark up the diary with dinners in mind, every 2 weeks if possible. ✓

Large meetings with colleagues. You have in the past been having such meetings every 2 months or so. They are much better when held in your room in the House, because round a table everyone can have a word. They are also better when they are general, rather than limited to a select or standing committee. With these points in mind, I would like to organise such meetings once a month. ✓

Monday Lunches. I would like to have more senior backbenchers to these. The Leader of the Lords sometimes finds it difficult to attend, and I would like to suggest to him that he attends only every other week. I suggest also that every other week you do not invite a Secretary of State or a Minister of State. In this way many more senior backbenchers could come.

We are not going to have lunches every Monday. They are too repetitive.

Regional Tours. Amanda has suggested that you might have more half-day tours, for visits near London. In this way you would have one photo call at a factory and a party reception for half-a-dozen constituencies. These generate an enormous amount of goodwill among colleagues.

I suggest we discuss these ideas on our way to Scotland, next week. ✓

M.B

MARK LENNOX-BOYD
31 August 1989