



Prime Minister

MT

MUS 13/9

PRIME MINISTER

We are having a word tomorrow about general DOE issues. I thought you might like notice of one suggestion I will make.

The DOE area is going to cause the Government lots of trouble over the next few years. We need to go on relentlessly pressing councils - including many of our own friends - for savings; we look like having the great majority of the local authority world (including again many of our friends) against us on rate capping on 'constitutional' grounds - and this is bound to find some echoes on our benches in both Commons and Lords; and the abolition of the GLC and Met Counties will be a technical and complex business which, though generally popular, will offer plenty of room for obstruction by our opponents. Both policies provide ample opportunities for challenges in the courts by Left wing Councils who have become increasingly litigious.

The legislation, which will involve at least three highly controversial and technically difficult Bills, will take two years; after that the rows outside Parliament will increase as we take action to cap certain rates and to impose initial controls over the new joint boards. As things look at present we seem almost certain to find ourselves forced to take over some recalcitrant councils via commissioners.

CONFIDENTIAL



I am not sure that senior colleagues yet appreciate the rows which, starting this autumn, are going to continue right up to the next election and beyond. I am certain the policy is reasonable and can be brought to a successful conclusion. But I would very much welcome a meeting of reasonable length with you and senior colleagues, including the Chairman of the Party and the Chief Whips in the Lords and the Commons to give early warning of the sort of sequence of events we foresee. I would let colleagues have a confidential paper in advance spelling out what I see as the key events and possible crisis points, and suggesting steps aimed at keeping most of our people on our side.

Once launched, it would be very damaging to draw back from such a controversial set of policies: but it is surely fair to let colleagues know what we are landing them in.

PJ

P J

13 SEP 83

MASTER

file



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SUBJECT LOCAL GOVT. Relations 1416

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

14 September 1983

Your Secretary of State discussed with the Prime Minister this evening his minute of 13 September in which he suggested that there might be a meeting taken by the Prime Minister about the problems of maintaining support for the Government's policy towards local authorities over the period of this Parliament. The Prime Minister agreed with this proposal and suggested that the meeting should take the form of a lunch on a Monday, probably just before Parliament reassembles. I will arrange for Mrs. Goodchild to be in touch with you about the date and the list of those who should attend.

The Prime Minister commented that if your Secretary of State wanted to provide a note as a basis for the discussion, it would be best for those attending the lunch to read the note on arrival at 10 Downing Street, immediately before the lunch.

SECRET

John Ballard, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

MR. BUTLER

Lunch on Monday, 17 October

Please see the attached letter from John Ballard, DOE. I have in fact invited all those mentioned in his letter and Lord Cockfield.- thus making a total of 14.

Sue

16 September 1983

502
noted
MICHAEL

THE DIARY

Lunch on Monday, 17 October (Lunch for Colleagues)
will be to discuss forthcoming Local Government
Legislation.

Sue

16 September 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

Sue Goodchild



2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

15 September 1983

Dear Robin

Thank you for your letter of 14 September. I am writing to confirm what I said subsequently over the telephone. My Secretary of State is content that, in addition to the Prime Minister and himself, those invited to the lunch should be the Lord President, Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Education, Lord Privy Seal, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (or possibly the Chancellor of the Exchequer?), Lord Bellwin, the Chairman of the Conservative Party, Rt Hon Michael Alison and the Chief Whips of the House of Lords and Commons. If for any reason one of them is unable to attend he suggests that Mr Waldegrave might be invited in their place.

I can confirm that we shall be providing a note as a basis for discussion, to be read on arrival by those attending the lunch.

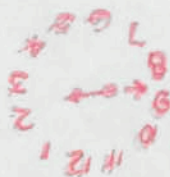
Yours sincerely

John Ballard

J F BALLARD
Private Secretary

Robin Butler Esq

Local Govt.
Relations,
Pt 16



15 SEP 1992

LETTER FROM THE
SECRETARY OF THE

SEP 6 1885



COMPLIMENT

cc Martin Let.
bc Mrs Goodchild

MRS. GOODCHILD

Please see the attached letter to the Department of the Environment, which is self-explanatory. Could you please be in touch with Mr. Jenkin's Office about the arrangements for such a lunch - perhaps on Monday, 17 October?

The Secretary of State for the Environment suggested that those attending, in addition to the Prime Minister and himself, should be:

The Lord President
The Home Secretary
The Lord Privy Seal
The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
The Secretary of State for Education and Science
The Chief Secretary, HM Treasury
The Chief Whip (Commons)
The Chief Whip (Lords)
The Chairman of the Party
Lord Bellwin
~~Mr. Waldegrave~~
- - -

With Mr. Alison, this would make 12, which is the maximum for the small dining room. But there would be much to be said for the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster also taking part. ^{I have} ~~Could you~~ put this point to Mr. Ballard. It may be that we should confine the meeting to senior Ministers and substitute Mr. Brittan and Lord Cockfield for Lord Bellwin and Mr. Waldegrave. ~~Mr. Ballard wants to have~~ ^{will let me} ~~know what his Secretary of State thinks and I will tell you~~ ~~a word with me about this, he is welcome to do so.~~

FRB.

14 September 1983