

PRIME MINISTER

Falkland Islands and the Media

After today, I am strongly of the view that the Government will win no prizes if it is seen to be running away from the media tomorrow and does not take every reasonable opportunity to explain its case. We simply cannot allow it to go by default. In addition, Lord Carrington and Mr. Nott will win no credit with their critics for turning down invitations.

Against this background, I have advised the FCO that Lord Carrington could very usefully do tomorrow's LWT "Weekend World" with Brian Walden. I am also urging the Ministry of Defence to encourage Mr. Nott to explain his case, as suitable opportunities arise. MOD and FCO are considering who should put the Government's case on BBC Radio "World This Weekend". We shall consider who should respond to "Panorama" and Granada's "World In Action" in the light of events tomorrow.

On reflection, I think it would be helpful if you could fulfil your engagement with ITN on Monday afternoon - for the same reasons: the Government needs to induce a greater rationality into the debate and to win understanding of the problems involved in coping with the Falkland Islands.

I have also agreed with the FCO and MOD that the Governor of the Falkland Islands and the leader of the marines should not be exposed to the press before they have reported to you and Lord Carrington on Monday. But we cannot keep them away from the press forever and we have agreed that a press conference should be set up for Monday afternoon.

I hope you are content with all these arrangements and especially my contention that Ministers - and particularly the two most closely concerned - should be seen this week to be fighting back.

3 April, 1982

B. INGHAM

*Mr Nott
is now
doing
"Weekend
World"
M.P.*