

CONFIDENTIAL

Public expenditure file AT



CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 3299

From the Minister without Portfolio  
The Rt Hon Lord Young of Graffham

16th January, 1985

Miss Janet Lewis-Jones,  
Private Secretary to the  
Lord President of the Council,  
68 Whitehall,  
London, S.W.1.

Dear Janet

PRESENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY

I attach a note of the meeting chaired by Lord Whitelaw on Tuesday, 15th January, 1985.

I am sending copies to the Private Secretaries to the Home Secretary, Secretaries of State for Education & Science, Environment, Social Services, Trade & Industry and Employment, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chief Secretary, the Chief Whip, the Paymaster General and to Bernard Ingham.

Yours ever

Leigh

Leigh Lewis  
Private Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL

**CONFIDENTIAL**

NOTE OF A MEETING HELD IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON 15th JANUARY,  
1985, TO DISCUSS THE PRESENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL POLICY

P R E S E N T

The Rt. Hon. Viscount Whitelaw  
Lord President of the Council

The Rt. Hon. Leon Brittan QC MP  
Secretary of State for the  
Home Department

The Rt. Hon. Patrick Jenkin MP  
Secretary of State for the  
Environment

The Rt. Hon. John Biffen MP  
Lord Privy Seal

The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler MP  
Secretary of State for Social  
Services

The Rt. Hon. Peter Rees QC MP  
Chief Secretary Treasury

The Rt. Hon. Lord Young of  
Graffham, Minister without  
Portfolio

The Rt. Hon. John Gummer MP  
Paymaster General

Mr. Norman Lamont MP  
Minister of State, Department  
of Trade & Industry

The Hon. Peter Morrison MP  
Minister of State, Department  
of Employment

The Hon. Peter Brooke MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary  
of State, Department of  
Education and Science

Mr. John Cope MP  
Deputy Chief Whip

Mr. Bernard Ingham  
Chief Press Secretary to the  
Prime Minister

SECRETARIAT

Mr. L. W. Lewis  
Miss S. E. Wallace

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL said that the Group had before it a paper by the Prime Minister's Chief Press Secretary on the next steps in the campaign to achieve better understanding of the Government's economic and social policies. The paper also included a summary of major issues to Easter 1985. It was important not to reduce the momentum which the Group had established before the Christmas break and the meeting needed in particular to resolve the organisational questions outlined in the Chief Press Secretary's paper.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP said that he had spoken to the officers of the 1922 Committee and obtained their general agreement to the proposed setting up of backbench groups as discussed at previous meetings. In establishing the groups, he suggested that the Chairmen of the Backbench Departmental Committees should be approached to serve, with the other members being chosen so as to ensure, as far as possible, that each group contained a good spread of geographical representation. The Whips' Office was ready to advise on membership.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

In discussion it was suggested that both Parliamentary Private Secretaries to Ministers and Departmental Whips might usefully be involved both in advising on the composition of groups and in approaching prospective members. The object of each group should be to help in presenting that Department's policy as part of the general presentation of the Government's economic and social programmes. While there was a case for involving members of Select Committees on the groups, it needed to be borne in mind that Select Committees tended inevitably to emphasise differences between Government and MPs and that Select Committee Members might therefore find difficulty in playing both roles. Central Office should also be able to help, via the Whips' Office, in advising on which Government Backbenchers came within the scope of, for example, different local radio stations, although it needed to be remembered that this was a Government and not a Party exercise.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL said that it was agreed that, in respect of each Department represented at the meeting, arrangements should now be put in hand to establish the backbench groups along the lines suggested. In the first instance, each of the Ministers concerned, after consulting as appropriate with his Parliamentary Private Secretary and the Departmental Whip, should speak to the Chairman of the relevant Backbench Committee and thereafter seek to produce a list of members for his Departmental group. These lists should be brought back to a further meeting of the Group in two weeks' time for consideration.

Turning to the speaking note prepared by officials, THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL said that the Group needed to decide whether the format and content of both the note and the accompanying list of 'bull points' were satisfactory.

In discussion the following points were made:

- The references in the note to the size of current investment needed to be reinforced by the actual figures which would, in particular, put into perspective the frequent calls for a further billion pounds of infrastructure spending.
- In this context it was highly desirable that the figures should be quoted in current and not 1980 prices.
- The note should make clear that the investment figures related to investment in the U.K. and not abroad, in order to refute suggestions that British companies were interested only in investing overseas.
- The note should emphasise that, in reducing taxes, a key aim of the Government would be to raise thresholds, thus helping to restore incentives to work.
- The list of 'bull points' should be revised to exclude technicalities such as Q.1 wherever possible.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL said that the speaking note prepared by officials was a valuable contribution to the Group's work. The meeting agreed the note and the accompanying list, subject to the points listed above. The Chief Press Secretary, with the advice of the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, should revise the note and list of bull points as soon as possible.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

In the absence of Backbench groups, the revised note should be circulated to the Ministers present who should take steps to disseminate it as appropriate. It might also form a useful core to any major speeches which Ministers were delivering during the course of the week. In circulating the note, it should be referred to as a background note.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL said that the Group should aim to meet again in two weeks at the same time. The Chief Press Secretary, in consultation with officials, should prepare a second speaking note for consideration at that meeting. The subject of the note might well be the public expenditure White Paper which was to be published on 22nd January.

Cabinet Office  
16th January, 1985

CONFIDENTIAL

16 JAN 1985

