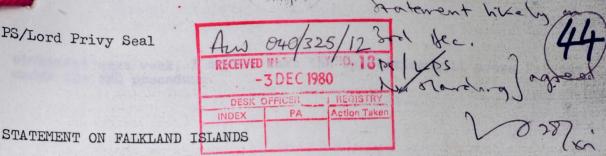
PS/Lord Privy Seal



Following the Leader of the House's Business Statement yesterday, Mr Peter Shore called for an early statement on Mr Ridley's current In his reply, Mr St John-Stevas said visit to the Falkland Islands. that he would consult the Secretary of State on the matter.

I append below the relevant extract as recorded in Hansard (Vol 994):

Mr. Peter Shore (Stepney and Poplar): In view of the conflicting and unsettling

reports about statements made by the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in the Falkland Islands this week, will the Leader of the House arrange for an early statement to be made to the House? If the Minister of State is on a protracted mission to South America and the Falkland Islands and cannot be here to make it, will the right hon. Gentleman raise the matter with one of his senior colleagues to ensure that we have an opportunity to comment on what the Government are proposing?

Mr. St. John-Stevas: As the right hon. Gentleman recognised, the Falkland Islands could not be described as exactly central. I cannot raise the matter with the Minister of State, but I will-[Interruption.] I can answer questions without prompting-raise it with my noble Friend the Foreign Secretary and consult him on the important point made by the right hon. Gentleman.

u gavie

Mr Ridley's visit has already sparked off much interest and concern in both Houses. It was raised on 26 November in the Lords' debate on foreign affairs, and the Secretary of State answered a Starred Question on the subject yesterday. Written PQs have been put down in the Commons, and Sir Bernard Braine has a question for oral reply (which will not be reached) on 2 December asking for a statement on Mr Ridley's visit. If the Government do not offer a

statement next week, I expect that the Opposition will press for one under the PNQ procedure.

E R Worsnop Parliamentary Clerk

28 November 1980

cc: Private Secretary
PS/Mr Ridley
Mr Harding
SAMD

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