

# LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 4 PM date: 29.3.82

The morning Lobby was repeated.

## Employment Bill

We referred the Lobby to what Mr Tebbit had said on "World At One". His mind was not closed but there were considerable and even greater difficulties over balloting on strikes than for union officials. The implication was that he had already given the question some thought. We agreed that the position of seamen was a particularly problematical example.

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PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister left No 10 at 7.00 am for Northolt and Brussels where she is attending the European Council today and tomorrow.

At 10.30 am European Council members will meet the King of the Belgians at the Palais des Academies. There will be speeches from King Baudouin and the Presidents of the European Parliament, Council, Commission and Court of Justice.

Afterwards the Council members will attend a lunch hosted by the King at the Palais Royal, before opening session in the Charlemagne Building. The session is due to end at 7.00 pm.

PRESS NOTICE

Announcement of a Reception for managers and employees of 30 of Britain's most successful small and medium sized companies. This will be held on 20 April.

IN THE HOUSE

There are no Statements today.

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 135 Written 3.30 pm: Mr John Lee to ask S/S Education if he will now publish a document on the reform of school examinations at 16 plus. (The answer will draw attention to the draft document sent to interested bodies for comment. Sir Keith Joseph will make this issue the main theme of his address to the Secondary Heads Association today.)

No 128 Written 3.30 pm: Mr Martin Stevens to ask S/S Energy whether the gas and electricity industries have yet reported to him the results of their consideration of the review by the Policy Studies Institute of the Industries' code of practice on the payment of bills and if he will make a statement. (Answer will welcome the report and will note that the Department has obtained their agreement to some improving amendments.)

No 137 Written 3.30 pm: Mr Robert McCrindle to ask S/S Environment when he intends to publish land registers for the remaining districts for England and if he will make a statement. (Answer will detail publication of these registers which set out available disused public land. Mr Heseltine has a speech today in Birmingham on the subject.)

No 136 Written 3.30 pm: Mr Alex Pollock to ask the S/S Scotland if he will make a statement on milk prices in Scotland. (Answer will give the maximum price Milk Boards can charge dairies. This follows last week's announcement covering England and Wales.)

EMPLOYMENT BILL

Mr Tebbit was sympathetic towards the amendments from Conservative backbenchers. He had not made up his mind but our personal guess was that he would not change the Bill; a great deal of thought and consultation had gone into the Bill and therefore we thought it unlikely changes would be made at this stage. Nevertheless Mr Tebbit's mind was not totally made up.

PRIME MINISTER

She was expected to return tomorrow evening. Mr Whitelaw would take Questions.

NORTHERN IRELAND

It was not certain that Cabinet would take a final decision this week on Mr Prior's proposals although there was a good chance.