

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 6.10 date: 5.4.82

We issued to the lobby the latest Ministerial Press Notice in respect of the appointment of Francis Pym as Foreign Secretary and the appointment of John Biffen as Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons. We also issued copies of the exchange of letters between Mr Luce and the PM. We advised the lobby that there would be no further announcements this evening but we thought that the remainder might follow tomorrow. We could not say how many more appointments there would be.

We advised the lobby to listen to the PM's interview in respect of Mr Pym's and Mr Biffen's qualities for their new jobs! In answer to a question we understood that Mr Pym had no doubts about accepting his new appointment when it was offered to him before lunch. He had lunch with the PM along with a number of other Ministers including Mr Biffen and Mr Joseph.

The PM would be having further meetings today before dining at the House this evening. No doubt she would be thinking of how she would fill the remaining vacancies. We did not believe her mind was yet made up.

We did not know of any personal message from the PM to the Fleet. She was not planning to see the Queen this evening or tomorrow.

The PM's objective was to return the Falklands to British sovereignty and rid them of the Argentinian invaders. As had been said over the weekend we could not forecast what orders would be given to the Fleet once they were in position but in the meantime the objective was to resolve the matter by diplomacy. We were not prepared to give up the Falkland Islands; if the Falklands wished to remain British then the Government would stand by them. The PM did not contemplate failure.

We undertook to find out who would open and close Wednesday's debate.

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