

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working in No 10 this morning and will be in the House this afternoon for the Falkland Islands debate.

PRESS NOTICE

Appointment of Professor Christopher Ricks as King Edward VII Professor of English Literature, University of Cambridge. This is one of the eight or so Regius chairs in Oxford and Cambridge in the gift of the Queen on the PM's recommendation.

PUBLICATION

The Home Office publishes today at 2.30pm the Data Protection White Paper. (CFRs at 10.00am).

PILOT ETHNIC SURVEY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

MPO were due to hold a Press Conference at 10.30am at the Queen's Hotel, Leeds, to launch a survey of ethnic composition of some non-industrial grades of the Civil Service. This will be a pilot study. Following the Scarman Report, Mr Whitelaw announced during the subsequent debate that the Government accepted it should take a lead on ethnic monitoring policy. This is part of that commitment.

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 187 Written 4.00pm: Mr Donald Anderson to ask S/S Wales when he expects to announce the names of the four local authority members of the Welsh Water Authority. (Answer will indicate that some offers of appointment are being made.) This is a controversial issue in Wales and Welsh Office say they do not know if the offers of appointment being made will be taken up.

No 160 Written 3.30pm: Mr Michael Latham to ask S/S Energy about plans for scrutiny of British Gas Corporation. (Answer indicates management consultancy firm to investigate).

No 162 Written 3.30pm: Mr Michael Ancram to ask S/S Energy about effects of ASLEF dispute on NCB's financing. (Answer will be technical and linked to an announcement by the Chief Secretary on external financing limits).

No 163 Written 3.30pm: Mr Michael Brotherton to ask S/S Energy what steps being taken to offset the effect of the rail stoppages earlier this year on coal supplies to CEBG. (Answer will announce grant of up to £17millions to cover the additional cost of using oil).

No 166 Written 3.30pm: Mr Iain Mills to ask S/S Transport about new measures to encourage training organisation to participate in part one of motorcycle test. (Answer will indicate details of new scheme).

No 183 Written 3.30pm: Mr John Ward to ask S/S Employment if he will make a statement on co-operation between the Manpower Services Commission's jobcentres and private employment agencies. (Answer will indicate that agencies will be allowed to advertise their services in jobcentres and that jobcentres in turn will advertise in agencies).

No 181 Written 3.30pm: Mr Gary Waller to ask S/S Employment what representations has received from National Association Port Employers about the financing of the national voluntary severance scheme for dock workers and if he will make a statement. (Answer will set out what are essentially debt rescheduling plans to help employers, ie. Government loans money to employers to help pay severance and we are waiving interest payments on certain loans etc).

LOBBY BRIEFING

time:

date:

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TONY BENN

We said we did not talk about nuclear weapons. The PM had been informed of Mr Benn's intentions.

DEBATE

PM would not be speaking; Mr Pym and Mr Nott would speak for the Government.

JOHN NOTT

The lobby had seen Mr Nott leaving No 10. We said he and other Ministers would be keeping the PM informed.

UN RESOLUTION

We emphasised that the obligation was on Argentina to withdraw before negotiations began. There was nothing to prevent the US or anyone else talking to either side before withdrawal. The Falklands were British sovereign territory and we required immediate withdrawal. We were not prepared to discuss the terms of any diplomatic negotiated solution or enter into hypothetical discussions on the possibility of direct talks before withdrawal.

WORLD CUP

The Government had not approached any of the three national Football Associations participating in the World Cup finals; nor had they approached the Minister for Sport. Sport did not exist in a vacuum but the position could well be resolved by then.

BRITISH GAS

We thought the outside consultant's role was to improve efficiency. Many people were depressed at the performance of the nationalised industries.

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PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTION TIME TUESDAY 6 APRIL 1982

Prime Minister : Mr Speaker, Sir, President Reagan is to be the guest of Her Majesty The Queen at Windsor Castle as was announced on 25 March. He is to be invited to address members of both Houses of Parliament in the Royal Gallery. The programme is still under discussion and further details will be announced when it has been approved.

Bob Crier : Does the Prime Minister accept that her attempt to use President Reagan's visit to shore up her own position is widely regarded as an abuse of this House? Has she noted that even President Reagan has called for a peaceful solution to the Falkland Islands crisis without bloodshed and does she not accept that since she is responsible in the final analysis for the conduct of her government, that she herself should be considering an early resignation and allow somebody else to meet President Reagan on his visit?

Prime Minister : Mr Speaker, Sir, we shall welcome President Reagan as the President of our senior NATO ally and most powerful defender of liberty in the West and liberty throughout the world. I understand that President Reagan like most of us would wish a peaceful solution to the Falkland Islands and we shall be very happy if anyone is able to secure the withdrawal of the Argentinians from the Falkland Islands and the restoration of British sovereignty and the restoration of the wishes of the people to live under sovereignty without a drop of blood and if anyone can do that, we shall warmly welcome their cooperation. With regard to resignation, no. Now is the time to strengthen resolutions.

?.....Warmly welcoming what My Rt Hon Friend has said, welcoming the personal charge that she is taking over these affairs, welcoming all that President Reagan can do to bring about a restoration of British sovereignty in the Falkland Islands, will she, and should not we all, keep in mind in this difficult matter the prayer of Sir Francis Drake which she, and many others, heard yesterday in Westminster Abbey.

/Prime Minister

Prime Minister : Mr Speaker I think that the prayer that my Hon. Friend must be referring to is not the beginning but the continuing and doing of the same until it be well and truly finished that really matters. I think it was a very apt quotation under the circumstances.

Mr John Brown ; Does My Rt Hon Friend accept that with regard to her action over the Falkland Islands issue she has the overwhelming support of this House Can she confirm or not our mission is to destroy the Argentinian invasion fleet and if she cannot, would she say whether she believes it is either possible or desirable in the long term security interests of the Falkland Islands and to protect the exposed southern flank of NATO, that a NATO base should be established in the Falkland Islands?

Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, our mission is to restore British sovereignty to the Islands and to give the people what they want - the right to live under British rule and owe allegiance to the British Crown. That is our task. With regard to a NATO base in the Falkland Islands, I do not think that would be well received, it is very very far out of the NATO area.

Mr Foot : Has the Rt Hon Lady been able to study this morning the reports in many newspapers, the Daily Telegraph and The Times, about the statement that the information about the attack was known in London ten days before, is she aware that it is claimed to be on unimpeachable sources and that if, in fact, that was true, it would have been possible for action of interception to be taken? Will the Rt Hon Lady say whether that information is correct and, if that information was received what action was taken by the government?

Prime Minister : Mr Speaker, two points, as I told the House on Saturday, even if action had been taken - will the House let me answer the question in my own way giving the information of which I am certain is accurate as I try to do and try to check these matters - even had we known at the time of 19 March, when there was a landing at Leith on South Georgia, and that was a long time before the 11 days to which the Rt Hon Gentleman has referred, we could not in fact have got ships /and

and the fleet there in time. With regard to the second part of the question, I think the Rt Hon Gentleman will find a certain amount of confusion in those reports and I therefore stand by what I told the Rt Hon Gentleman on Saturday: the first time we had precise information. If the Rt Hon Gentleman looks into that he will see that there is a phrase to the effect that they knew there were ships, they did not know their intent, I am telling the Rt Hon Gentleman with the greatest possible accuracy as information came to me. The first information which I had was on Wednesday of last week, when we took action. Previously we had been very worried about the situation in South Georgia where Endurance had been and it was suggested that she take off the Argentinians by force and we had understood that there were ships on the way for that and when we understood that, we also took certain dispositions.

Michael Foot : Would the Rt Hon Lady now answer the immediate point that I put to her and, of course, questions of British intelligence are concerned in these matters and the House has a right to judge whether the British intelligence was operating properly and, if so, what action was taken? Can the Rt Hon Lady now tell us whether the information stated here was received, whenever she may have been informed, surely she has had the chance to look at such an accusation today and judge and tell the House and the country whether such information as this was received at the time stated?

Prime Minister : Mr Speaker I have tried to help the Rt Hon Gentleman. I think if he looks at that report - the one on the front of The Times - he will say that there were ships there, their intent was not known, I understand this is what The Times said. We knew that there were problems, of course we were dealing with them on South Georgia. The precise time at which we had information that it was an invasion fleet and it was on its way was Wednesday evening, precise time. We took action then. Previously because of the situation in South Georgia, we had also to make certain other dispositions.

/Michael Foot

Michael Foot : If the Rt Hon Lady cannot give us and the country an accurate answer on this matter now, will she study the matter further and make another statement to the House tomorrow as many of her Ministers have had to do before?

Prime Minister. : I have given the accurate information which I myself know and the action which I myself took at the time when I received it.

Paul Bryan : Is my Rt Hon Friend not encouraged by the support that this country has received at the United Nations and throughout the Free World at the stand her Government has taken on the Falkland Islands?

Prime Minister : Yes Mr Speaker, there ^{was} a very forceful resolution which we moved at the United Nations Security Council calling upon the Argentinians to withdraw and we received support from the motion and it was passed from the United States, France, Ireland, Japan, Zaire, Togo, Uganda, Guyana and Jordan. Those were the countries that voted for us. The Soviet Union, China, Poland and Spain abstained and Panama voted against.

David Steel : Did the Prime Minister hear at the weekend the interview of the Hon Member for Shoreham before he resigned as Minister of State, in which he said quite clearly, and I heard the interview, that the Government had no warning of any attack or threat to the Falkland Islands until about a fortnight ago and a fortnight ago is a very great difference from 48 hours or 24 hours. Will she try to clear this matter up?

Prime Minister : As I have been trying to indicate there were problems, which the Rt Hon Gentleman knew, on South Georgia. The problems there were if Endurance proceeded to take off the ten Argentinians who had landed at Leith, and they refused to leave although they had not got the proper immigration papers, we were in touch with Buenos Aires and we said they must go, or get the proper clearance to be on our territory. We knew there was a threat that if we took them off by force, Endurance may well be stopped and there were ships about which could do the stopping. The precise nature of the threat to Port Stanley and to that part of the Falkland Islands came to me, as I told the Rt Hon Gentleman, on Wednesday. I do not believe that /there

there was a precise threat to Port Stanley as long before as the Rt Hon Gentleman indicates.

Alan Teggen : As the United Nations Security Council resolution on the Falkland Islands is mandatory and the Argentinian Government have not complied with it, will my Rt Hon Friend consider tabling a further resolution enforcing economic sanctions on the Argentinian Government?

Prime Minister : Mr Speaker, I think that if we were to table a further resolution about economic sanctions, we should not have quite such a successful conclusion as we have done with the resolution we already have.

Alan Roberts : Will the Prime Minister consider the consequences of the Government's mis-handling of the Falkland crisis for quite a number of my constituents? Is she aware that 50 per cent of the trade with Argentine goes through Liverpool docks and that is likely to stop as the result of military action or sanctions which I would support and, if that trade is stopped, will the Prime Minister make sure that Merseyside Docks which is in crisis already receives Government assistance to compensate so that unemployment doesn't increase as a result of the mis-handling of the Falklands crisis by this Government?

Prime Minister : The extent of our exports to Argentine are and have been comparatively small in relation to our total exports. I cannot give the Hon Gentleman the answer he seeks. I would however point out as a matter of information that we have decided to impose an embargo on the imports of all goods from Argentina from mid-night tonight.