

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11.00 date: 22.4.82

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working in No 10 most of the day.

MR PYM

The PM saw Mr Pym this morning for about 15 minutes from 8.15am. No last minute developments. Subsequently the PM saw others involved with the Falklands.

CABINET

At 10.30am the Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the Cabinet. [Falkland Islands, Parliamentary Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Community Affairs, Legislative Programme 1982-83.] All present except Mr Pym.

MEETING OF MINISTERS

At 11.30am the PM is due to chair a Meeting of Ministers. [E: The GLC and London Transport, Eighth Round of Offshore Licensing.]

QUESTIONS

At 3.15pm the Prime Minister will be in the House for Questions.

CIVIC TRUST DINNER

At 7.30pm the Prime Minister will attend the Civic Trust Dinner at the Mansion House. She will not make a speech but say a few words. Unlikely that we will have a text or that she will refer substantively to the Falklands.

PRESS NOTICES

Appointment of the Reverend David Henry Bartlett to the Suffragan See of Tonbridge. He is currently Vicar of St Peter and St Paul, Bromley, and will succeed the Right Reverend Philip Harold Ernest Goodrich who has become Bishop of Worcester.

The re-appointment of James Guinness as a Public Works Loan Commissioner and Chairman of the Commissioners.

The re-appointment of Miss Vera Di Palma as a Loan Commissioner.

The re-appointment of Peter Brackfield as a Loan Commissioner.

PUBLICATION

MPO will place in the Library of the House today at 3.45pm a publication entitled "Early Tasks" covering the aims and objectives of the MPO and indicating a programme of work.

IN THE HOUSE

STATEMENT

After the Business Question Sir Keith Joseph will make a Statement about the future of the Schools Council.

There will be a non-attributable briefing for education correspondents at Elizabeth House at 5.00pm or when Sir Keith returns.

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 114 Written 4.00pm: Mr Tim Eggar to ask the Prime Minister which Minister is now responsible for the co-ordination of Government Information Services. (Answer - John Biffen).

No 108 Written 3.30pm: Mr Tim Eggar to ask S/S Energy if he will make a statement on the membership of the Advisory Council on Energy Conservation since the extension of its mandate. (Answer will indicate that Dr Robert Telfer is to be the new Chairman. Other appointments to follow).

BILL

Derelict Land Bill presented today.

NATO SUMMIT

Journalists should obtain the necessary accreditation from NATO. Forms would be available from No 10 and FCO later today.

PYM'S DELEGATION

The Foreign Secretary would be accompanied by officials from the FCO. No other politicians were in his delegation.

PYM'S STATEMENT IN THE HOUSE

Asked about how the lobby should interpret Mr Pym's reappearance in the Chamber, we rehearsed the sequence of events; Bernard Ingham and Nick Fenn, although in the Press Gallery, had not picked up the precise words Mr Pym had used in answer to the development question but when they left the Gallery it was clear from the lobby correspondents that Mr Pym had misled the House. This was immediately relayed to Mr Pym who went straight back into the Chamber to ensure there was no misunderstanding. The lobby therefore should not read more into the matter.

PARTY VIEWS

Ian Gow and Cecil Parkinson would in the normal course of events be judging the mood of the Party and relaying that to the PM. As far as we knew the PM was not seeing MPs formally to obtain their views although she would of course see MPs routinely whilst in the House.

DEFENCE WHITE PAPER

We were not aware of any postponement. We did not know when it would be published but expected it fairly soon; as far as we knew no decision had been taken. Recent events would not alter its main thrust.

SUPERB

We thought it unlikely that Superb could have been involved in sinking the Irish trawler as the submarine had been in Faslane for several days.

PYM/WASHINGTON

The Foreign Secretary's intention was to go to Washington to talk to Al Haig and the US Administration about our commentary on the Argentinian proposals and our counter-proposals. He had no intention of talking face to face or in "proximity" with the Argentine Foreign Minister. Whilst we could not read the future we stressed there was no intention that Mr Pym should see Costa Mendez.

His visit was open-ended but our guess was he might return late Friday or on Saturday.

No decision had been taken about a meeting with the President; this was up to the White House.

There were no plans for Mr Pym or anyone in his delegation to travel to New York in respect of any UN involvement. We had our Ambassador to the UN in New York.

PROPOSALS

Asked how our counter proposals would be relayed to Buenos Aires we said this would be up to Haig. We pointed out there was no problem in respect of communications but Haig would not pass anything on until after he had seen Mr Pym.

INVINCIBLE

No-one need be puzzled about Invincible's current role and her future with the Australian navy; it was right that we should make full use of her until such time as she was passed over to the Australians. Once handed over the navy would still be in the same position as now with two carriers.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On learning from the lobby that the European Parliament had condemned Argentina we said that the PM would be very pleased by this. We fully expected the Parliament to back the Commission.

COSTS

The costs were certainly within the contingency reserve of £2.5 billion. The Chancellor was not on the Sub-Committee dealing with the Falklands; this was not significant as it was deliberate that the group should be kept small. If the question of costs arose he would be brought in.

REQUISITIONING COSTS

We referred the lobby to yesterday's written PQ reply from the PM: "Compensation for the requisitioned ships is being based on section 4 of the Compensation (Defence) Act 1939. Negotiations with the shipping lines are still in progress, and the total amounts to be paid will depend on how long the ships remain of requisition."

SCHOOLS COUNCIL

We guided the lobby that this afternoon's statement would indicate the Council was likely to disappear and be replaced by smaller institutions dealing with specific aspects of education. The Council was concerned with the system of examinations at 16+ and 18+ and the development of the schools curriculum. It had 56 members and there was a myriad of committees.

DE LOREAN

The future was certainly not bright. We were not aware of any statement but understood that Cork's partner would be meeting workers later today.

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for each of his Department's local offices serving the Birmingham, Small Heath, constituency the current number of non-pensioner and pensioner claimants; and if he will give comparable figures for 1979, 1980 and 1981 where available.

Mr. Newton [pursuant to his reply, 7 April 1982, c. 399-400]: The information requested is as follows:

Number of non-pensioner and pensioner claimants at offices dealing with the Birmingham, Small Heath constituency.

Office	16 March 1982	17 March 1981	18 March 1980	20 March 1979
Supplementary Benefit				
Bradford Street				
Non-pensioners	5,588	3,847	2,889	2,798
Pensioners	3,132	3,452	3,475	3,488
Handsworth				
Non-pensioners	12,096	10,688	7,013	7,033
Pensioners	3,443	6,676	5,633	5,768
Ladywood				
Non-pensioners	7,007	5,305	3,908	4,433
Pensioners	3,187	2,490	2,478	2,691
Sparkhill				
Non-pensioners	4,724	3,347	2,447	2,633
Pensioners	2,397	2,339	2,268	2,411
Washwood Heath				
Non-pensioners	7,513	5,980	4,980	5,055
Pensioners	4,731	4,989	5,636	5,683
Contributory Benefits				
Handsworth				
Non-pensioners	1,715	2,204	2,978	4,801
Pensioners	766	660	718	1,039
Ladywood				
Non-pensioners	1,537	635	746	1,299
Pensioners	1,048	315	198	491
Sparkhill				
Non-pensioners	987	1,038	1,309	2,249
Pensioners	500	386	241	310
Washwood Heath				
Non-pensioners	1,704	1,733	2,763	4,468
Pensioners	469	514	685	916

Figures for supplementary benefits are the number of cases in action on the dates shown. Figures for contributory benefits are the number of claims received in the four week period ended on the date shown.

Dr. Gilbert asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for each of his Department's local offices serving the Dudley, East constituency the current number of non-pensioner and pensioner claimants; and if he will give comparable figures for 1979, 1980 and 1981 where available.

Mr. Newton [pursuant to his reply, 8 April 1982, c. 437]: The information requested is as follows:

Number of non-pensioner and pensioner claimants at offices dealing with the Dudley, East constituency.

Office	16 March 1982	17 March 1981	18 March 1980	20 March 1979
Supplementary Benefit				
Dudley (North)				
Non-pensioners	9,529	5,909	4,246	5,097
Pensioners	7,760	7,521	9,167	11,262

Office	16 March 1982	17 March 1981	18 March 1980	20 March 1979
Contributory Benefits				
Dudley (North)				
Non-pensioners	2,813	2,340	3,482	7,718
Pensioners	798	1,780	1,313	1,796

Figures for supplementary benefits are the number of cases in action on the dates shown. Figures for contributory benefits are the number of claims received in the four-week period ended on the date shown.

Departmental Staff (Birmingham, Sparkbrook)

Dr. Gilbert asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* for each of his Department's local offices serving the Dudley, East constituency the current number of persons employed; and if he will give where available the comparable figures for 1979, 1980 and 1981.

Mr. Newton [pursuant to his reply, 8 April 1982, c. 437]: The information requested is as follows:

Number of staff at offices dealing with the Dudley, East constituency.

Office	1 April 1982	1 April 1981	1 April 1980	1 April 1979
Dudley (North)	187	177	212	261

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Falkland Islands

Mr. Arthur Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the names of the civil and public servants on the Falkland Islands who signed a letter relating to the situation on the Falkland Islands delivered to his Department at or just before the Easter weekend; what public or Government positions these people held and what are their salaries; and what was the nature of this letter and his reply.

Mr. Pym: The letter was signed by 18 officials, including both ex-patriates and islanders. Their names and positions are as follows:

Mr. R. Browning (Assistant Secretary, Secretariat); Mr. R. Buckett (Mechanical Superintendent); Mr. A. Carey (Supplies Officer); Mrs. A. Chater (Supervisor of Camp Education); Mr. R. H. Checkley (Registrar of Supreme Court); Mr. G. Cheek (Director of Civil Aviation); Mr. J. A. Fowler (Superintendent of Education); Mr. R. Gilbert (Electrician); Dr. D. H. Haines (Senior Medical Officer); Mr. L. Halliday (Harbourmaster); Mr. R. G. W. Lamb (Chief Police Officer); Mr. W. H. Roberts (Communications Officer); Mr. H. T. Rowlands (Financial Secretary); Mr. D. J. Sollis (Master of MV "Foreest"); Mr. J. Stephenson (Meteorological Officer); Mr. P. G. Sumner (Deputy Chief Secretary); Mr. D. J. Turner (Building Superintendent); Mr. P. Watts (Broadcasting Officer).

I regret that details of their salaries cannot be obtained in the time available.

The text of the letter requested that a protecting power be appointed to help to arrange the temporary evacuation of the civilian population of the Falkland Islands under the terms of the Geneva Convention. It also requested the immediate despatch to Port Stanley of an observer from that power.

I do not propose to reply formally to the letter until I have received it. However, I have already made it clear in the House that we would of course be ready to consider

sympathetically assistance to Islanders who express their wish to be evacuated from what could become a combat zone.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what area of sea around the Falkland Islands is protected for fishing purposes; and what agreements have been made to permit vessels of other nations to fish in these waters.

Mr. Onslow: The Falkland Islands have a 3-mile territorial sea over which they have *inter alia* fishing jurisdiction. Other nations at present fish outside the 3-mile limit which are high seas; and there are thus no restrictions on fishing.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about the potential for oil development in the territorial waters of the Falkland Islands; if there have been any indications of mineral deposits on the Islands themselves; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Onslow: Available information on the hydrocarbons potential of the Falkland Islands is sparse and based on broad grid seismic surveys. While the detailed conclusions of these surveys are commercially confidential, there are areas around the Falkland Islands which appear to contain sedimentary layers of a sufficient thickness and appropriate structure both to generate and contain hydrocarbons, though this has not been confirmed by drilling.

The Falkland Islands themselves are believed to contain no hydrocarbons and surveys have shown no metalliferous minerals of economic value.

DEFENCE

Mr. Thomas Griffiths

Mr. Frank Allaun asked the Secretary of State for Defence if, in the light of the finding of a Department of Health and Social Services tribunal in 1979 that Mr. Thomas Griffiths, a former employee at the Department's chemical defence establishment, Nancecuke, Cornwall, was suffering from a large range of illnesses as a result of nerve gas poisoning, and in view of other evidence submitted to his Department, he will review the payment of £110 paid to Mr. Griffiths in 1976 with a view to providing substantial additional compensation.

Mr. Pattie: No. The DHSS tribunal was concerned with the question of a disability award, and its finding did not render ineffective the outcome of the legal proceedings which Mr. Griffiths had already taken against my Department. Mr. Griffiths has since 1979 made representations to the Secretary of State for Defence, other Ministers, and to Her Majesty The Queen. All of these have been carefully considered and Mr. Griffiths has been informed on each occasion that it is not intended that the settlement which was the outcome of the legal proceedings should be reconsidered or that any further payment should be made to him.

Mr. Frank Allaun asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take steps to order a new investigation into the claim for compensation made to his Department by Mr. Thomas Griffiths in respect of his accidental exposure to nerve gas when at work in the chemical

defence establishment at Nancecuke in 1958, in view of the degree of disability that is now apparent, and the finding of a Department of Health and Social Services tribunal in 1979.

Mr. Pattie: No. Mr. Griffiths' claim was finalised in 1976 when his solicitors took out the payment which the Department had made into court in relation to his claim.

Chemical Defence Establishment, Nancecuke

Mr. Frank Allaun asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many claims for compensation in respect of damage to health caused by exposure to gases during work at the chemical defence establishment, Nancecuke, Cornwall, have been made to the Department since 1960; and what has been the result of each claim.

Mr. Pattie: My Department's existing records do not cover the whole of the period to which the hon. Gentleman refers, but we are aware of only two such claims against the Department. One claim was settled when a payment into court of £110 was taken out. The other claim, in respect of which legal proceedings were also started, was subsequently withdrawn; no payment was therefore made.

British Army Equipment Exhibition

Mr. Newens asked the Secretary of State for Defence if in the light of the consequences of supplying British arms to Argentina, he will cancel the annual British army equipment exhibition until restrictions can be agreed that will prevent the sale of arms to countries likely to use them for aggressive purposes.

Mr. Geoffrey Pattie: No. All arms sales are strictly controlled and considered individually on their merits. The use to which the arms are likely to be put is one of many factors already taken into account.

Mr. Newens asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he proposes to make any changes in the list of invitations to the British army equipment exhibition in the light of experience over the Falkland Islands; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to publish details of those countries invited to such exhibitions, in deference to the wishes of many of our overseas visitors. I can, however, confirm that Argentina will not be represented at this year's British army equipment exhibition.

Defence Sales Organisation

Mr. Newens asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will review the policy and practice of the Defence Sales Organisation with the aim of preventing arms sales to repressive regimes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: Arms sales policy towards individual countries is kept under continual review. All applications for the sale of arms are considered on their merits in the light of all relevant factors, including the nature of the regime.

"Uganda"

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence why the "Uganda", while it is part of the Falklands

expeditionary force does not have an all British crew; why the necessary conversions to the structure of the "Uganda" to make this possible were not carried out; and what will be the position of the Indian nationals on the "Uganda" if hostilities break out.

Mr. Blaker: The P & O Liner "Uganda" has been requisitioned solely as a hospital ship and has formally been declared as such. She thus enjoys protected status under the Geneva conventions and none of her crew may be captured. A large proportion of the regular crew of the "Uganda" is Asian and this will continue to be the case while she is operating as a hospital ship. All members of her crew are volunteers for this role. No conversion was necessary to the crew accommodation on board the ship.

Local Overseas Allowance

Mr. Stokes asked the Secretary of State for Defence what rate of local overseas allowance is payable to Service personnel in the Falkland Islands task force; on what basis this rate is determined; and what indications were given to the personnel concerned about the rate of allowance that was likely to be paid.

Mr. Blaker: Local overseas allowance is a tax-free allowance paid to members of the Armed Forces to meet the essential extra costs of serving overseas in normal conditions. It is not intended to compensate for arduous or dangerous conditions of service, which are factors taken into account in the assessment of forces pay. The rate of LOA payable on any RN ship is that appropriate to the last foreign port at which shore leave was taken. Under the usual rules those who sail from the United Kingdom—the majority of the present task force, including soldiers embarked on troop ships—would have received no LOA; the minority who sailed from the Mediterranean or who happened to be able to take leave at Ascension Island would have received LOA of between £1 and about £5 a day.

To avoid the obvious unfairness of such a situation it was decided to pay a standard rate of LOA of £1 a day to all Service personnel in the task force. This is a rough average of what various Service men in the force would otherwise have received. The objective was not to cut costs, and the overall cost of implementing the change is expected to be greater than the cost of applying the previous rules.

The task force was told of the standard rate on 16 April.

Equipment Supplies (Argentina)

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will set out details of military equipment and spares which were supplied to the Argentine in the six weeks prior to the invasion of the Falkland Islands;

(2) if he will set out details of all orders for military spares for the Argentine received in the six weeks prior to the invasion of the Falkland Islands, indicating which orders were sanctioned and at what level; and whether they received OI priority;

(3) what was the last date on which military equipment or spares were supplied to the Argentine; and what was then supplied.

Mr. Pattie: No major items of military equipment were supplied to Argentina in the six weeks prior to the invasion of the Falklands. Under the licensing arrangements in

operation prior to the invasion, spares ordered direct from industry would not be monitored by MOD. Routine releases of naval spares were made from RN store depots on 19 February and 22 March but a request on 30 March to expedite delivery of further naval spares already on order was declined at official level.

In view of the exceptional circumstances I informed the hon. Members for Caernarvon (Mr. Wigley) and for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick)—[Vol. 22, c. 55]—in general terms of the defence sales to Argentina since 1977. I do not however, propose, certainly during the present operation, to change the practice, upheld by successive Governments, of not disclosing details of individual defence sales.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether any firms are still producing military equipment and spares to orders from the Argentine; and if he will give details of any such equipment or spares and indicate what is happening to finished items.

Mr. Pattie: All defence sales business with Argentina has been suspended and all export licences for military equipment and spares have been revoked. It is a matter for individual firms to decide whether or not to continue work on goods originally destined for the Argentine in the hope of finding an alternative market.

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ENVIRONMENT

Rates

Mr. Silvester asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether hereditaments which straddle enterprise zone boundaries are eligible for the exemption from rates which applies to industrial and commercial property in the zones.

Mr. King: The Government's intention has been that the exemption from rates applicable to non-domestic hereditaments in enterprise zones should apply to those parts of straddling hereditaments lying inside the zones. The legislation governing the rates exemption—schedule 32 to the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980—does not, however, provide the correct statutory basis for such partial exemptions. I intend to bring forward amendments to the Local Government (Finance) No. 2 Bill to remedy this defect in respect of enterprise zones in England and Wales with effect from this financial year.

In the meantime, therefore, with the agreement of the Treasury, I and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales propose to make extra-statutory payments. We are asking rating authorities to make these payments as our agents to the ratepayers concerned.

At our request, local valuation officers will informally apportion rateable values to the parts of straddling hereditaments situated inside and outside enterprise zone boundaries when asked to do so by rating authorities. We are asking rating authorities to make to the ratepayers concerned a non-statutory payment corresponding to the

Council House Building (Cost)

28. **Mr. Ioan Evans** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the latest average cost of building a council house.

Sir George Young: The latest average cost of building a council house in England is £16,800.

This figure is for a two-storey, five bed-space council house and excludes the cost of land and site works, ancillary buildings and professional fees.
Greenwich (Grant Related Expenditure Allocation)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the London borough of Greenwich about its grant related expenditure allocation figures for 1982-83; and whether he proposes to take steps to implement the representations.

Mr. King: My noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State met a deputation from the London borough of Greenwich, led by the leader, Councillor Capelin, on 2 March 1982. There has subsequently been a meeting between officials to discuss the figures in more detail.

Grant-related expenditure assessments have by law to be based on a general formula, and cannot be negotiated individually; any general changes that might be made in relation to 1982-83 at supplementary report stage would have to be discussed with local authority associations.

Argentina (Sporting Relations)

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what advice has been sought from the various sports governing bodies in the United Kingdom on sporting relations with Argentina following the Argentine invasion and continuing occupation of the Falkland Islands;

(2) whether, in view of the Argentine invasion and continuing occupation of the Falkland Islands, in violation of United Nations resolution 502, he will consider the use of sporting sanctions in addition to the other measures already taken by the Government, and, accordingly, will seek early meetings with the appropriate sports governing bodies in the United Kingdom;

(3) what advice he has to offer the various sports governing bodies in the United Kingdom on sporting relations with Argentina following the Argentine invasion and continuing occupation of the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Macfarlane: There are several international sporting events and competitions scheduled to take place over the next few months in which British and Argentine teams will participate with other countries.

At the moment, the Government see no objection to British teams participating in such events. I urge British sports governing bodies not to compete bilaterally against Argentine teams, whether here or in Argentina, and to

refrain from arranging further fixtures. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is advising United Kingdom nationals—sporting or otherwise—against visiting Argentina at this time.

Our position is kept under constant review in the light of changing circumstances. I can say no more at this stage, particularly on the possibility of seeking a wider sporting boycott of Argentina. I have written to the Sports Council chairman explaining the Government's position at this stage and shall be advising the governing bodies accordingly.

Local Government Expenditure

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he expects to require further reductions in local government expenditure during the next two years.

Mr. King: The Government's expenditure plans in Cmd. 8494—table 4.3—imply cash increases in local authority current and capital expenditure in England of about 3 per cent. and 28 per cent. respectively for 1982-83 compared with the estimated outturn for 1981-82. The Budget Statement subsequently proposed two further changes—an increase in the provision for house improvement and an adjustment to current expenditure to allow for the reduction in the national insurance surcharge. Final decisions have yet to be taken for 1983-84.

Urban Programme

Mr. John H. Osborn asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number and total value of the projects approved under the traditional urban programme circular 22.

Mr. King: 890 projects worth £24.6 million have been approved. A list giving details of all the approved projects by local authority has been placed in the Library.

Rent Rebates

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many working families with children who are in receipt of rent rebates also pay tax;

(2) what are the most recent figures for the total number of people receiving rent rebates; and how many of these are families with dependent children;

(3) if he will publish in the *Official Report* more recent figures on means-tested benefits than those for 1979 given in the reply to the hon. Member for Norfolk, North (Mr. Howell) on 1 December 1980, *Official Report*, c. 87-88.

Sir George Young: The following estimates for 1980, which are based on the combined results of the family expenditure survey for 1979 and 1980, are subject to considerable sampling error.

Mr. Speaker: I have received notice of two applications under Standing Order No. 9. I shall call them in the order in which they were received.

Organisation of American States

4.2 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (West Lothian): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 9, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, "the decision of the Organisation of American States at their meeting yesterday to invoke the inter-American treaty of mutual assistance against the wishes of the Government of the United States of America."

This shows that Latin American diplomatic support for Argentina, whether we like it or not, is hardening. It is definite that the Argentine Foreign Ministry had not expected such unanimous support. In fact, it got it by 18 votes to nil. The United States tried to prevent this and abstained. Colombia was the only Spanish-speaking country to abstain. That was on the ground that the matter was sub judice under the United Nations and not because of Colombian support for the British case.

The matter is urgent because Brazil is agreeing to supply the Argentine navy with material support. It is urgent because democratic Peru is leading the campaign for counter sanctions against Europe. It is urgent because, despite formal Peruvian denials—Peru does not want to see reciprocal sanctions applied against it from the EEC—a squadron or more of Peruvian MiG 15 fighters has been sent to Argentina. This is a matter for the Foreign Secretary, and I should like his attention for a moment.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member is addressing me at the moment. He must not make the speech that he would make if I were to grant his application. All that he needs to do is to explain the urgency, the necessity and the directness of the issue.

Mr. Dalyell: The urgency relates to the matter of the task force having air cover, and whether it is true, as has been reported, that these formidable fighting machines, the MiG 15s, have already been sent from a member of the Organisation of American States—the democratic republic of Peru—to the Argentine. That has urgent military and naval consequences for the air cover protection of the task force.

The matter is urgent because democratic Venezuela has announced that it is delaying the purchase of spare parts from Britain and is using other economic sanctions against Britain. It is important because no country of the Organisation of American States is supporting Britain other than, very sotto voce, the English-speaking Caribbean countries. Even Chile is keeping silent, and is now tilting towards the Argentine.

Yesterday the Organisation of American States talked of exercising its right of legitimate defence and of threatening the security of the continent. It talked of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Argentine. In the debate on Saturday 3 April, as reported in column 638 of *Hansard*, we asked the right hon. Lady the Prime Minister who were our friends in South America. We were told in that emergency debate that we had many friends. Alas, that is not true.

I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, as a genuine matter of urgency and not as any type of kite-flying that the House ought, at the very least, to hear a statement from the Secretary of State for Defence on military and naval consequences of what the Organisation of American States is up to, or at best some opportunity to debate the matter before the weekend, because after the weekend, in view of the OAS's attitude, it could be, alas, too late.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman gave me notice before 12 o'clock today that he would seek leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing,

"the decision of the Organisation of American States at their meeting yesterday to invoke the inter-American treaty of mutual assistance against the wishes of the Government of the United States of America."

I have listened carefully to the exchanges in the House this afternoon. I want to make it clear that I have no intention of acceding to the request of the hon. Gentleman for an emergency debate at the present time after what I have heard this afternoon about negotiations. Therefore, I do not submit the hon. Gentleman's application to the House.

In view of what I have said, does the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Ogden) wish to press his application?

Mr. Eric Ogden (Liverpool, West Derby): No, Mr. Speaker. I want only to—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Does the hon. Gentleman wish to make his application?

Mr. Ogden: No, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Andrew Bennett.

Mr. Ogden: On a point of Order, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw my application, of course, but I ought perhaps to explain that I had written at the top of my application "Subject to the statement". I tried to put to the Foreign Secretary the simple question that it is not a matter of freedom of movement from the islands since most of the people coming out are being deported.

Mr. Speaker: I ought to explain that if any hon. Member gives me notice of a Standing Order No. 9 application I take that as notice and then I am not likely to call him to ask a question. Hon. Members choose to make applications.