

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11 AM date: 20.5.82

The Prime Minister is working at No 10 this morning and will be in the House this afternoon.

At 10 am the Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the Group of Ministers concerned with the Falklands (Home Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Chancellor of the Duchy, Attorney General and the CDS).

CABINET

At 11.00 am she chaired a meeting of the Cabinet (Foreign Affairs, Community Affairs, Parliamentary Affairs, Index-linked pensions.

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

After Business Questions, the Prime Minister will open the Debate on the Falklands - a motion for the adjournment - with the Foreign Secretary winding up.

PUBLICATIONS

At 3.30 pm "Statement on the Recommendations of the Security Commission". Copies will be available in the Lobby.

At 3.30 pm Seventh Annual Report of the Lay Observer 1981.

PRESS NOTICE

At 11.00 am, announcement of a Knighthood for the Hon Mr Justice Hobhouse on his appointment as a Justice of the High Court of Justice.

IN THE HOUSE

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 128 Written 3.30 pm: Mr Tony Durant to ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will now state the Government's policy on examinations at 17 plus years. (Answer will announce publication of a statement on the establishment of new prevocational qualifications in England and Wales to improve job prospects and performance in employment.)

4 pm Pursuant to Oral Question 27 April by Jack Shaw to Secretary of State for Defence on the future of constitution of Royal Ordnance factories.

FALKLANDS

We brought the Lobby up-to-date. When our Ambassador saw the UNSG late Tuesday evening the UNSG outlined to him the contents of a document he had just received in Spanish from Ros containing Argentine "ideas and views". The UNSG said that Ros had stressed these were not Argentina's final ideas.

Our Ambassador did not come away from that meeting with a document. He took away an oral account he had received from the UNSG. That account was sent to London overnight by telegram and reflected the preliminary views mentioned by the Prime Minister on the Jimmy Young Show. It was our expectation, and we thought that of the UNSG, that a further paper containing Argentine final ideas would be forthcoming.

On Wednesday morning (New York time) our Ambassador received from the UNSG an English translation of the Argentine document which Ros had given

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the UNSG on Tuesday evening. It transpired that this was the Argentine definitive response. The document was transmitted to London where it was received and considered by the Prime Minister last night. It probably arrived when she was having dinner with Mr Muldoon. She would have looked at it last night and it will be considered further this morning.

Last night the UNSG spoke to President Galtieri and later (10.35 pm London time) to the Prime Minister. There was an informal meeting of the Security Council. See UKMIS NY Tel No 788 for Tony Parsons' statement and UKMIS Tel No 792 for UNSG's press statement.

This morning we received the UNSG's ideas which he referred to in his press statement. These will be studied by the group of Ministers who will report to Cabinet. The Prime Minister is bringing the House up-to-date this afternoon. We were not prepared to comment on these proposals except to say that the UNSG had identified areas of agreement and disagreement. He had not set any deadline but recognised that things were moving rapidly.

Ministers would decide whether a paper would be available. It would not be a White Paper - there was no time for one. We could not say whether Ministers would decide to make a paper available.

There had been problems over an interim regime. Our insistence was that sovereignty must not be prejudged. One way of ensuring this was to tie up the interim arrangements and administration to prevent any possibility of Argentina flooding the Islands with their voters.

The negotiating door was not closed and had not closed before the UNSG's proposals were received. Even without proposals from the UNSG, Ministers would still have been considering where the negotiations had reached. We could not say what view Cabinet would take of the UNSG's proposals.

When he spoke to the Prime Minister the UNSG did not advise her that he was sending proposals. They arrived overnight and would have been seen by the Prime Minister this morning. The telephone call, which was the only one, lasted around 5-10 minutes.

In answer to a question about New Zealand material support, we pointed out the Times report that Mr Muldoon had said he would back Britain to the hilt.

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are having to admit marginal psycho-geriatric cases owing to the pressure on hospital accommodation for those elderly persons.

Mr. John MacKay: My Department has no such evidence, nor have representations been made to my right hon. Friend about individual cases.

Western Isles (Development Programme)

Mr. Dalzell asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans are contained in the draft integrated development programme for the Western Isles to safeguard sites of special scientific interest and areas meeting the requirements of Article 4 of EEC. directive 79/409/EEC

Mr. John MacKay: The provisions relating to the protection of the environment are contained in chapter 10 and annex VII of the integrated development programme, copies of which were lodged in the Library on 30 March.

Mr. Dalzell asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* The Nature Conservancy Council's written comments to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland on the proposed integrated development programme for the Western Isles.

Mr. John MacKay: Representatives of the council attended all meetings of the steering committee of officials which drafted the programme and I understand that its proposals on protection of the environment reflect the Nature Conservancy Council's views. My Department has received no subsequent comments on the programme from the council.

Electricity Demand

Mr. Hooley asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his most recent estimate of simultaneous maximum demand for electricity in Scotland in 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85.

Mr. Alexander Fletcher: The forecasting of electricity demand is the responsibility in the first instance of the Scottish electricity boards. I am asking the chairmen to write to the hon. Member.

Weather Damage (Costs)

Mr. Eadie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has received the estimated repair bills from district councils as a consequence of the winter's severe weather which caused broken pipes, flooding and other damage to council homes; and if he will list individually such estimated cost of the councils.

Mr. Allan Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 14 May, c. 333]: My right hon. Friend has not yet received any formal claims from district councils in response to Scottish Office finance circular No. 4/1982, issued on 22 February, which describes the Government's scheme of financial assistance to local authorities which incurred exceptional expenditure as a result of the severe winter weather.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Crown Agents

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the 1981 annual report and accounts of the Crown Agents for Oversea Governments and Administrations are to be published.

Mr. Neil Marten: The 1981 report and accounts are being published today and copies have been laid before the House. I am arranging for copies to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Falkland Islands

Mr. Arthur Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, prior to the proposed inquiry into the handling by Her Majesty's Government of the Falklands issue, he will publish a factual account of the length of time, dates and all information regarding the steps taken and attempts made to resolve the Falkland Islands problems prior to the unprovoked aggression by Argentina.

Mr. Pym: Successive Governments held a series of talks with successive Argentine Governments between 1965 and 1982 in an effort to resolve the Falklands Islands dispute.

The main parliamentary announcements regarding these talks were as follows:

		<i>Official Report</i>
8 August 1966	Written Answer	Vol. 733 c. 239W
26 March 1968	Debate	Vol. 761 c. 1446 ff and c. 1865 ff
1 April 1968	Statement	Vol. 762 c. 3 ff
11 December 1968	Statement	Vol. 775 c. 424 ff and c. 608 ff
20 November 1969	Statement	Vol. 791 c. 1522 ff
24 November 1969	Statement	Vol. 792 c. 36 ff
23 July 1970	Written Answer	Vol. 806 c. 309W
21 June 1971	Written Answer	Vol. 819 c. 178W
6 July 1971	Written Answer	Vol. 820 c. 346W
23 September 1971	Written Answer	Vol. 823 c. 13-17W
11 December 1972	Oral Answer	Vol. 848 c. 18 ff
31 July 1974	Written Answer	Vol. 878 c. 206W
14 January 1976	Statement	Vol. 903 c. 391 ff
5 February 1976	Oral Answer	Vol. 904 c. 1414 ff
21 January 1977	Debate	Vol. 924 c. 923 ff
2 February 1977	Statement	Vol. 925 c. 550 ff
13 July 1977	Oral Answer	Vol. 935 c. 405 ff
7 December 1977	Written Answer	Vol. 940 c. 769
16 December 1977	Debate	Vol. 941 c. 1226 ff
22 February 1978	Written Answer	Vol. 944 c. 712W
29 January 1979	Written Answer	Vol. 961 c. 348W
14 May 1980	Statement	Vol. 984 c. 1476 ff
2 December 1980	Statement	Vol. 995 c. 195 ff
2 February 1981	Written Answer	Vol. 998 c. 21 W
22 July 1981	Written Answer	Vol. 9 c. 158W
2 March 1982	Written Answer	Vol. 19 c. 93W
3 March 1982	Statement	Vol. 19 c. 263 ff

Hopetoun House Banquet

Mr. Dalzell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the cost to public funds of the banquet at Hopetoun House, South Queensferry, West Lothian, on Saturday 15 May, attended by the Prime Minister.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 19 May 1982

TRADE

Consumer Credit Licence Applications

Mr. Cryer asked the Minister for Trade how long consumer credit licence class C and D applications are taking; what provisions exist to ensure prompt processing applications; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Vaughan: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Argentina

Sir David Price asked the Minister for Trade what is his latest estimate of the effect of the economic sanctions placed upon the Argentine by the United Kingdom's partners in the European Economic Community, by the Commonwealth and by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Rees [*pursuant to his reply, 17 May 1982, c. 6.*]: It is not possible to make an accurate assessment of the effect of these measures on the Argentine economy. About 28 per cent. of the Argentine's exports are affected by import bans and an even higher percentage of its imports by the suspension of export credit. These measures have already had an immediate impact on the Argentine economy and international confidence in it.

Multi-Fibre Arrangement

Mr. Proctor asked the Minister for Trade whether he has any evidence to show that restrictions imposed by the multi-fibre arrangement increase the cost of clothes available in British shops; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Rees [*pursuant to his reply, 17 May 1982, c. 6.*]: I am aware of a report by the Consumers' Association in August 1979 which stated that prices of clothing had risen as a result of the multi-fibre arrangement. This report was subsequently challenged by the textile industry on the ground that it had not succeeded in isolating the effect of quotas on prices from other factors.

PRIME MINISTER

Public Service (Security)

Mr. Peyton asked the Prime Minister whether she can yet make a statement about the recent report by the Security Commission into security procedures and practices in the public service; and whether the Commission's report will be published.

The Prime Minister: In my statement to the House on 26 March 1981 I announced that, after consultation with the right hon. Gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition,

I had asked the Security Commission to conduct a review of security procedures and practices in the public service and to consider what changes, if any, were required.

The commission has completed its task and submitted its report. I am most grateful to Lord Diplock and his colleagues, Lord Bridge of Harwich and Lord Allen of Abbeydale, for their thorough and painstaking work. After careful consideration, I have concluded, albeit with some regret, that it would not be in the national interest to publish this report since substantial portions of it concern the most sensitive aspects of security procedures. By the same token, an expurgated version of the report would give a misleading impression of it. I therefore propose to publish tomorrow, as a Command Paper, as full a statement as possible, consistent with national security, about the commission's findings. I am authorised to say that Lord Diplock and his colleagues are content with this course, and they believe it to be the right course to follow in the circumstances.

This is the first comprehensive review of security procedures that has taken place since the report of the committee on security procedures in the public service, known as the Radcliffe Report, was published in April 1962. Like Radcliffe, the commission has taken "security" in its terms of reference to mean the safeguarding of such information in the possession of the Government as would by its unauthorised disclosure cause injury to the interests of the country. This report does not cover the protection of Government buildings or their contents or vital installations against sabotage or terrorist attack, although it does cover physical precautions for denying access to classified information by unauthorised persons.

The report is generally reassuring. Subject to the commission's views about the need for an urgent evaluation of the risks involved in electronic information processing and the means of countering them, Lord Diplock and his colleagues conclude that the security procedures, as they have been applied since Radcliffe and considerably modified and updated since, have worked well and can be relied upon to prevent infiltration of any of those bodies dealing with particularly sensitive security issues of that which took place in the 1930s and 1940s.

Nevertheless they make a number of recommendations which the Government accept—subject in a few instances to further necessary inquiries—and will implement as soon as possible.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Earnings

Sir Bernard Braine asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate for the latest available date a top salary in free enterprise companies and the ratio between such remuneration and average earnings; and if he will compare figures with those given by the right hon. Member for Ashton under Lyne (Mr. Sheldon) when Financial Secretary to the Treasury on 11 May 1976, *Official Report*, c. 367-369.

Mr. Ridley: I regret that information is not available on which to base a reliable estimate, for a recent period, of the gross salary that is comparable with the figure of £30,000 quoted in 1976.