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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Personal Minute

No. 9/86

THE LORD PRESIDENT

There are well established arrangements whereby Departments clear with other interested Departments the timing of public announcements whether they are made by Parliamentary statement, Parliamentary Question, speech or press notice. An important element in these arrangements is the requirement to check the timing and presentation of an announcement with my Chief Press Secretary so as to ensure that it does not conflict with other announcements. You and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster should also always be informed, as should the Lord Privy Seal and the Chief Whip where Parliamentary aspects are involved.

It is extremely important that these arrangements are followed scrupulously and it is the responsibility of Ministers in charge of Departments to ensure that they are. Cabinet Ministers should also be ready to warn Cabinet at our regular meetings of imminent announcements of a special sensitivity.

I am sending a copy of this minute to members of the Cabinet, the Chief Whip and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Margaret Thatcher

23 May 1986

086

PRIME MINISTER

Attached is a minute, cleared with Sir Robert Armstrong, for you to send to members of the Cabinet about interdepartmental clearance of announcements. I put it in your Cabinet folder in case you wish to refer to it at Cabinet tomorrow. You may choose not to do so. It would be clear to all that you are implicitly criticising Mr Fowler's handling of the supplementary benefit and mortgage interest announcement. There is every reason for criticism here. But you may think it best simply to despatch the minute which speaks for itself.

Despite Lord Young's suggestion in his minute of 19 May (Flag A) that he should be consulted in advance of all Government announcements bearing on employment, I have not referred to consultations with him specifically in the draft below. Of course, he must be consulted on such announcements (just as the Treasury need to be consulted on announcements affecting expenditure, the FCO on those affecting foreign relations, etc). But to ask for consultation with Lord Young on employments issues and not to the other Ministers in respect of their interests would unbalance the minute.

Lord Young would be content with this procedure

I have therefore suggested to Lord Young's Private Secretary that after you have minuted, he should write to Cabinet colleagues underlining the point about the need for consulting his Department on all announcements bearing on employment, whether the news is good or bad.

He also reports that he will be minuting you about bringing together all responsibility for payments, help and fraud work for unemployed people into his Department. No action at this stage.

Minute below for signature.

N.L.W.

N L Wicks

21 May 1986

MJ2BYD

Ref. A086/1510

MR WICKS

Thank you for your minute of 20 May which I have shown to Sir Robert Armstrong. He would be well content with the draft you propose to submit to the Prime Minister.

MS

M C STARK

21 May 1986

GOVT. MACH: Presentation: NOV 83



874
46

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

Mr. Stark
Cabinet Office

I told you on the telephone that the Prime Minister wished, in the light of the DHSS' failure to consult other Departments and No.10 about the timing of the announcement on supplementary benefits and mortgage interest, to remind Departments of the need to consult all concerned about the timing of announcements. She wishes to do this by sending a minute to Cabinet Ministers to which she may wish to give advance notice at Thursday's Cabinet. I now attach a draft of a minute and should be grateful for any comments which you may have on it before I submit it to the Prime Minister.

(N. L. WICKS)
20 May 1986

SRWADS

DG 2 BBY



DRAFT MINUTE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

The Lord President

There are well established arrangements whereby Departments clear with other interested Departments the timing of public announcements whether they are made by Parliamentary statement, inspired Parliamentary Question, speech or press notice. An important element in these arrangements is the requirement to check the timing and presentation of ^{an} announcements with my Chief Press Secretary so as to ensure that it does not conflict with other announcements. The Lord President, as Minister responsible for the overall presentation of Government policy, must also be informed.

(X)

It is extremely important that these arrangements are followed scrupulously and it is the responsibility of Ministers in charge of Departments to ensure that they are. Cabinet Ministers should also be ready to warn Cabinet at our regular meetings of imminent announcements of a special sensitivity.

I am sending a copy of this minute to members of the Cabinet, the Chief Whip and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

The Lord President
The Lord President of the Council
as should

(X)

You and the C DC should also
always be engaged as should ^{the} C P S +
Chry Whip where Parliamentary aspects
are involved. ☉

MR WICKS

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Prime Minister's Engagements

WEDNESDAY 21 MAY

0900	Sir Keith Joseph
0920	Mr. Baker
0940	Mr. Ridley
1000	Mr. Moore
[Later	Mr. Freeman
	Mr. Lamont]
1110- 1130	Meet children from Variety Club of GB watching rehearsal. Hand over keys for sunshine coach.
	Keep free
	Lunch in flat
pm	Keep free
	Keep free for CBI speech: Working supper in flat
2200	2 Line: Vote

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