



c: Mr Wicks

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Press Secretary

LORD PRESIDENT

MIO - TIGHTENING UP PRESENTATION

At MIO last evening, I conveyed to Heads of Information the points made by the Prime Minister in Cabinet last Thursday about the presentation of policy.

I also alerted them to the imminent circulation of a letter from the Prime Minister to Ministers in charge of Departments on the presentational requirements for the Recess.

There was the usual discussion about the need for some central monitoring of radio and television programmes. Neville Taylor (COI) and I emphasised that the conclusion of all previous discussions had been that there was no substitute for Departmental monitoring. A more positive approach was required from Information Divisions.

I then went on to report that I had discussed with you several problems about the operation of MIO and its machinery:

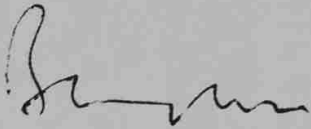
- the poor attendance record of some Heads of Information
- the consistent failure of Departments to meet deadlines. The monthly update of the six-monthly diary was a painful process. A recent effort to take stock at the beginning of July of business expected to be transacted before the Recess had produced only one written return (from Welsh Office) by the deadline; No 10 Press Office, which was more extended than any other press office, had to ring round in order to complete the exercise.

I concluded by saying that you were concerned about these problems. You wished it to be known that you regard MIO as an important part of the Government machine which Heads of Information should take seriously. Requests for information by the Chief Press Secretary were not made lightly and flowed from his need to keep the Prime Minister and yourself informed.

You hoped Heads of Information would in future regard such requests for information as having your endorsement and would observe the deadlines set.

This summary will be printed in the minutes of the meeting.

My intervention evoked an embarrassed and in some cases sulky response. I will keep you posted on the expected improvement.



BERNARD INGHAM
8 July 1986