

SUBJECT

MASTER

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Home Affairs BK

cc HO (M/S)

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 November 1981

Dear Sarah

Mr. Raison called on the Prime Minister yesterday evening at 1800 hours to discuss race relations, following his visit to the United States, and in particular to discuss the Report attached to the Home Secretary's minute to the Prime Minister of 26 October.

Mr. Raison first emphasised the importance of words and gestures in the field of race relations. The minority communities needed to feel that the Government was on their side, and Ministers should do all they could to create a sympathetic climate towards them. After a short discussion, Mr. Raison agreed that there were a number of useful gestures the Government could make:

- a) He would put to the Prime Minister a list of candidates from the ethnic communities for honours. In preparing this, he would consult the other Ministers most concerned, and in particular Sir Keith Joseph and Mr. Waldegrave, given that there might be suitable candidates in the academic field. It would be too late to include any of these names in the New Year Honours List, but they could be considered for next year's Birthday Honours and subsequent lists.
- b) He would in due course produce a draft passage for inclusion in one of the Prime Minister's speeches, emphasising the Government's commitment to a multi-racial society, and generally being supportive of the minorities. A list of the Prime Minister's speaking engagements for 1982 is attached. I should be grateful if you could treat this as particularly confidential.
- c) As indicated in the Report attached to the Home Secretary's minute to the Prime Minister, Mr. Raison would consider ways in which more could be done to encourage private enterprise by ethnic minorities, particularly West Indians. It might help here to encourage departmental Ministers to make more appointments from the minorities to public boards, and Mr. Raison might consider suggesting names for inclusion in the list of the "great and the good".

/s/ d) Mr. Raison

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d) Mr. Raison agreed to suggest a list of names from the ethnic minorities for inclusion in dinners and receptions held here by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Raison then went on to say that he hoped the Government could be as forthcoming as possible in replying to the Report of the Select Committee on Home Affairs on Racial Disadvantage. There were three issues on which he hoped that Ministers could reach early agreement, and on which the Government's response to the Select Committee might be positive:

i) Under Section 11 of the Local Government Act of 1966, grants could be made to local authorities with a high population of Commonwealth immigrants to increase their employment of ethnic staff. The administrative guidelines under which these grants were made needed to be improved.

ii) Earlier this year, H Committee had turned down an experimental project for monitoring the ethnic background of those employed in the Civil Service. Mr. Raison hoped that this decision could be reconsidered.

iii) Under the Race Relations Act of 1976, the Commission for Racial Equality had presented a Code of Practice to the Secretary of State for Employment. Mr. Tebbit would obviously want to consider this carefully. But it would help if the Code could be approved quickly. This would be important in responding to Lord Scarman's recommendations on race relations, and would demonstrate the Government's commitment to the anti-discrimination provisions of the Race Relations Act.

Mr. Raison concluded that early action on these three subjects would be seen as symbols of the Government's good intentions. He hoped that the ethnic communities would respond in kind, for he could not deny that there was indeed a serious crime problem among the black minorities.

I am copying this letter to Colin Walters in your Secretary of State's office.

yours
Willie Rickett

Miss Sarah Kippax,
Home Office

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PRIME MINISTER'S SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS FOR 1982

JANUARY

Monday 11 Address Conservative Group for Europe
Wednesday 13 Speak to the National Federation of Self-Employed

FEBRUARY

Tuesday 23 Address Engineering Employers Federation

MARCH

Monday 8 Finchley AGM
Friday 12 Launch a ship in Sunderland
Saturday 13 Local Government Conference
Saturday 27 Central Council, Harrogate

APRIL

Wednesday 7 Morning: speak to the FCS in Loughborough
Thursday 22 Civic Trust Dinner
Friday 30 Speak to Bedford Constituency

MAY

Friday 14 Conservative Scottish Conference in Perth
Saturday 15 and) Franco/British Council in Edinburgh
Sunday 16) (I am assuming that a speech is required)
Wednesday 26 Women's Conference

JUNE

Saturday 12 Welsh Conference

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 2 or) Address large fête in North East Scotland
Thursday 9)

OCTOBER

Friday 8 Party Conference

NOVEMBER

Monday 15 or) Lord Mayor's Banquet
Monday 22)

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NOVEMBER (continued)

Wednesday 17

Address North Atlantic Assembly, London

Friday 26

St. Andrew's Night Dinner in Glasgow

DECEMBER

Saturday 4

CTU Conference

Wednesday 8

Open Conference on Information Technology,
Barbican Centre