

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11 AM date: 21.4.82

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working in No 10 all day.

PRESIDENT AHIDJO

The President of the United Republic of Cameroon will be met by the Prime Minister when he arrives at 11.45 am in the FCO Quadrangle. The President will inspect a Guard of Honour formed by the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards. The President and the Prime Minister will then walk through to No 10 for talks and lunch.

IN THE HOUSE

There will be a Statement from Mr Pym at 3.30 pm.

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 98 Written 3.30 pm: Mr Michael Mates to ask the Home Secretary whether Lord Diplock has submitted his second report on the interception of communications and if he will make a statement. (Answer will say the report has been received. It shows that present rules on tapping are being scrupulously observed. The present arrangements are working extremely well. Report will not be published.)

No 96 Written 3.30 pm: Sir Anthony Royle to ask MAFF whether he has any change to propose in the management of the Royal Botanic Gardens. (Answer will indicate that a proposal for changing the present direct management by MAFF into a system allowing for a Board of Trustees and a Director responsible is to be discussed with interested bodies.)

No 42 Written 4.30 pm: Mr Christopher Price to ask S/S Trade if he will seek the assistance of the Chairman of Lloyds and the Chairman of the British Insurance Association to prevent, by methods available to them, the continued cover on the British market of Aerolineas Argentinas by means not at present legal and if he will make a statement. (Answer will indicate that the Chairman of the Lloyds brokers concerned has given an assurance that his firm will not be placing the renewal business.)

No 77 Written 3.30 pm: Mr John Watson to ask S/S Industry whether any new institutions are to be invited to participate in the loan guarantee scheme. (Answer will indicate that three banks are to join.)

No 6 Oral: Mr Dennis Canavan to ask S/S Environment what matters he intends discussing at his next meeting with the football authorities about arrangements for the World Cup. (Although this answer will concentrate on hooliganism, Mr Macfarlane will say that the Argentinian World Cup question is still under review.)

PYM

Mr Pym was unlikely to have a great deal new to say in his Statement. He could obviously report on his meeting with EEC Foreign Ministers.

MEETING OF MINISTERS

The small steering group of Ministers dealing with the Falklands met again this morning. The group met just after 9.30 am and finished just after 11 am. Usual membership: Prime Minister, Defence Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary and Mr Parkinson. The Paymaster General as a Cabinet Minister had been a regular attendee at the group's meetings from the start.

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Cabinet yesterday had been a stocktaking meeting and obviously the smaller group developed policy in a detailed way within the overall context of Cabinet wishes.

The smaller group may well now have finished putting together the broad outline of the UK response. It was quite possible that some proposals might be transmitted to the US in advance of Mr Pym's visit.

PYM VISIT: US

Allowing 24 hours before the Foreign Secretary flew out enabled the British response to be put together in a considered manner. This was really not something that could be done overnight. Meanwhile it could not be gainsayed that the fleet would be continuing south during this time thus increasing the pressure for a diplomatic solution.

There were no plans at present for Mr Pym to see the President. That would be a matter for the President. There were no plans for meetings with Costa Mendez or any other Argentine ministers.

The trip was an open-ended one with Mr Pym taking as long as he needed for talks.

The idea for the visit had been arrived at mutually with both UK and US seeing advantages in Mr Pym going to Washington.

FALKLAND ISLAND OPINION

The opinion of Islanders was of great importance. The sounding out of opinion needed to be seen in the context of a three phase timescale:

- Phase 1: the Argentine forces leave;
- Phase 2: the islanders, under British administration, have a time for reflection on changed circumstances;
- Phase 3: a sounding out of opinion as part of reaching a long term settlement.

PB