

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11 AM date: 24.5.82

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working in No 10 all day.

OSDA

At 10.30 am she chaired a meeting of the Group of Ministers concerned with the Falklands (Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Defence, Chancellor of the Duchy, Attorney General, CDS. Foreign Secretary in Brussels for EC FAC).

OMANI MINISTER OF EDUCATION

At 5.45 pm the Prime Minister is due to welcome His Excellency Yahya Mafooth Al-Manthari, Minister of Education in Oman. This is a British Council sponsored visit by the Minister, who is here until 28 May. This is a courtesy call on the Prime Minister - she met him during her visit to Oman.

AUDIENCE

At about 6.30 pm the Prime Minister hopes to have an Audience of The Queen. In response to a question, we said that this was an Audience of no special significance. It had been arranged for that day as a matter of convenience.

IN THE HOUSE

STATEMENT

Mr Nott will make a statement to the House at 3.30 pm on the latest Falklands situation.

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 37 Written 4.00 pm: Mr K Harvey Proctor to ask the Prime Minister whether she will ensure that no further talks take place with the Government of the Republic of Ireland concerning any matter and that in particular there will be no discussions of an all-Ireland nature while the Irish Government maintains its policy of neutrality during the present conflict with Argentina. (In a longish answer the Prime Minister will express disappointment at the Irish attitude but indicate that discussions will not be discontinued.)

No 47 Written 4.00 pm: Mr Christopher Murphy to ask the Prime Minister whether she has plans to have consultations with heads of other EC Governments regarding the abandonment of the Luxembourg compromise and its consequences for the UK. (Answer will point towards Mr Pym's efforts in Brussels over the next few days and the opportunity for debate on Wednesday - answer talks about "serious implications").

No 53 Written 4.30 pm: Mr Kevin McNamara to ask the Secretary of State for Defence about the sinking of the Irish trawler Sharelga by an HM submarine. (Answer will repeat the acceptance of liability and indicate that any reasonable claim will be met. Also repeat that submarine's CO was "unaware".)

Nos 120, 121 and 122: Mr Albert McQuarrie to ask the Foreign Secretary a series of questions about discussions with the Spanish Government on the re-opening of the frontier between Spain and Gibraltar

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d meeting with Ministers in this connection.

We confirmed that the Cabinet would meet the following day.

The meeting of Ministers concerned with the Falklands would, we agreed, be primarily a military stocktaking exercise. There was no great development on the diplomatic front to report. The UN had met for several days without result. The problem for them was that they have had for 7 weeks a Security Council Resolution which has been defied and the defiance compounded.

On losses we drew attention to the MoD statement.

On the possibility of a resumption of talks, we said this was not contemplated and we would not allow talks to get in the way of the action now taking place - action which the Government was forced to take against its hopes and wishes. Now that our Forces were firmly established on the Islands, they would get on with the job. We agreed that "days not weeks" was certainly the Government's hope and we reminded the Lobby of what the Chief of Defence Staff and Mr Parkinson had said about speed of operations. We stressed, however, that it was for the Commander of the Forces to decide how best to proceed. There was a hope and determination for speed consistent with a minimum loss of life.

We agreed that Mr Pym had floated the idea of some sort of arrangement guaranteeing the Islands in the longer term but we emphasised the need to take things in stages and pointed towards Mr Pym's reference to a period of 6-12 months for life to settle down again in the Islands.

We did not think Mr Haig would come back into the picture at present. On the question of surrender, we agreed it was the Government's aim to achieve an immediate and verifiable withdrawal of Argentine forces.

On the question of the return of film from the Islands, as opposed to still pictures, we indicated the technical difficulties but said that experiments continued.

We could not confirm that the survivors from HMS Sheffield would be flown back that day - we thought they would not return for a few days, with Thursday as a possible date.

THE POPE

We indicated that the Prime Minister's reply to the Pope would be released later that day, but it had to be delivered to the Vatican first. We thought the reply would rehearse the history of the present problem and indicate that it was open to the Argentines to end the conflict immediately. We wanted peace with freedom, not peace at the expense of freedom. Asked whether the offer of withdrawing Government involvement in the Pope's programme was still open, we said the offer had been made but we had not heard from the Vatican on it. We agreed that a meeting between the Prime Minister and the Pope was in the original programme, but in the margins at a reception.

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS

Having pointed towards the Prime Minister's written answer to come later in the day, we acknowledged that relations were somewhat strained. but we were allies and both members of EC and clearly it was important to continue dialogue. No firm plans had been made for a further summit which was not in any case due before about July.

HC

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 21 May 1982

PRIME MINISTER

Computers

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Prime Minister, pursuant to her answer to the hon. Member for Norfolk, North on 16 March, *Official Report*, c.71, and 19 April, c. 19, regarding computers currently in use in Government Departments, if she will institute an investigation into (a) the overall cost of computerisation, (b) the extent to which the introduction of computerisation has failed to achieve the manpower savings envisaged and (c) the reasons why there has been a substantial increase in staff despite the extent of computer installation.

The Prime Minister: Staff numbers in Government Departments have been reduced by 9 per cent. since this Government took office. I am considering what information should be provided on the costs and savings of computerisation.

Cabinet Office

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Prime Minister how many staff work in the information technology unit in the Cabinet Office.

The Prime Minister: There are four members of the unit, with three supporting staff.

Security and Intelligence Service

Miss Richardson asked the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her answer of 4 May, *Official Report*, c. 20, she will make a statement about her practice, and the practice of her predecessors, in regard to questions on the security and intelligence service.

The Prime Minister: It is my practice, as it has been the practice of my predecessors, not to answer questions on security and intelligence matters.

French Prime Minister (Talks)

Mr. Arthur Lewis asked the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on her discussions with Pierre Mauroy, the French Prime Minister, during the weekend of 15-16 May; and whether she raised the matter of Her Majesty's Government's policy on the Channel tunnel.

The Prime Minister: I met the French Prime Minister for the first time on 15 May. We had a full and useful discussion, mainly about European Community affairs. We also touched on the South Atlantic. On the question of the Channel fixed link, we agreed that studies should continue.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Murphy asked the Prime Minister what representations she has received from members of the public about Her Majesty's Government's policy on the

Falkland Islands; to what extent those representations have supported the principles of (a) complete withdrawal of Argentine forces, (b) return of the islands to full British administration and (c) self-determination for the inhabitants; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have received up to 4,500 letters on this subject in each of the last seven weeks. The vast majority have supported the policy followed by the Government.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Nursery Education

Miss Joan Lester asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what would be the recurrent and initial capital cost of providing nursery education for all three and four-year-olds.

Dr. Boyson: The present expenditure plans allow for current and capital expenditure on education for under-fives of £254 million and £12 million respectively in 1982-83. By reference to unit costs, the additional recurrent cost of extending provision nursery education to the entire 3 and 4-year-old age group is estimated to be approximately £425 million and the initial capital cost between £800 million and £1 billion. These estimates make no allowance for any economies of scale or, in the case of capital expenditure, for the use of surplus accommodation.

Wigston Schools

Mr. Farr asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to announce his decision in relation to the proposed amalgamation of Wigston Bellcote county infant school and Wigston All Saints Church of England aided junior school.

Dr. Boyson: My right hon. Friend is giving full and urgent consideration to the important issues involved in these proposals. He will announce his decision as soon as possible.

University Grants

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what announcement the University Grants Committee has made to universities about grants for the academic year 1982-83.

Sir Keith Joseph: The University Grants Committee has announced universities' recurrent and equipment and furniture grants for the academic year 1982-83 as shown in columns 1 and 3 respectively in the following table.

As an aid to planning, the UGC has also given universities a provisional grant figure for 1983-84 and an indication of what the grant might be for 1984-85 on the basis of the planned provision for higher education set out in the expenditure White Paper—Cmd. 8494.

For 12 universities the UGC's grant distribution allows some increase in the grants and/or the student number targets which were set in July 1981. These modifications relate to various special factors at these institutions and follow discussions between the universities and the University Grants Committee in recent months. They include increases in science student number targets

University or College	Recurrent Grant (cash)		Equipment and furniture grant 1982-83 £ million
	1982-83 £ million	1983-84 (provisional) £ million	
Loughborough	15.18	16.01	1.43
Manchester Business School	0.97	0.96	0.03
Manchester	39.85	41.17	2.90
University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology	14.17	14.03	1.61
Newcastle	26.13	27.18	3.08
Nottingham	23.16	24.06	2.08
Oxford	37.06	38.73	3.20
Reading	16.13	16.72	1.60
Salford	13.10	12.42	1.09
Sheffield	27.16	28.22	2.25
Southampton	20.66	21.61	1.90
Surrey	11.44	11.54	1.04
Sussex	11.94	12.29	1.04
Warwick	14.58	15.13	0.89
York	9.03	9.60	0.74
TOTAL ENGLAND	805.51	829.26	66.42
Aberystwyth UC	8.71	8.94	0.66
Bangor UC	9.53	9.85	0.74
Cardiff UC	14.79	15.32	1.18
St. David's Lampeter	1.58	1.65	0.05
Swansea UC	11.47	11.76	0.93
Welsh National School of Medicine	5.45	5.72	0.36
University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology	7.45	7.61	1.02
University of Wales, Registry	1.86	1.94	—
TOTAL WALES	60.84	62.79	4.94
Aberdeen	19.49	19.78	1.52
Dundee	12.85	13.26	0.83
Edinburgh	37.04	38.84	2.67
Glasgow	36.69	38.36	2.70
Heriot-Watt	8.98	9.29	0.90
St. Andrews	9.84	10.10	0.59
Stirling	7.06	7.11	0.30
Strathclyde	19.45	20.10	2.08
TOTAL SCOTLAND	151.40	156.84	11.59
TOTAL GREAT BRITAIN	1,017.75	1,048.89	82.95

* Excluding Imperial College.

Note: Paragraph 16 of the UGC's general guidance letter contains a provisional indication of grant for 1984-85.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr. David Fingleton

Mr. Arthur Lewis asked the Attorney-General if the Lord Chancellor will dismiss Mr. David Fingleton from the bench of magistrates.

The Solicitor-General: No. The complaint has now been disposed of.

DEFENCE

Task Force (Satellite Communications)

Mr. Mawby asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he is satisfied with the technical capacity of satellite communications between the United Kingdom and the task force in South Atlantic waters.

Mr. Blaker: I am entirely satisfied with the technical capacity of satellite communications between the United Kingdom and the task force in the South Atlantic for operational purposes. For the reasons explained by my

right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on 13 May—[Vol. 23, c. 1031]—it has not yet proved possible to use satellites for the transmission of television pictures.

Falkland Islands (Journalists)

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those journalists attached to the task force and supporting ships, and the names of the organisations to which they are accredited.

Mr. Blaker: There are 28 journalists, cameramen and photographers currently with the task force. This list is as follows:

J. Hands, ITN
M. Nicholson, ITN
R. Hammond, ITN
J. Martin, ITN
J. Jockell, BBC
B. Hanrahan, BBC
B. Hesketh, BBC
R. Fox, BBC
R. Saville, PA
M. Cleaver, PA
A. McLroy, *The Daily Telegraph*
C. Lawrence, *Sunday Telegraph*
J. Witherow, *The Times*

J. Shirley, *The Sunday Times*
 P. Keel, *The Guardian*
 G. Parry, *The Guardian*
 T. Snow, *The Sun*
 M. Seemark, *Star*
 D. Norris, *Daily Mail*
 R. McGowan, *Daily Express*
 T. Smith, *Daily Express*
 A. McQueen, *Daily Mirror*
 K. Sabido, Independent Radio News
 I. Bruce, *Glasgow Herald*
 P. Bishop, *The Observer*
 L. Dowd, Reuters
 M. Hastings, *Standard*
 D. Hudson, *Yorkshire Post* and Others

Winnin Decoy System

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Defence if Her Majesty's Government are collaborating with the Australian Government in the project Winnin decoy system.

Mr. Pattie: The United Kingdom is currently participating in the NATO Sea Gnat project to meet its future shipborne decoy requirement, but possibilities for co-operation in the longer term with Australia on project Winnin will also be considered.

ENERGY

Alternative Energy Strategy

Mr. Skeet asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the extent to which each alternative energy strategy is energy intensive.

Mr. Mellor: Energy intensiveness is only one factor in the calculation of economic benefit of the different alternative energy technologies. Energy intensiveness, defined as equivalent annual primary energy input divided by annual energy output, varies greatly with the individual design and with the definitions of energy input employed. Such studies as have been carried out both in the United Kingdom and overseas suggest that, for all the alternative energy devices considered, energy intensiveness is considerably less than unity which means that there is a net energy gain.

Severn Barrage

Mr. McKelvey asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is his latest estimate of the cost of a Severn Barrage scheme in current prices.

Mr. Mellor: The direct construction cost is estimated to be approximately £6,270 million at December 1981 prices. This estimate, which is subject to some uncertainty, is based on the assumptions for an inner barrage in the Severn Barrage committee's report "Tidal Power from the Severn Estuary", published as Energy Paper No. 46, revalued using the "Bulletin of Construction Indices—Civil Engineering."

Renewable Energy Sources

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he intends taking action on the advice given by the Advisory Council on Research and Development for Fuel and Power on his research and development programme on renewable energy sources.

Mr. Mellor: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Hardy) on Monday 17 May 1982.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Magistrates' Courts (Enforcement of Fines)

Mr. Arthur Lewis asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make a statement on the references in the report of his working group on magistrates' courts on the question of the enforcement of the payment of fines imposed by the courts; and what action he has taken or intends taking in the light of this report to ensure the payment of outstanding fines.

Mr. Mayhew: The working group on magistrates' courts was charged with reviewing the kind of help which might most usefully be given to magistrates' courts in improving fine enforcement procedures. Its suggestions in this area mainly relate to changes of practice and procedure which might be adopted in the offices of clerks to justices. Copies of the report have accordingly been sent to all justices' clerks as well as to other interested individuals and representative bodies. Other action to follow up the report is under consideration.

Horserace Totalisator Board

Mr. Arthur Lewis asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will not reappoint the chairman of the Horserace Totalisator Board, Mr. Woodrow Wyatt, when his term of office expires.

Mr. Whitelaw: I have recently reappointed Mr. Woodrow Wyatt as chairman of the Horserace Totalisator Board for a further period of three years with effect from 1 May 1982.

Foreign-born Husbands

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in view of the decision of the European Court of Human Rights to accept as admissible three cases of women who have been affected by the rule which affects women bringing their foreign-born husbands to live with them in the United Kingdom, if he will now reconsider this rule.

Mr. Raison: My right hon. Friend is aware of the decision of the European Commission of Human Rights that these cases are admissible. The Commission has yet to consider the merits of the applications. It will also be seeking a friendly settlement between the parties. The Government remain of the view that there are strong arguments that the rules do not violate the European Convention on Human Rights.

Illegal Immigrants

Mr. Proctor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what sources of information and what methods are employed by his Department in detecting illegal immigrants; if he is satisfied with the current rate of detection and the methods employed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Raison: Information on possible illegal entrants is received from a number of sources, but mainly from the

part of 1982 for which figures are available; and if he will publish comparable figures, respectively, for the similar periods of each year since 1965.

Mr. Peter Rees: The available information is as follows:

*United Kingdom Balance of Trade in Manufactures**

	£ million	
	European Community†	Rest of the World
January–February 1970	+71	+294
January–February 1971	+28	+282
January–February 1972	+17	+368
January–February 1973	-38	+362
January–February 1974	-158	+212
January–February 1975	-181	+628
January–February 1976	-90	+781
January–February 1977	-224	+746
January–February 1978	-295	+1,009
January–February 1979	-393	+352
January–February 1980	-785	+1,131
January–February 1981	-162	+908
January–February 1982‡	-670	+796

Notes:

* Standard International Trade Classification, Sections 5 to 8 on Overseas Trade Statistics basis.

† Including Greece, Denmark, and Ireland throughout.

‡ Figures have been adjusted, as far as is practicable, on to a 1981 classification basis. Any remaining discontinuities are likely to be very small.

|| Figures for February 1982 are provisional.

ENVIRONMENT

Grants to District Councils

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will be in a position to announce the Government's decisions on local authority claims for grant under section 51 of the New Towns Act 1981.

Sir George Young: When the report of NBA Building Performance Services Ltd. on authorities' claims has been received and considered and any necessary discussions have been held with the Association of District Councils and the authorities concerned.

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what level of local authority claims for grant under section 51 of the New Towns Act 1981 has been made by Welwyn and Hatfield district council.

Sir George Young: Claims submitted by Welwyn and Hatfield district council for grant under section 51 of the New Towns Act 1981 relate to expenditure of some £11.2 million.

Industrialised Buildings

Mr. Joseph Dean asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which local authorities have notified him of their intention to demolish houses or flats built by industrialised or semi-industrialised systems; how many units of housing are involved; and what were the original costs.

Mr. Stanley: I shall answer this question shortly.

Mr. Joseph Dean asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authority housing units have been built by industrialised and partly industrialised systems.

Mr. Stanley: No complete record exists, but information available suggests that since 1919 about one million local authority houses and flats have been built by proprietary industrialised and partly industrialised systems in England and Wales.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Law of the Sea Treaty

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs why the United Kingdom abstained on the vote to adopt the United Nations law of the sea treaty.

Mr. Rifkind: Our objective throughout these law of the sea negotiations has been to achieve a text which was generally acceptable to all parties and could be adopted by consensus. As this objective was not met, we felt obliged to abstain.

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the United Nations law of the sea treaty; if this will be ratified by the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: We shall be examining the texts adopted in New York in the light of all our national interests and the attitude of other Governments. Our signature and subsequent ratification of the convention will depend on the results of this examination.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Eldon Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, in the light of proposals by the Secretary General of the United Nations and others that a multinational force be established on the Falkland Islands, it is his policy that British troops should be included in this force and that Argentine troops will not.

Mr. Onslow: We know of no serious proposal to this effect. It has been and remains the Government's position that all Argentine forces must be withdrawn from the Falkland Islands, in accordance with resolution 502 of the United Nations Security Council.

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many wage earners there are in the Falkland Islands; how many are employed by the Falkland Islands Company; and how many persons resident in the islands own land there.

Mr. Onslow: According to the most recent Falkland Islands census in 1980, there were 890 wage earners of whom 240 worked for the Falkland Islands Company. There are two tenant farmers and 30 owner-occupiers of agricultural or pastoral land.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Council of Ministers

Mr. Proctor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will review the operation of the Luxembourg convention with regard to the use of the veto at Council of Ministers meetings; and if he will make a statement.