



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

23 August 1982

Dear Michael,

When I came to see you just before the end of the Session, I told you that there was a possibility that I would be offered a part-time job in the commercial world, and sought your confirmation that, if the offer was made, it was sensible for me to take it.

A group of companies in the advertising and marketing field (in which, years ago, I had some experience) were looking for a non-executive Chairman for their group, which owns companies in this country and (so far) in a total of five of the ten countries of the E.E.C.. When we met, my discussions with them had progressed a considerable distance, and I anticipated hearing from them shortly. I have now heard from them, and they tell me that in every respect, save one, I was the person whom they would like to have as their Chairman.

However, the one stumbling-block is the fact that one of their companies operates in the Republic of Ireland, and they did not feel that to have as their Chairman someone who had been Secretary of State for Northern Ireland would be a good thing. I also understand that, in view of the activities of the I.R.A. in London of recent weeks, there is a certain nervousness about possible attacks on their London-based companies if I was the Chairman.

I thought that you ought to be aware of this, because it seems that the office of Secretary of State for Northern Ireland carries with it more disadvantages than I had appreciated when I took it on, and I feel sure that you and the Prime Minister would wish to alert any future candidate for that office to the fact that the disadvantages may endure, as in my case, even after he has relinquished it.

I shall, of course, now have to look elsewhere, and hope for the best.

Yours etc

Humphrey

The Rt. Hon. Michael Jopling M.P.,
Chief Whip,
12 Downing Street,
London S.W.1.



Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street, London SW1

R4
Prime Minister (2)

To note.

MS 6/9

PRIME MINISTER

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I enclose a copy of a letter I have received
from Humphrey Atkins which I think you should
see.

3 September 1982.



Minister

Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street, London SW1

4 September 1982.

Thank you for your letter of 23 August. I am
sorry about the chairmanship, and I will certainly
see that this aspect of the Northern Ireland job
is appreciated.

The Rt Hon Humphrey Atkins, MP,
House of Commons, SW1A 0AA.