

CONFIDENTIAL



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cc LPO

CO

Mr Rickett

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

14 January 1983

Prime Minister

*You may wish to raise the handling of the Franks
debate with the Lord President, Chief Whip, and
Home Secretary and Chairman on Monday.*

Dear Murdo,

We discussed your letter of 13 January to Willie Rickett.

To take the last point first, the Prime Minister agreed that a day of Government time should not be provided for a debate on the economy, and I understand that it has now been arranged that the Opposition will take a Supply Day for this purpose next week, after the Chancellor of the Exchequer has returned from his overseas visit.

*WR
14/1*

On the arrangements for publication of the Franks Report, I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has now sent to Mr Foot indicating that she will make an oral statement. I will be in touch with Mr Foot's office on Monday to see if, in the light of this letter, Mr Foot still wants a discussion with the Prime Minister, with a view to arranging that on Monday afternoon.

With regard to the debate, the Prime Minister sees some force in Mr Foot's point that a one day debate would result in a preponderance of Privy Counsellors being called to speak with resulting criticism from back benchers. But she does not think it reasonable that the Government should be asked to provide two days in Government time, and she therefore suggests that the Chief Whip should take the line with the Opposition in discussing these matters that the Government thinks that one day would be sufficient but would be perfectly content with a two day debate provided that the Opposition provided the second day from their allocation of time. This matter could be discussed, if the Lord President and the Chief Whip wished, at the Prime Minister's meeting with colleagues before lunch on Monday morning.

I am copying this letter to David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

Murdo Maclean Esq.,
Chief Whip's Office.

Robin Butta

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

14 January 1983

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 13 January.

I hope to be able to let you have a copy of the Franks Committee Report at midday on Monday 17 January and to publish it at 4.30 pm the following day.

As regards the statement accompanying publication of the Report on Tuesday, I think that the House will expect me to describe briefly the ground covered by the Report and its main conclusions. I understand that your view is that such a statement should be made orally, and I agree. I propose therefore to make an oral statement including the suggestion that we should have a very early debate on the Report.

Yours sincerely

Royce Whalley

The Right Honourable Michael Foot MP

PRIME MINISTER

PUBLICATION OF THE FRANKS REPORT

I attach a letter from the Leader of the Opposition, with a reply which I suggest that we discuss at the meeting with Sir Robert Armstrong tomorrow morning.

The Chief Whip has had a conversation with the Opposition about an oral statement, and Mr. Foot's position is that he would have no objection to a written statement - indeed he would favour it - provided that it did not go beyond announcing that the Report had been published and was available in the Vote Office, and that there would be an opportunity for an early debate. I think that you envisaged that a statement, even if written, would need to go further than that and I understand that Mr. Foot thinks that a statement calling attention to the conclusions of the Report should be made orally.

Mr. Foot still seems to be envisaging a discussion with you, although your previous letter only offered such a discussion if Mr. Foot felt there was something to discuss. I suggest we send off the attached reply tomorrow and I ring up Mr. Foot's office on Monday. If he still felt it necessary to have a talk with you, we could arrange it on Monday afternoon.

RB

13 January 1983



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Office of the
Leader of The Opposition

13 January 1983

Dear Margaret

Thank you for your letter of 7 January and for your agreement to discuss with me on a Privy Counsellor basis, the arrangements for publishing and debating the Franks Report.

Of course I would like to see a copy of the report as soon as possible and would appreciate it if you could now inform me when that will be. I am also unclear from your letter about your suggestion that any substantive comment on the report will be deferred until the debate. Perhaps you could let me know whether you intend to make an oral statement on the day the report is published.

M. Thatcher

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP

ARGENTINA : Review : PT3,



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON, ENGLAND

ARGENTINA 1983



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Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street, London SW1

CONFIDENTIAL

13th January 1983

Dear Willie,

I had a meeting at 12 noon today with Michael Foot and the Opposition Chief Whip when we discussed -

- 1) the handling of the Report of the Franks Committee and
- 2) the request from the Opposition for a debate on the economic situation .

Mr Foot showed me a copy of a letter which he has sent to the Prime Minister and therefore our conversation took place in the light of that. With regard to the publication of the Franks Report, he would have no objection to the Report being published without an oral statement from the Prime Minister, but he does not think that any written statement should go beyond announcing that the Report had been published and was available in the Vote Office, with perhaps some reference to the fact that there would be an opportunity for an early debate. If, however, the intention was to have a written statement which called attention to various aspects or conclusions in the Report he believes that this should be done orally. I do not believe that he sees any advantage in having an oral statement and he thinks that the first comment by the Prime Minister and by himself should be in the debate, but clearly this may not inhibit others from commenting in advance of the debate.

With regard to the debate itself, he believes that the Government should provide 2 days in Government time, with perhaps the first day being exempted until 12 midnight, since he regards this issue as of the highest importance and he believes that one day would result in a preponderance of Privy Councillors being called to speak with resultant criticism from back benchers on all sides of the House. (You will recall that after Shadow Cabinet yesterday there had been a suggestion that the Opposition might provide an Opposition day for a second day of the debate on the Franks Report.)

Mr Foot will be away tomorrow and Saturday and therefore if the Prime Minister wished to see him then the only opportunity would be Monday morning.

With regard to the request for a debate on the Economic Situation, I informed the Opposition that the Government were not minded to provide a day in Government time and again drew attention to the fact that the Opposition had a day when they could debate a subject of their choice. Mr Foot nevertheless

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suggested that the Prime Minister might wish to reconsider the decision not to provide a day in Government time and asked me to inform No.10 accordingly. I think it would be helpful if I could let the Opposition know the Prime Minister's response as early as possible this afternoon.

I am sending copies of this letter to David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office) and Sir Robert Armstrong (Cabinet Office).

*yours ever,
Murdo MacLean*

(Murdo MacLean)

W Rickett Esq.,
Office of the Prime Minister