

Robin Butler

LUNCHES FOR CABINET COLLEAGUES

I wonder whether the scope and format of these regular Monday lunches might be reconsidered?

The Guest List usually includes a number of regulars, eg. Lord Whitelaw, the Chief Whip, the Chairman of the Party, David Wolfson and myself, and then there are only one or two other Cabinet Ministers, in rotation. The function adds up to an agreeable social occasion but conversation is very general.

An alternative might be to use the function as an opportunity for one Cabinet Minister to have lunch with the Prime Minister, with a view to general discussion about his work and that of this Department. He could, perhaps bring one Junior Minister with him, or perhaps his political adviser; from here we could field Stephen Sherbourne and/or John Redwood, someone from the Private Office and David Wolfson and/or me. The lunches could then have a functional as well as a social role to play.

I would be glad to have your thoughts on this idea.

MA

MICHAEL ALISON

3.2.84

As it happened, today's lunch (comprising Biffen, Whitelaw, Wakeham, Wolfson, Corkfield, Younger, Alison + the PM) was agreeable - but fairly general apart from a bit of GCHQ talk