

# LOBBY BRIEFING

time:

date:

(1922 Speech)

of State for Trade and Industry whether agreement has now been reached in the Western Alliance on strategic export controls on computers. (Answer puts on record agreement reached after COCOM talks.)

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS NEXT WEEK

We said there could be quite a few statements next week but at this stage could give no further help.

## EC COMMISSIONER

We agreed that M Delors, the new President of the Commission, was keen on financial discipline and had his heart in the right place. Now that the Commission had a Chairman we would want to talk about a British Commissioner but could see no signs of an announcement yet.

## EAST COAST ELECTRIFICATION

We said that we thought that there would be some Ministerial consideration before the House rose but that did not necessarily mean that a decision was in the offing. We could not help on timing.

## DUARTE

We thought that the talks would centre on Central America.

## 'PROPAGANDA WAR'

Asked if there was to be a continuation of Ministerial speeches etc on the industrial situation we said that there would. The coal dispute had been running for 19 weeks and in the course of that the NCB had been in the lead. But people had termed this a political issue, the new talks had broken down, and the Government, as banker, was trying to focus the issues:

- the generosity of the offer in terms of pay increases;
- the formidable investment in pits;
- the extremely generous voluntary redundancy arrangements, which were the envy of every industry in Britain.

Questions had to be asked about what the dispute was about and what was its nature. The Government wanted to make clear that militancy and intimidation was a challenge to our form of democracy.

We said that a very few reports of the 1922 Committee speech given by the Prime Minister had equated 'the enemy within' with the miners. This was not the case - she was referring to the minority of militants. The PM was in favour of the workers who wanted to work and in favour of the constructive elements, she was against the militants.

Asked about future speeches we said that Mr Walker was on Weekend *(in Trade unions but,*

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World. There would probably be a Minister on the World This Weekend and any conclusion to the dock strike would bring its own demand, but we knew of no specific speeches. We were not expecting anything from the PM although she did have a longstanding Newsnight engagement at the end of the week, when she would be looking both retrospectively and to the future. There was also the debate a week on Tuesday.

Asked about how the Government would deal with the militants, we said that the Government would make it clear that both it and the nation would not tolerate such activities. The situation appeared to have posed a deeply difficult problem to Opposition. Asked if there would be greater encouragement to industries to use the courts, we said there would be greater encouragement if industries themselves felt it was to their advantage to do so. Trade Union legislation sought to put power into the hands of the Trade Union members, and distance it from the Trade Union militants to use for their own ends. We thought that timing of any future legislation on Trade Unions would be taken steadily. The current Bill included important balloting options and had been toughened up during its passage. There seemed to be a feeling of revulsion in society at attempts to usurp the democratic procedures. It would be important to help arm the moderates with the power of public opinion.

Asked if it has been a mistake on Mr MacGregor's part to talk to Mr Scargill, we said that it had not. The position of the NUM leadership had been revealed - they would not contemplate the closure of any pit and the industry should effectively be frozen in 1984 for all time. No industry in Britain, public or private, would contemplate that situation.

X | Asked about the violence by lorry drivers at Dover, we said that the Government could not countenance that, although it was possible that this should not be taken at face value. It may be that the Dover men wanted to return to work. Mr Ridley had condemned the violence on the Today programme. The Government could not be choosy about violence - it was not in the business of countenancing that at all.

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