

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

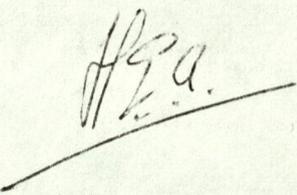
MEMBERS' PAY

DISCUSSION WITH MR MICHAEL COCKS, THURSDAY, 6 JULY

The discussion was held at my request. I explained that Mrs Thatcher was aware of the activities of the Chairman and Vice Chairmen of the 1922 Committee in connection with settling Members' pay for the future. She had had several meetings with Edward du Cann and knew of the discussions between him and Cledwyn Hughes, and knew also that Cledwyn Hughes had talked with the Prime Minister.

It was Mrs Thatcher's view that if any agreement on the lines of that put forward by Edward du Cann and Cledwyn Hughes was to be reached, that agreement could only be made between herself and the Prime Minister. We understood it had been suggested that Michael Foot and Francis Pym could be involved. While of course there was no objection to this, we felt that they were not the people to make any final agreement.

I asked Michael Cocks if he could let me know the Prime Minister's attitude to this whole question and whether he felt that further discussions on it, either directly with Mrs Thatcher or through us would be proper. He promised to discuss this with the Prime Minister and come back to me during the following week.

  
7th July 1978

MHT

Richard gave me this and ask me to file it in the Security Cabinet. He told me that you had given it to him from Flood Street. I was slightly concerned, however, in that it has never been acknowledged. Do you require any further action?

*Thompson*

*agreed*

CS

6 July

*John who  
at present. That  
this letter was in  
my to me. That  
I will write  
John with Thompson*

From: the Rt. Hon. Edward du Cann, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

9 June 1978

*Ed. Du Cann*

Thank you for seeing Charles Morrison, Paul Bryan, Kenneth Baker and myself just before the Whitsun Recess to talk further about the remuneration of M.Ps.

Undoubtedly these matters will come again to the forefront of attention in the House after the Whitsun Recess. As you know, Government is pledged (as a result of the joint representations made by the Executives of the 1922 Committee and the PLP) to introduce legislation implementing the recommendations of the Boyle Committee on M.Ps' pensions. The only reason, we are assured by the Leader of the House, why this legislation has not already been introduced is its complexity. Also, Government is due to make an announcement before the House rises in the summer about a percentage increase in M.Ps' remuneration.

There is intense Parliamentary interest in these matters: witness the Early Day Motion No.252 tabled by Mr.Lomas, currently signed by 217 M.Ps, of which 138 are Labour and 66 Conservative.

It has been my intention, and that of my colleagues on the Executive of the 1922 Committee, to see that the subject of M.Ps' pay is handled with good sense and responsibility. We have particularly had in mind two objectives (which I do not feel, from your letter, have been necessarily fully appreciated by all of our colleagues in the Shadow Cabinet during their short discussion.) These objectives have been first to ensure that the matter of the remuneration of M.Ps is satisfactorily dealt with at some time in the near future, that is to say that M.Ps should be paid a proper remuneration for the work that they do; and, second, that by removing the subject from political contention your position as incoming Prime Minister would be protected to the maximum extent. We are determined upon them in the general interest.

In our view, this subject has for too long been confused by false modesties and by the timidity of Governments (with one notable exception when Mr Whitelaw was Leader of the House).

There is no doubt that at the present time many M.Ps on both sides of the House are experiencing hardship. It is intolerable that British M.Ps are paid less than their counterparts in other countries, and by a substantial amount, and not least that British M.Ps will be paid very much less than Members of the newly elected European Parliament. We have no doubt that it will not be possible for some of our colleagues to serve as Ministers should they be invited, because they will not be able to accept the financial sacrifice involved. This applies particularly to the junior ranks.

What we are seeking now is your general support for our general approach to these matters. If we have this we believe we can settle affairs with the maximum of dignity, the maximum of good sense, and the minimum of fuss. Furthermore, there is the chance of getting a sensible result and of getting it fairly promptly.

May I now deal with certain specific matters that you raised in your letter and in our subsequent discussion.

We were surprised that it was suggested that our proposals did not include Ministers: they did, and they do.

You made the point to us that it might be that the Government of the day would have a phasing programme in mind, if this was necessary on account of its general policy. We have no objection to this. What we want to achieve is a commitment on the part of the broad mass of membership of the main Parties, and endorsed by the Leadership, that what Boyle proposes will be accepted. If implementation has to be phased for reasons of State, so be it.



There is no question of our agreeing to press the Government to set up Boyle and to implement Boyle's recommendations immediately, i.e. before the next General Election. The whole basis of our conversations with the PLP has been an attempt to avoid making Party embarrassment out of what should be a House of Commons matter.

I hope the proposals will now have your general endorsement. We must bring the matter to a head and settle it now.

Y  
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The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, M.P.

CONQUEROR