

SECRET

B.R

MR. GOW

Michael Scholar tells me that he has had a word with you about my British Rail paper of which I have now sent you a copy. The Prime Minister is anxious that we should canvass backbenchers on this and it would be very helpful if you could take a few soundings. These, I think, should be of a fairly general form - "How would you like to see the railways reformed?" rather than "Here is a plan from Number Ten" - which might leak out in an embarrassing form. Perhaps it would also be better if we delayed a couple of days until I have shown David Howell the paper and asked for his reactions.

Let us confer.

*fm*

7 July 1982

FERDINAND MOUNT

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