

From: The Rt. Hon. Lord Renton, QC.

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Lincoln's Inn,  
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9th October, 1979.

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your letter of 4th October, which we have now discussed. I confirm that I am arranging for the Dinner to be postponed from 7.30 p.m. until 8.00 p.m. on the understanding that the Prime Minister will do her utmost to be with us by 7.55 p.m. so that the Lord and Mr. Thatcher may make a triumphal entry into the Great Hall when all those present are in their places for dinner but before the first Grace is said.

I confirm that we shall be very glad to have Mr. Ian Gow as a guest.

...

Enclosed is a draft of the speech which I propose to make although I may make slight variations or corrections up to the last minute.

Would you please ask the Prime Minister if she would be so good as to let me know whether she agrees with my recollection as set out in paragraphs 6 and 7. If she does not do so, I would be most grateful if you could telephone me on 242 8986 (my flat in the Inn) or on 242 3200 (my office there).

With many thanks for your help,

Yours sincerely,  
Renton

Treasurer

Miss Caroline Stephens,  
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
Whitehall,  
London, S.W.1.

P.S. I enclose a spare copy of my <sup>draft</sup> speech and would be grateful if the Prime Minister would kindly delete anything which she would prefer me not to say, and you could ask Ian to bring it to the dinner.

TREASURER'S SPEECH AT DINNER TO P.M. on 16.10.79.

Fellow Members of Lincoln's Inn

1. We are proud and honoured and grateful to have with us in Hall tonight, the Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury. There have been 49 Prime Ministers and no fewer than 11 of them, including her, have ~~had~~<sup>enjoyed</sup> the advantage and distinction of being members of this Honourable Society: more than all the other Inns put together! Your 10 predecessors here ruled our country as we rose to greatness as a world power and became the heart of the greatest empire the world ever knew.

2. I hope it encourages you to know that Walpole, the first Prime Minister did the job for 21 years. So did William Pitt, the youngest Prime Minister, who in 1794 combined the offices of Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Treasurer of this Inn! He too was much influenced by Adam Smith and was the first to introduce national budgets. Then came Addington, the only Speaker of the House of Commons to become Prime Minister, and Spencer Perceval, the only Law Officer to do so. Then Canning, the great orator and wit, who had cruelly said, "Pitt is to Addington as London is to Paddington" - but Addington was at the helm when we won the battle of Trafalgar. Next was Melbourne - who tutored the young Queen Victoria in the arts of Government. Then Peel, who as Home Secretary started the Police Force and whose spirit must have rejoiced when police pay was increased soon after your appointment as Prime Minister. Then came Disraeli the only Jew to become Prime Minister, and Gladstone, who took it in turns to rule for many years from 1868. Finally we had Mr. Asquith from 1908 to 1916.

3. It is most remarkable that for all but 14 of the 133 years from Pitt in 1793 to Asquith in 1916 either the Prime Minister or the Lord Chancellor or both were members of Lincoln's Inn. Those were the days! Great days for our country, ruled and led by men who drew inspiration and strength from their membership of this Inn. <sup>after a gap of 63 years:-</sup> Thanks to you, Madam, happy days are here again! That'll put the country right!

As we celebrate with you tonight, we are delighted that your Lord Chancellor, our one and only Quintin, Lord Hailsham, is here with us as our guest. He is this Inn's 25th Lord Chancellor, more than all the others! And that is not the limit of our present golden <sup>age</sup> for we also have the Lord Chief Justice, the Master of the Rolls and the Vice-Chancellor.

4. We also welcome Mr. Denis Thatcher for it is his name and not her maiden name that she has made famous. At the end of the last election campaign and before the result was known, Frank Johnson wrote of Denis in the Daily Telegraph, "..... he fought a campaign conspicuous for its dignity, candour and laconic humour, and my vote for Man of the Match goes to him."

5. Another guest is Mr. Walter Dring, R.A., the famous portrait painter, who is here to observe some of our senior benchers for a reason which will eventually appear in Hall. Also here is the Prime Minister's Personal Private Secretary, Ian Gow, M.P. - but, hush, he is the only solicitor present!

6. Mrs. Thatcher is the only Prime Minister to have had a science degree - in chemistry at Oxford in 1947. While there she became interested in politics, and in the 1950 General Election she was the youngest woman candidate in the country and did well at Dartford, where I was born and where my father had practised as a doctor. After the campaign was over Miss Roberts, as she then was, came and saw me at the common law chambers where Lord Hailsham and I were then practising, and asked me about coming to the Bar and which Inn to join - a question to which there was only one answer! And so I found myself certifying that I believed her to be a lady of respectability and a proper person to be admitted as a student of this Honorable Society. She certainly looked good, in every way. It did not occur to me when I sponsored her ~~as a student of this Honourable Society~~ that nearly thirty years later I would be the Treasurer proposing her health as Prime Minister, and welcoming her home in triumph to Lincoln's Inn.

7. She and Denis were married in 1951 and she was Called to the Bar <sup>here</sup> in 1954 and became a pupil of Lord Justice Brightman in his Chancery Chambers. Then she went to be a pupil of Lord Justice Lawton in the common law chambers of Sir Gerald Thesiger, now Treasurer of the Middle Temple. She seems to have brought us all a bit of luck! <sup>My young</sup> Fairy Godmother. Finally she settled down to becoming an extremely promising Tax lawyer until

she gave birth to twins. This deprived the tax bar of one of the best brains ever to demolish a Finance Act - jolly lucky they were that she gave up practice!

She'd have wiped the floor with them all, just as she did with her opponents when she was shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer.

8. From 1970 to 1974 she was Secretary of State for Education - the only Cabinet post she held before becoming Prime Minister, which is unusual. When we elected her as Leader in 1975 she knew that, like the Younger Pitt had to do, she had yet to gain an international reputation, but she rapidly and effectively caught up and a few months later forcibly pointed out that Russian armed strength threatened world peace, and in the Kremlin they called her "The Iron Lady." Since then she has travelled tremendously at home and abroad, and wherever she goes compels attention and respect, except from extremists.

9. When she became Prime Minister, the Government immediately started to do the things they had threatened and promised to do. More money for the police and for defence. No more for lame ducks. V.A.T. greatly increased. Direct taxes reduced - and that should reduce some of the moaning at the Bar! So should the Report of the Royal Commission.

10. Some people have wondered whether her party chose her mainly because she was a woman. But I can assure you, that she was chosen entirely on her own merits. Her principles, her parliamentary skill, her integrity, courage and strong character established her as the Leader we wanted. She owes nothing to women's lib.

11. But as she is our first woman Prime Minister, her success must cause the spirit of Sir Thomas More to rejoice for he was the first man in high places in this country to establish that women's brains were at least as good as men's. He did so largely by observing how well one of his daughters did at Latin. Her name of course was Margaret!

2. Sir Thomas More was I believe the only lawyer to be made a saint but he was also the only Saint who had the glorious merit of being a member of Lincoln's Inn! The only one so far but several Benchers are keeping their fingers crossed! *Don't ask me which ones! We must as Mr. Asquith said, "Wait & see!"*

13. and 14. Peroration. To be added after the Party Conference.

8th October, 1979