

PRIME MINISTER

You agreed to hold back on the problem of the Lions' tour.

It is now a little less easy to do so, given press interest in Mr. Thatcher's comments on Thursday night.

You should know that Hector Munro has given the attached Written Answer today. There is a question on the issue which will be reached when Environment are top next Wednesday. I have asked that the proposed Answer and briefing for supplementaries should come to us, as well as to the Home Secretary and the Foreign Secretary, on Monday night. It now seems that the Rugby Unions are unlikely to announce their acceptance of an invitation to tour until the week before Christmas, but what Mr. Munro says in Parliament on Wednesday is likely to be taken as a firm indication of the Government's attitude. Meanwhile, there are growing signs of opposition to the proposed tour from other sporting fields. Mr. Munro will let us know more of this early next week.

MAD

spoke to DOE  
na

MAD  
10/11

See original

ans.

7 December 1979

7/12/79

JOHN CARLISLE: Conservative: Luton West:

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give support to the four home Rugby Unions tour of South Africa should they receive an invitation to tour.

Answer from Mr. Hector Munro:

No Government approval would be given to any such tour. To do so would be incompatible with our acceptance of the Commonwealth statement on sport.

This answer is misleading.

(i) approval is not sort

(ii) we have no authority to give or withhold approval

~~(iii)~~ The only way possible is that we sponsor through agreement with the word is) through contacts with S. Africa. We also intend a further statement in connection with the proposed tour over here and

Winter tour  
Why this attitude  
Tours can  
attitude

MRP

REVISED 12/XII.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Olympic - Barbarians + Cote d'Ivoire country

3 Roy Hughes

m. Statement of 14.  
changes when S.A progresses  
No decision yet. So prevail on Rugby authorities  
m. Position made clear

1. Q. Why not a formal meeting with the Rugby Unions to dissuade them from further contacts?  
A. No point, Rugby Unions can be in no doubt of Government's position set out by me in letters in September and by FCO in Press Release of 14 September (Annex A of Background Note). No change has taken place.
2. Q. Government's attitude to possible tour of South Africa by British Lions?  
A. I am not aware that any invitation has yet been extended, but we would regret it if it was accepted. Such a tour would receive no Government support or approval and would be discouraged in accordance with the Commonwealth Statement.
3. Q. Time to renegotiate Commonwealth Statement?  
A. Government position clear from their statement of 14 September. Will discuss possible changes with Commonwealth colleagues if and when sufficient progress has been made towards integration of sport in South Africa.
4. Q. Will not changes in South Africa come about more quickly if progress recognised, rather than by isolationist policy?  
A. We recognise that some progress has been made towards integration in certain sports; but we do not consider that this is yet sufficient to justify our discussing the possibility of modifying the Commonwealth Statement. In particular we do not consider that South African Rugby is non-racial.
5. Q. Does not "success" of Barbarians tour justify a change of policy?  
A. Before the Barbarians' recent tour, we made it clear that we regretted that the team had been invited. Nothing about the circumstances in which that tour took place justifies a change in our attitude, which is based on the Commonwealth Statement.
6. Q. Should not independent sports bodies run their own affairs without interference from Government?  
A. We of course respect the independence of sporting bodies, but international obligations must also be respected. In the case of South Africa, we have the Commonwealth Statement whose terms we are concerned to observe.

7. Q. Why isolate South Africa and not other countries?  
A. In the case of South Africa, the Commonwealth Statement exists and we must respect it.
8. Q. What about USSR?  
A. See 7 above.
9. Q. Why not renegotiate Gleneagles?  
A. Our Press Statement of 14 September said we shall continue to observe with a view to discussing this with Commonwealth colleagues when conditions in sport in South Africa warrant it.
10. Q. What if Government advice ignored and Lions tour takes place?  
A. This is not for us to judge, but we must hope that anyone responsible for staging such a tour is aware of all the possible implications.
11. Q. What about Mr Thatcher's reported remarks?  
A. Mr Thatcher has the same right as any other person to express his personal views on this matter as a private citizen.
12. Q. Meeting of Supreme Council for Sport in Africa this week?  
A. Know it is taking place and plans to discuss possible Lions tour. Cannot obviously comment.
13. Q. Could not a Lions tour mean that we are banned from the Olympic Games?  
A. Rugby is not an Olympic sport. The Rugby Unions are not affiliated to the British Olympic Association. It is for the International Olympic Committee to decide which countries should participate in the Games.
14. Q. Commonwealth Games 1982?  
A. Decision for Commonwealth Games Federation.
15. Q. What information do you have about the views of other sporting bodies?  
A. I understand that a number of British sporting bodies have called on the Rugby Unions to have regard to the interests of British sport as a whole.

Dalyell →

16. Q. Resume sporting links with Rhodesia?
- A. I am sure everyone would welcome this once everything has settled down under a legal regime.
17. Q. Sports Council fact-finding mission?
- A. Have to wait and see what report contains.
18. Q. Will consideration be given to stopping rugby grants if tour goes ahead?
- A. At the moment that is a hypothetical question.

4 Tessel

why govt involved

M concerned to implement already  
Position made closer to R U's

5 Howell

strong intelligent considered stance

Olympic

free gathering of world's youth  
with treasury

One sport has no right to  
jeopardise chances of rest

Speaker

"yellow card"

↳ provocation taken into account  
↳ that's what I'm doing

↳ Risk of ending c'wealth games, or  
turning into white only