

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet

I understand that at Cabinet tomorrow you would like to put something on record about mutual trust between colleagues and also between Ministers and their senior Advisers; and additionally say a word about diaries. I suggest that you might speak on the following lines:-

"As my colleagues know, I shall be circulating the usual document giving guidance to Ministers on procedural matters. This is largely a book of reference for Private Offices, though there will be a few points that I shall be drawing to the attention of Ministers specifically.

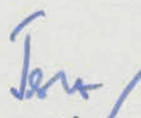
There is however one thing where we ought to set a spirit and tone of our own from the very outset and where I think it is right to ask for full Cabinet endorsement.

We are going to work as a team with a clear sense of purpose.

This means that we must maintain the strictest standards of confidence in Cabinet and between members of the Cabinet, and also in and between all members of the Government. ~~No doubt we shall have our arguments from time to time. but we shall have them privately and will not damage our own good name by advertising them publicly through leaks or gossip. The last Government had a bad record in this respect and we shall set a different standard.~~ The principle of collective responsibility will be absolute.

Furthermore, just as we will maintain confidence among ourselves, I think we have a right to expect and to extend confidence between Ministers and their senior Advisers. Whatever we may decide to do about the principle of deliberate open Government, we must do all we can to avoid the unauthorised leaking of confidential information. The Head of the Civil Service will be making the same point to Permanent Secretaries.

This leads me to a rather different point. I am not keeping a diary myself: and I hope that no member of the Cabinet will keep a diary of his Ministerial experiences or start writing his memoirs while he is still in Government. If anyone feels differently about this, perhaps they would consult me, although I think I know what my answer will be.


John Hunt

9th May 1979