

PRIME MINISTER

NO. 10's 250th ANNIVERSARY

You thought it might be appropriate to celebrate No. 10's 250th Anniversary by inviting a number of children to the house.

We considered whether one way of doing this might be to invite school children from up and down the country, with their parents, to come here for a tour of the house, a press conference, and tea. On reflection, we think this approach would pose considerable difficulties:

- i) It would be difficult to find a fair way of selecting a representative national sample of school children.
- ii) If we relied upon those who have at some stage written in to you, and stuck to inviting them, this would be very risky since we should have no way of vetting them.
- iii) If we did not pay travel costs of parents and children - especially those from a long way away - we should open ourselves to criticism and thoughtlessness; if we did pay the travel costs it could be a very expensive operation.
- iv) The administrative complications would probably end up being a nightmare - they were bad enough for the 25 who came from Liverpool.

We therefore propose, as an alternative, that it might be simpler, safer, and cheaper, to invite a number of children from a NSPCC home reasonably close to London. This is widely known to be a charity you are personally attached to, we could be reasonably sure that the children would behave themselves, and you would not be open to criticism that you had failed to secure an appropriate representative sample of young people.

We never have NSPCC children close - it makes them but too nervous always with children of parents who help with money - with some find families

We can have a word about this at our diary meeting tomorrow.

Mark Addison

MARK ADDISON

8 August 1985

PM

Celebrating No 10s 250th anniversary

You have said that you wish to give some children a tour of No 10 followed by a press conference on (date)

Bernard's initial suggestion for this was based on a conversation he had ~~had~~ with ITN in which he understood that they would be prepared to bring children to London for a day. Since then, ITN have pulled back and now say that, while they would, of course, be interested in covering the childrens' press conference as a news event, they do not want to have any closer involvement ~~than that~~.

Given ITN's refusal to take an active role, we shall ~~xxx~~ almost certainly need to involve parents in bringing at least the younger children up to London. I suggest therefore that we stick to Bernard's original idea of having 30 children, not 60, as we shall have to cope with parents as well. This will leave us with 30 children plus as many as 60 parents in No 10 on 'the day'.

Since January ¹⁹⁸⁴ 1984 press office have dealt with 73 letters to you from children. Some have asked for - and got - a message from you to mark a special occasion (eg a school anniversary, rugby tour ⁹⁴) Some have asked to know such things as your favourite flower or food. We have replied to these on your ~~xxx~~ behalf, drawing on your publicly stated preferences. But there are some children who we have not been able to help because they have sought either an interview with you or an article from you for their school magazine. There are about 20 such requests.

I suggest that we select our guests from the list of children who have written to you since the beginning of 1984, giving first priority to those who have sought an interview with you, then selecting the remainder across as ~~xxx~~ wide a range of questions and geographical areas as possible.

It seems to me that we must be ~~xxx~~ both fair and seem to be fair in selecting our children. The children who have written to you almost select themselves, - they have had the interest, the initiative and the plain gumption to put pen to paper and I think that their letters give us the fairest ground on which to proceed.



10 DOWNING STREET

EXHIBITION

1953

Agree :

to confine invitations to 30 children?

that parents will have to be invited too?

that we should choose the children from amongst those who have written to you in the relatively recent past, giving first priority to those who have asked for an interview or article for their school magazine?



10 DOWNING STREET

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET



Spur 20

10 DOWNING STREET

Mark

We spoke about
this in the car yesterday.
Here is the "masterplan"

See 6/8

JL

DES? Agree 12V should choose

Agree no carting.

- price cap 2/20.

- we will not, but we try to get
1.5V we supply as list
5 (TV)? we - for per
4 to each other

MISS CAINES

CELEBRATING NO. 10'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

Thank you for sending me a copy of Bernard's proposals. We had a word about this today.

To sum up what we agreed:

- (i) It would be best not to pursue the idea of a school doing the catering, the timing is all wrong and the whole thing would be very complicated.
- (ii) We should avoid getting into the invidious position of selecting individual schoolchildren from the regions, unless it is simply on the basis that they have written to us. I should have thought you might provide ITV with the list of all those who have written in, and ask them to arrange for the invitations to be sent out, using our list as a guide wherever possible.
- (iii) Bernard will need to consider any difficulties which may arise in giving ITV a monopoly of what will turn out to be a news event.
- (iv) I also agree with Robin that the conducted tour and press conference (but not in that order) is the right approach: ie this is not an occasion for the disabled.

MARK ADDISON

7 August 1985

VC4ABO