

Gardiner Jr

4th August 1981

Thank you very much for your letter of 3rd August.

I quite understand the reasons which prompted you to write as you did.

I much appreciate what you say in the final paragraph of your letter.

I hope that you will have a good Recess.

George Gardiner Esq MP
House of Commons
London SW1

From: George Gardiner, M.P.



House of Commons,
LONDON, SW1A 0AA.

Dear Margaret

3rd August, 1981

I feel I must send a personal letter to you, following the reported speech by Francis Pym and Press conference remarks by Peter Thorneycroft this last week-end. I do not expect a reply, though I hope you have time to read this.

It seems that barely a week-end passes now without some Cabinet Minister delivering an ingeniously worded speech that invites interpretation as an attack on the economic policies that you and we represent. I am sure you can guess the motive as well as I can, but I must tell you from my own experience and observation that these frequent expressions of dissent within the Cabinet have a devastating impact upon the morale of our supporters. In this recent instance, I judge that the combined effect has wiped out all the advantage gained by your reply in the Censure Debate but five days before.

As you know, I have throughout supported the Government's economic strategy, in Parliament and Press. I speak often on Party platforms, and invariably find our supporters ready to face rough weather in pursuit of the objectives for which we were elected. I would add that their support for you personally is total. But what are they to make of these regular Press reports, inspired by your colleagues, asserting that within your Cabinet you are "facing revolt", "boxed in", "forced to trim", etc?

I hesitate to write to a Prime Minister in these terms, and dare to do so now only because I fear that all we are striving for is being imperilled. But unless you can soon demonstrate your authority over such Ministers things are going to move from bad to worse, as some of your loyal backbenchers start to hedge their bets.

My own view is that this can only be achieved by a reshuffle during the Summer recess, with at least one of the dissidents relegated. This would give fresh impetus to all our efforts, and a splendid launch to the new Session's programme at the Party Conference. I beg you to forgive me for venturing this view in private, but I am fortified by the fact that apparently the Party Chairman now proffers his advice in public.

With continuing good wishes in all your efforts, and hoping that you will soon get some summer relaxation,

Yours ever
George

Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
The Prime Minister.