

THE TIMES 200 GRAY'S INN ROAD LONDON WC1X 8EZ 01-837 1234

Harold Evans

No Budget
PROTOT



Budget

October 29, 1981

Dear Rupert,

Can I explain to you why I find it so frustrating, upsetting even, at the moment about costs? I am passionate to get The Times right and to get it right means profits not just sales, etc. But since I started here I have been flying blind. I have had not a single figure. Gerry has been doing his best - but I am not even being shown the weekly rough summaries. I don't know why this is kept from me. It is, of course, inadequate by a million miles for the ~~the~~ operating statements we need monthly which will identify precise areas for attack, but at least it would be a guide.

EMM
Lynch
MGR.

We are doing everything possible to make cuts which will not damage the paper, and as you say in due course we will get a budget. I did manage to keep to editorial budgets over 14 years at The Sunday Times, despite one or two off years out of my control - i.e. an overlarge NUJ settlement, for instance.

I'd also like to feel part of a team. If all the normal figures were provided it is not inconceivable I might have a useful observation or two. I am very puzzled why there is nothing to get one's teeth into. I kept all the secrets of TNL on the board for 14 years and for the last year as chairman of the executive of the Sunday Times (when we planned a 17½ per cent ad. rate increase in autumn 1981 and the 40 p price increase in October).

I'm not, in short, saying anything about editorial independence but generally about how we can all efficiently help this great enterprise stay on course.

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As you will know I will back you 100 per cent in the showdown with the unions on overmanning and demarcation which we must have. I think we will have to get the best deal we can with the newsagents and raise the ST price. I also wonder if we should not re-examine our colour rates urgently? As an emergency, I'd also say we could live with the web width change without the better quality paper - which would give us £100,000 or more on The Times and perhaps £250,000 altogether. I'd hate to do it, because reproduction is bad, but I would rather have some precise discussion than have a general feeling that we must cut everything.

~~and~~ Can we have a drive on The Times alone ^{with} the unions? They are better inclined here. The Guardian and FT are heavy on promotion. I am finding it exceedingly difficult to attack anyone at all from the FT which pays so much more than we do

~~xxxxxxx~~

Yours