Acquisition of the Sir Edward Heath Archive

The Bodeian Library have acquired the personal papers of Sir Edward Heath who was Prime Minister from 1970-1974. The papers are being sold by the Edward Heath Charitable Trust

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GEOFFREY WAGGATT (Kingston)

Q. Following Mr. Maudling's comments on radio last night, can we have the Prime Minister's assurance that he will allow Conservative N.F.'s freedom of choice when they yote on the Common Market, or will he throw aside the democratic principles for which the Conservative Farty has always stood and twist their arms and impose a three-line Whip.

A. The Government has reached its decision. It has stated it most clearly. I think everybody would gree that it could not have been more clearly stated. In these circumstances the Government is fully entitled over such a major issue to ask for the full support of the Party in Parliament. That is our democratic Party system. It seems to me slightly contradictory that it should be generally accepted that for the vast mass of things that we do in Parliament, that for some small Bill for sewerage in Little Muddlecombe, you can put the Whips on, but when you have the biggest issue in peacetime that this country has faced for decades, you say that the Government should say to everybody to just go and do as you like. Well of course this doesn't make sense in the Party system. And so I would say this, that we have always in our Party respected that there are some who for reasons of principle and conscience find themselves unable to support the Government, or overselves in Opposition, on particular matters. We have always respected that. We have no standing orders in our Party on which action can be taken. And as I reminded somebody at the Frees Conference the other day it was 1928 that the Whip was last withdrawn from a Member - though largely because the then Chief Whip of the day lost his temper rather late at night, and within a fortnight it was back again. So it wasn't really a disciplinary action. We don't work that way in our Party. We respect the principles and conscience of individual members. And so the Government is fully entitled to ask the Farliamentary Party for complete support for the policy it is carrying through.
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A question from Party members at the Central Council meeting in July 1971
Nation/region
South East England
Grant awarded
£400,000
Award date
19/07/2010
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It comprises almost 1,000 boxes and includes a rich and diverse collection of papers from his time in office, in the shadow cabinet, as well as personal papers from his early life as an undergraduate at Balliol College, and his active role in student politics during the 1930s.

Saved for the nation: Bodleian Libraries acquire Sir Edward Heath Archive

The archive comprises almost 1,000 boxes and includes a diverse collection of papers from his time in office and in the shadow government as well as personal papers from his school days and at Oxford where he was an undergraduate at Balliol College. He travelled to Spain during the Spanish Civil War and Nazi Germany in the late 1930s and the papers include his observations of the treatment of Jews and his photographs of one of the Nuremberg Rallies.