

**ROCC**

***MICHAEL ALDRICH***

***PRESS CUTTINGS***

***MARCH 1992***

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SONIA MCLAUGHLAN:

Well, Labour's Treasury spokesman, John Smith, has been in Sussex today to campaign for his Party.

With many businesses in the county struggling to cope with the recession Mr. Smith said he'd come to hear some of their concerns.

After spending the morning in Brighton where he saw a demonstration of the latest computer technology he moved to the North of the county. In Crawley he toured a firm on the town's industrial estate where he had this message -

JOHN SMITH (Labour's Treasury Spokesman):

My message is that the recession was unnecessary and it will continue until a government acts to end it, and that is why a Labour government would be better for industry and commerce here as elsewhere. How will we bring it to an end? First of all by encouraging investment, then by stimulating the construction industry, by promoting training, and by these means helping to restore confidence to industry and commerce, and we have been through a difficult period of time in which we have suffered the results of boom bust economics, we've got to do something better for the future but in the meantime a government must act, if it doesn't act the recession will just go on.

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INTERVIEWER:

But many business leaders don't trust Labour, they don't think that you have the ability to get the economy back on the right track.

JOHN SMITH:

Well, there's not very many of them have much confidence I think in what they've been through for the last year or two, and I believe that very shortly a Labour government will be able to demonstrate to them that we are intent on a real partnership with business and industry and that they will find that the Labour government is practical and serious and determined to build a strong economy in Britain, and I think at the moment some of them are showing a certain amount of political loyalty to the Conservative Party rather than making an objective analysis of the situation.

TIM HUMPHREY:

Labour's Treasury Spokesman, John Smith. Well, what are businesses in Sussex looking for from the parties in this General Election? The Chairman of the company Mr. Smith was visiting in Crawley, ROCC Computers, described the last two years as 'quite a struggle'. But even after this afternoon's visit, Michael Aldridge still wasn't sure who he'd be voting for.

MICHAEL ALDRIDGE (ROCC Computers):

The recession has bitten into our capital goods business. Our services business, which is about half our business, is growing at a very, very strong rate. We're very pleased with that. But we're very concerned that our capital goods business has fallen off because investment has fallen off.

ANDREW SINCLAIR (Reporter):

And do you believe that the worst is now behind you, or could there still be more to come?

MICHAEL ALDRIDGE:

We have from our own projections no evidence whatsoever of any kind of upturn. If you want to ask me a personal view I rather suspect it might get worse before it gets better.

A. SINCLAIR:

And would you say that the situation ROCC Computers is in is similar to many other firms here on the industrial estate in Crawley?

MICHAEL ALDRIDGE:

Very much so. Unfortunately.

A. SINCLAIR:

What did John Smith have to say to you today?

MICHAEL ALDRIDGE:

He talked about the policy for recovery and for investment and about, you know, the approach that a Labour government would take in terms of the economy. It's what we've heard very much before. I think some of the things that perhaps need a bit more explaining is that I'm very fond of rectitude in public finance and I would quite like to know the full facts of the current public finance conditions, particularly is there a big hole in public finances as has been discussed over the last week or so.

A. SINCLAIR:

Would you go as far as saying that you've been won over to Labour's views today?

MICHAEL ALDRIDGE:

I don't think it's been a case of being won over to

anything. I think it's a case of as a company we want an end to recession and we want somebody that is going to make a positive contribution to do it.

A. SINCLAIR:

Do you think that Labour is the party which could end this recession for you?

MICHAEL ALDRIDGE:

I think the economic situation of the country is far worse than any of the political parties are so far admitting, and I rather suspect that the only way that we're going to get out of the economic mess is to pull together as a nation and that we've got here a very divisive election campaign going on and I really would like to see the end to the election as quickly as possible and the nation starting to pull together to do whatever needs to be done to get us out of it. For.. not for a moment do I think that it's a short haul, I think it's a long haul.

A. SINCLAIR:

You talk about pulling together, what do you mean by that?

MICHAEL ALDRIDGE:

It would be nice to have a consensus in the country about what ought to be done to get us out of this recession, and that means a consensus about long term investment in various areas, and to see a recovery that is investment-led, not consumer goods led. We need to be putting money into investment in industry. There are people in Crawley, skilled people, professional people, without work, and we need investment in those factories and we need investment to get the country back working again.

S. MCLAUGHLAN:

That's the Chairman of ROCC Computers in Crawley, Michael Aldridge, talking to our reporter Andrew Sinclair.

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