

and may well be made impossible, when the negotiators fear that any concession, or compromise is, within the hour, going to be printed, pictured or broadcast as a capitulation.

There is another difficulty which you will appreciate. Quiet and constructive achievement often has no one to write or speak its praise. But conflict is its own publicity agent. A clash looks more exciting than a slow edging towards compromise. It is, therefore, more likely to get the front page.

But when it reaches the front page, the honour and pride of politicians and peoples become engaged. Headlines harden convictions, without clarifying them. As I have said more than once, there is nothing more difficult for a political negotiator to retreat from than a bold, black headline!

Please do not misunderstand me. I do not advocate secret deals around green baize tables in a dim light with all curtains drawn. No genuinely democratic state can or should countenance commitments secretly entered into; or adopt policies or make engagements without the people knowing about them and parliament passing on them.

But full publicity for objectives and policies and results, does not mean, or at least should not mean that negotiation must always be conducted, step by step, in public. Certainly no private business, not even a public relations business, could be operated successfully by such methods. And government is the most important business of all.

Diplomacy is simply the agency for the conduct of that business with other states. As such it involves the application of intelligent public relations procedures to the conduct of foreign affairs.

There are times when I think we might be well advised to leave more of it to the diplomats. They are trained for the job and they are usually happy to conduct a negotiation without issuing a progress report after each 20 minute period.

I hope that I won't be considered as disloyal to my Trade Union of political negotiators if I suggest that there are certain things that ambassadors and officials can do better than foreign or other ministers, especially in the early stages of negotiation.

If governments fail to reach agreement through official diplomatic channels, they can go on trying or, at worst, fail without fury. But when Foreign Ministers or, even more, when heads of governments meet, with their inevitable retinue of press, radio, and television companions, with experts, advisors and advisors to advisors, things become more complicated and often more difficult.

There is always the danger that if agreement cannot be reached at meetings on which so much public hope and expectation have been centred, this will inevitably be interpreted as conclusive evidence that