

CONFIDENTIAL

1.

PRIME MINISTER

Your comment on the letter below worries me a little. You are, of course, quite right when you say that the Chief Secretary can really deal only with the role of the Treasury and that a CSD Minister should talk about the CSD. No doubt Mr. Biffen and Mr. Channon could both be invited to give evidence on this basis. But if we proceed in this way, there is a very real risk that the Sub-Committee will say that the only person who can comment on the roles of both Departments and on the relationship between them is you and that you should therefore be invited to appear before them to give evidence.

I think that we want to avoid getting into this situation, and I therefore suggest that Mr. Biffen should continue to try to escape the attentions of the Sub-Committee but without advancing the reason you suggested. Do you agree?

Yes - but it will
be difficult.

AMC

ant.

27 June 1980

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Prime Minister



I would have thought the
Chancellor's and Chief Secretary's
view on this was right. Agree?

AKL
24/6

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

T P Lankester Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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The only safe ground on
which he can refer to
appear before a Treasury
Committee is that

23 June 1980

Committee is that

he knows chiefly only the roles
of Treasury, A CSD, Finance -
Paul Chamber, in much more

Dear Tim,

SHELDON SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE TREASURY AND CIVIL SERVICE (unpublished)
SELECT COMMITTEE on the CSD

On 18 June the Chief Secretary received an informal request, via Mr Michael English, to give evidence to the Sub-Committee about the machinery of Government issues relating to the roles of the Treasury and the CSD. The date proposed was 25 June, and the Chief Secretary turned this down on the grounds of the short notice, his commitments with the Committee Stage of the Finance Bill, and the fact that the Sub-Committee had yet to complete their evidence from officials: Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir Douglas Wass are to give evidence to them on 2 July.

He has also consulted the Chancellor on the question whether it is appropriate for a Treasury Minister to appear before the Sub-Committee at all on this subject, and they have agreed that this should be avoided at this stage. The Chief Secretary would be grateful to know if the Prime Minister shares this view.

Yours sincerely,
Aristair Pirie

A C PIRIE
Private Secretary

23 JUN 1980

