



PRIME MINISTER

Ref: A09469

Are you content?

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PRIME MINISTER

*This is a reference
note for private office could
we have a digest for Ministers
ms*

Questions of Procedure for Ministers

You will recall from your previous Ministerial experience that at the outset of a new Administration the Prime Minister issues to his colleagues a compendium of guidance on a variety of matters that relate to the running of the Government and to the conduct of Ministers. All Governments since the war have found such a document valuable as a source of reference on matters about which Ministers would otherwise be constantly looking to No. 10 or the Cabinet Office for guidance. Virtually the whole document reflects practice that has become common to both major parties in office; indeed some of it, such as the guidance on private interests, has been made public.

2. I accordingly attach for your approval a draft of Questions of Procedure for Ministers and of a cover note in your name under which it would be circulated, in printed form, to all Members of the Government. It is desirable to issue this as early in the life of a new Government as possible since Ministers need to be aware of some of the guidance e.g. that on private interests, Cabinet procedure and appointments, virtually straightaway.

3. Much of the document will be familiar to you and much is purely procedural. I would however draw your attention particularly to the following paragraphs which contain guidance that reflect the spirit in which the Government is to conduct its affairs:-

Paragraph 8 (Appeals to the Cabinet from Cabinet Committees)

Paragraphs 21, 22 and 101 (Collective Responsibility)

Paragraphs 25-31 (Propriety and Security in the conduct of Government business)

Paragraph 39 (Conduct of Parliamentary Private Secretaries)

John Hunt

4th May, 1979

DRAFT

CABINET: PROCEDURE

QUESTIONS OF PROCEDURE FOR MINISTERS

Note by the Prime Minister

1. I circulate with this note a memorandum which brings together guidance on matters of procedure and Ministerial conduct. The principles set down have evolved through successive Administrations over many years.
2. I ask my colleagues to read the memorandum with great care and to make sure that its contents are familiar to their Private Offices and to their principal Departmental advisers.
3. Guidance on the rules governing travel by Ministers is issued separately.

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