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MISC 11(79) 6th Meeting

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CABINET

MINISTERIAL GROUP ON PUBLIC EXPENDITURE

MINUTES of a Meeting held in Conference
Room A, Cabinet Office on
TUESDAY 24 JULY 1979 at 8.30 am

PRESENT

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer (In the Chair)

The Rt Hon Lord Soames
Lord President of the Council

The Rt Hon George Younger MP
Secretary of State for Scotland

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP
Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon John Nott MP
Secretary of State for Trade

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP
Chief Secretary, Treasury

Miss J Kelley
Northern Ireland Office

SECRETARIAT

Mr P Mountfield
Mr T J Burr

SUBJECT

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE 1980-81

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The Committee further considered the proposed reductions set out in Annex B to C(79)26 on expenditure within the responsibilities of the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER summing up a brief discussion, said that the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales accepted equivalent reductions in their expenditure to those agreed for corresponding English expenditure. Subject to minor revisions, these reductions would amount to £257 million for Scotland and about £109 million for Wales. Officials would settle the precise equivalent figures on the normal basis. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland had suggested that officials should agree the figures for his expenditure, but his officials were not authorised to accept the equivalent reduction of £96 million indicated by the reductions in corresponding English expenditure. The Chief Secretary, Treasury, should discuss and agree the figures urgently with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. He would himself minute the Prime Minister before the Cabinet meeting on 26 July to inform her of the Committee's conclusions.

The Committee -

Took note, with approval, of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's summing up of their discussion, and invited the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Chief Secretary, Treasury to proceed accordingly.

Cabinet Office

25 July 1979