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8 July 1980

MP 9/1/80

The Rt Hon Edward du Cann MP
Chairman
Select Committee on the Treasury
and the Civil Service
House of Commons
London SW1

For Mr du Cann,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE TREASURY AND THE CIVIL SERVICE

Your Clerk has invited me to let you and your colleagues on the Committee have a statement on progress with the work with which I am associated. I have pleasure in sending you the enclosed note which updates the one I laid before your Committee in February; I should be obliged to the Clerk if he would, with your agreement, circulate it to members of the Committee together with a copy of this letter.

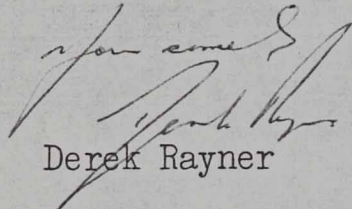
You will see that I emphasise in the note that my status is that of an adviser without executive authority and that the success of my contribution depends upon the response made by Ministers and officials. I draw attention to this in no negative or defensive spirit but to ensure that your Committee is under no misapprehension about my position.

Questions at recent meetings of the Committee to CSD officials have suggested that I have "succeeded" where CSD has "failed" and that I have been able to find savings where CSD has not. I cannot comment, of course, on anything that happened before I was appointed, but I would like to establish with you and your colleagues that the work with which my name is associated is done very largely by officials in Departments appointed by and working on behalf of their Ministers. If therefore savings have been found and reforms suggested, they have been found and suggested by Departments themselves rather than by me. My function in these exercises is chiefly that of advice, encouragement and a different perspective.

It may also be helpful to say a word about the working relationship between CSD and myself. As so often in these matters, "CSD", "the Treasury" or even "Marks & Spencer" can become misleading shorthands. In talking about "CSD", I have to think in terms of the policies for which its Ministers are responsible and for the

people who are responsible for advising Ministers on those policies and for implementing them. In terms of both policies and people there is generally a good relationship between CSD and my small office and myself.

I was very pleased to see that you told Sir John Herbecq that you regard your Committee and the CSD as allies. You were kind enough to say the same thing to me when I met the Committee in February. While it is entirely right for Parliament to retain a critical - even a suspicious - view of the Executive, I am sure that the causes of efficiency and value for money in the Government Service will be enormously assisted if we can help each other and be seen to be doing so.


Derek Rayner

Enc: Note on Progress with Rayner Exercises