

PRIME MINISTER

Select Committee on Trade and Industry

The attached letter from Mr. Nott's Private Secretary raises the question of your submitting evidence to the Industry and Trade Select Committee about the organisation of the Departments of Industry and Trade.

We have asked Sir Ian Bancroft, as your adviser on machinery of government matters, to let you have his views on this suggestion, but for my own part I should be very reluctant to see you putting any evidence to a select committee. I am not aware of any precedent for a Prime Minister giving evidence in recent times (though we shall need to do some research to establish whether this is so). If you submitted a paper, the next step would of course be a request from the Select Committee for you to give oral evidence. And once the precedent of evidence from you had been established in this case, we could expect a continuing stream of requests for evidence from you on any number of other subjects.

If you agree that you should not submit a paper, one alternative way of proceeding would be for Sir Keith Joseph and Mr. Nott to put in a memorandum which had been previously cleared with you. But as I say, we shall be getting considered advice from Sir Ian Bancroft.

I don't need to go. KMS.

- The answer is that we don't see merger (Business Minister with Trade) and are

reluctant to go back to another very large department at any rate so soon out.

3 March 1980