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Hof Trans.
Sir John Hunt
CWO.
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

21 May 1979

Dear Private Secretary,

The Prime Minister has now authorised the circulation of "Questions of Procedure for Ministers", and it is currently being printed. It should be available to you later this week.

The Prime Minister has asked me to underline two points about Cabinet business to which she attaches particular importance. "Questions of Procedure" will stress that papers for Cabinet or Cabinet Committees should be circulated at least two full working days before they are to be discussed. The Prime Minister wishes to ensure that Private Offices put these papers before Ministers at least 48 hours before the meeting, and do not hold them up until the night beforehand.

Secondly, I have been asked to stress the need for brevity in Cabinet papers. This is a regular plea: but the Prime Minister wishes to emphasize that issues should be carefully analysed before Ministers put them to Cabinet or Cabinet Committees, and that they should be presented for discussion and decision succinctly.

I would be grateful if you could ensure that these two points are always borne in mind when you are preparing papers for consideration in Cabinet or at a Cabinet Committee.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to all members of the Cabinet, including the Minister of Transport, and to Sir John Hunt. I would be grateful if Private Secretaries could ensure that it is brought to the attention of their Junior Ministers.

Yours sincerely,
K.R. Stone.

The Private Secretary

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