

CONFIDENTIAL

Govt Buildings

8.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

B/F 28/6/79

21 June 1979

Expenditure on Government Accommodation

Yesterday Mr. Finsberg answered a Written Question from Mr. William Hamilton about the cost of refurbishing the accommodation provided for Ministers since 3 May. Among the items listed was the sum of £1736 for expenses on the Prime Minister's behalf. To the best of our knowledge no-one here was consulted about the fact that you intended to publish this information. This must not happen again. It is all too likely that such information will be picked up and used against the Prime Minister at Question Time; and, while Questions must obviously be answered fully and directly, the Prime Minister must be aware of what is going on so that she can be prepared for any follow-up she may have to face. Much the same applies to the other Ministers concerned.

May we have your assurance that you will let us know before any similar information is published in future?

N. J. SANDERS

David Edmonds, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

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proposes to take to clean up the River Mersey and to improve the quality of industrial effluent discharged into the river.

Mr. Fox : None. This is a matter for the North-West water authority. Its longer-term proposals are described in two documents: (1) "Inland River Water Quality"—a consultation paper on suggested long-term objectives, November 1978 and (2) "Report on Planning" of February 1979.

Government Buildings (Energy Conservation)

Mr. Arthur Lewis asked the Secretary of State for the Environment in view of the need to conserve energy, to what extent he has taken action to double glaze and roof insulate all Government buildings; and what progress has been made.

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg : Roof insulation is one of several cost-effective energy conservation measures being undertaken by the Property Services Agency. A programme of roof insulation, wall cavity filling and draught proofing in the Services married quarters is expected to be completed in 1980-81. On other Government buildings, roof insulation is being carried out as resources permit. Because of the high cost of double glazing, priority is being given to the other measures which are more cost effective. The matter is, however, kept under constant review.

Touring Caravans

Mr. Fry asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many touring caravans are in use in Great Britain.

Mr. Monro : There are no official statistics of the number of touring caravans in use. Estimates—excluding motor caravans—made by manufacturers and voluntary organisations range from 325,000 to 600,000.

Departmental Organisation

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what precise steps he is taking to uncover and thereafter to eliminate, waste in the nationwide organisation of his Department for which he is ultimately responsible; and if, in due course, he will seek to make a statement in the House thereon.

Mr. Heseltine : I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to him today by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

Ministerial Accommodation (Refurbishing Costs)

Mr. William Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the total cost of refurbishing the accommodation provided for Ministers since 3 May; and whether he will publish a table showing the details for each Ministry.

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg : Total expenditure incurred in refurbishing accommodation for Ministers since 3 May is £26,886. This includes expenses on official residences. The details are:

	£
Prime Minister	1,736
Chancellor of the Exchequer ...	2,685
Education and Science	135
Energy	720
Environment	1,939
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	802
Home Office	20
MAFF	924
Trade	16,245
Treasury	1,425
Welsh Office	255

Wildlife

Mr. Kimball asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the Government intend to strengthen legislation to protect wildlife.

Mr. Heseltine : Yes. It is our intention to introduce in this Session a Bill which, in broad terms, will seek to strengthen the protection afforded to wildlife and its habitat and to embrace our international obligations.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Council of Ministers

Mr. Major asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will make a statement on the results of the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Nine on political co-operation held on 18 June.

Sir Ian Gilmour : The Foreign Ministers met in political co-operation on 18 June. They discussed the conference on security and co-operation in Europe, current problems in the Middle East, and South East Asia. My right hon. and

carrying hazardous cargoes; what specific recommendations have been made; to what extent these have been implemented; and whether the local authorities most closely concerned have been kept informed;

(3) what steps have been taken since 1 January to improve the safety of the hazardous installations in the Canvey Island/Thurrock area covered by the Health and Safety Executive's report published in June 1978, giving specific details in the case of each installation;

(4) when the promised information about current legislation relating to liquefied gas terminals in the United States of America and the Netherlands and about research into the behaviour of liquefied gases which might have a bearing on the siting of such terminals will be sent to the hon. Member for Essex, South-East.

Mr. Mayhew: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Race Relations Employment Advisory Group

Mr. Tilley asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will continue to attend meetings of the Race Relations Employment Advisory Group.

Mr. Mayhew: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mobility of Labour

Mr. Thompson asked the Secretary of State for Employment what changes are to be made to the Manpower Services Commission schemes to promote geographical mobility of labour in order to achieve financial savings.

Mr. Prior: I am informed by the MSC that the following changes will be made:

A Employment Transfer Scheme

Under the employment transfer scheme people who are unemployed, or threatened with redundancy, can be given cash help to move to take up work beyond normal daily travelling distance of their homes.

(i) Local Labour Market Rules

At present two of the conditions for receiving assistance apply only to moves from places outside the assisted areas. These conditions are that there are

- (a) no reasonable prospects of suitable employment in the home area; and

- (b) no suitable unemployed registrants in the new area.

In future these local labour market rules will apply also to moves from places in the assisted areas.

(ii) Disturbance Allowance

At present disturbance allowance is payable to single workers without dependants who move from assisted areas. This allowance will, in future, be paid only for moves originating in special development areas where the destination of the move is of lower assisted area status (e.g. to a development area).

(iii) Transfer Grants

At present transfer grants towards the incidental expenses of moving home are paid to workers with dependants. There is a higher rate for all moves originating in assisted areas. In future the higher rate will be payable for moves originating in special development or development areas only if:

- (a) the destination of the move is of lower assisted area status than its origin (e.g. in the case of a move from a special development area); or

- (b) the applicant is a former textile or clothing worker, or is moving to take up a vacancy in certain skilled occupations in designated industrial sectors which has been unfilled for eight weeks or more.

The higher rate will no longer be payable in respect of any move originating in an intermediate area.

(iv) Temporary Transfers

Temporary transfers will no longer be eligible for assistance.

B Key Workers Scheme

Under this scheme employment transfer scheme type assistance is given where employers move key workers to new or expanding establishments in assisted areas. This scheme will be discontinued.

C Job Search Scheme

Under this scheme financial assistance is given to those who are unemployed to look for employment beyond normal daily travelling distance of their homes. At present, the two local labour market rules (in paragraph A above) apply only to people whose home is not in an assisted area. In future they will apply to everyone.

Implementation Date

The above changes will apply to applications received by MSC local offices after 30 June.

ENVIRONMENT

River Mersey

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures he

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr W W Hamilton (Lab - Central Fife):

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Mr Geoffrey Finsberg

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