

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet Committees

This submission contains recommendations for the main standing Committees of the Cabinet in the light of the appointments which you made yesterday. It would be helpful to have your decision on these fairly soon: but there is urgency over the Ministerial Committee on Europe because a meeting will almost certainly be needed on Wednesday, 9th May to settle our line for the final phase of the Lome II negotiations.

Defence and Overseas Policy Committee (OPD)

I suggest that the terms of reference should be:-

"To keep under review the Government's defence and overseas policy."

and that the composition should be:-

- Prime Minister
- ? Home Secretary? x *if possible*
- Lord Chancellor
- Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary
- ? Chancellor of the Exchequer? x *Try: yes.*
- Secretary of State for Defence
- Lord President
- Lord Privy Seal
- Sec of State for Trade ✓*

I am not recommending a separate Committee to deal with Rhodesia and Southern African questions. I think it makes more sense (and will mean fewer meetings) if OPD handles these, though when questions relating to trade and sanctions are being discussed it will sometimes be necessary to invite other Ministers e.g. Trade, Energy and the Attorney General.

*No* on Northern Ireland. If you want this, it can easily be arranged. The composition would however be almost identical to OPD and you may think it simpler to let OPD deal also with Irish affairs. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland could be invited whenever they were on the agenda: or alternatively you could make him a full member of the Committee on the understanding that he would not have to attend if he was in Belfast and matters of concern to him were not on the agenda.

*? Industry within of EQ is a sub-c'tn.*

Finally this can be a sub-committee of

Ministerial Committee on European Questions (EQ)

I suggest that the terms of reference should be:-

"To consider questions relating to the United Kingdom's membership of the European Community."

OPD augmented as requested. The chairmanship would not then conflict with an earlier form.

no t.o.v. see below.

There is a problem over the chairmanship. Lord Soames has already approached me and made a strong bid for this. I believe that he had also spoken similarly to Lord Carrington. His case is essentially that, while he has no wish to go to Brussels or to get in the hair of FCO Ministers, his European experience would be invaluable in pulling things together in Whitehall. I am less sure about the need for this, which is the task of the European Unit in the Cabinet Office anyway. In my view a better case would rest on having a neutral chairman as between FCO and Treasury Ministers and the availability of Lord Soames for chairing meetings if the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is out of the country. On the other hand I think Lord Carrington wants the chairmanship since he does not intend to leave Europe solely to Sir Ian Gilmour: and there must be some risk that if the chairmanship is given to Lord Soames that, despite his saying that he does not want to get involved in negotiations, we would in fact drift back into the 1973-74 situation that neither Lord Home nor Mr. John Davies found very satisfactory. The compromise of giving the chairmanship to Sir Ian Gilmour would not, I think, suit either man. The simplest way of resolving the matter is of course to give the chairmanship to Lord Carrington <sup>\*</sup> because of his greater seniority in Cabinet order: and if you decide otherwise I think you may need to have a word with him about it.

indeed he does! KRS

If however you agree, the composition could be:-

- Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary (Chairman)
- ~~Chancellor of the Exchequer~~ (but with the Chief Secretary free to represent him on less important matters)
- X Secretary of State for Industry - rarely
- Lord President
- X Secretary of State for Employment - rarely
- Lord Privy Seal
- Minister of Agriculture
- Secretary of State for Trade
- X Secretary of State for Energy - rarely
- Attorney General

\* I understand that Lord Carrington wd. be content for Lord Soames to act as Deputy Chairman should the Chair be in his absence. This may be the best solution.

(Other Ministers, in particular the territorial Secretaries of State and the Secretaries of State for the Environment and Transport would need to attend on occasions but I think there would be merit in keeping the nucleus of the Committee as small as possible.)

In addition I think there is a need for a separate group (since rather different Ministers are involved) on Community Fisheries Questions (FQ). I suggest its terms of reference should be:-

"To keep under review policy on the revision of the Common Fisheries Policy and related matters."

and that the composition should be:-

- Lord Privy Seal (Chairman)
- Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Secretary of State for Scotland
- Secretary of State for Wales
- Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
- Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Royal Navy

To sub.c'te  
or ad hoc.

No - keep it to  
OPD  
Assignment  
Jo. the relevant  
item

#### Economic Committees

I think you will need a senior "macro" committee under your own chairmanship to chart the Government's strategy and to consider major questions of policy: and also a second-tier and largely "micro" committee to take some of the load off your own and to deal largely with industrial questions.

For the Ministerial Committee on Economic Strategy (ES) I suggest the terms of reference should be:-

"To keep under review the broad development of the Government's economic strategy, both internal and external."

and that the composition should be:-

- Prime Minister (Chairman)
- Home Secretary
- ~~Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary~~ ✓
- Chancellor of the Exchequer
- Secretary of State for Industry
- ? Lord President
- Secretary of State for Employment
- ? Minister of Agriculture (most of his departmental business will go to EQ)
- Secretary of State for Trade
- Secretary of State for Energy
- Chief Secretary, Treasury

Energy  
Oil.

? L.P.S.

?

?

(Other Ministers, e.g. Environment, Scotland and Wales would, of course have to be invited on occasion).

*A sub-committee of the main committee*

For the Ministerial Committee on Economic Affairs (EA) the choice of chairmanship lies between the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Industry and possibly the Lord President. I would favour giving it to the Chancellor initially: but he will be carrying a very heavy burden and, depending on how pay matters go, there may be a case later for abolishing the Committee and setting up two separate ones - one under the Chancellor on pay questions and one under the Secretary of State for Industry on industrial questions. If however you agree to the idea of a combined committee under the Chancellor initially, its terms of reference could be:-

"To consider questions arising in the field of economic affairs."

and the composition could be:-

*No terms of reference required if sub-committee of main committee*

- ~~Chancellor of the Exchequer~~ (Chairman)
- Secretary of State for Industry
- Secretary of State for Employment
- ~~Lord Privy Seal~~
- Secretary of State for the Environment
- Secretary of State for Scotland
- Secretary of State for Wales
- ~~Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster~~
- Secretary of State for Trade
- Secretary of State for Energy
- Chief Secretary, Treasury
- ~~Minister of Transport~~

Queen's Speech and Future Legislation Committee (QL)

You have already approved the composition of this viz:-

- Home Secretary (Chairman)
- Lord Chancellor
- Chancellor of the Exchequer
- Lord President
- Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
- Attorney General
- Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury

Legislation Committee (L)

I suggest that the terms of reference should be:-

"To examine all draft Bills and such statutory instruments as may be referred to it; to consider arrangements for debate in Parliament of proposals for the European Economic

Community secondary legislation; to consider arrangements for dealing with Private Members' business; and to keep under review the Government's policy in relation to issues of Parliamentary Procedures."

and that the composition should be:-

~~Chancellor of the Duchy and Leader of the House of Commons~~  
(Chairman) - *Leader of House but not as chairman.*

? Home Secretary

Lord Chancellor - *Chairman*

✓ ~~Lord Privy Seal~~ *Someone for Employment, Patrick Daynes?*

Lord President and Leader of the House of Lords

Secretary of State for Scotland

Secretary of State for Wales

Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury

Captain, Gentlemen-at-Arms

Attorney General

Lord Advocate

Financial Secretary, Treasury

#### Home and Social Affairs (H)

I suggest the terms of reference should be:-

"To keep under review social and other domestic matters which are not within the terms of reference of any other Committee; and to consider proposals for legislation when necessary."

and that the composition should be:-

Home Secretary (Chairman)

Lord Chancellor

Secretary of State for Employment

Lord President and Leader of the House of Lords (CSD)

Secretary of State for the Environment

Secretary of State for Social Services

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

Secretary of State for Scotland

Secretary of State for Wales

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Secretary of State for Education

Chief Secretary, Treasury

Minister of Transport

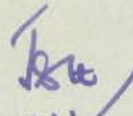
Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury

Captain, Gentlemen-at-Arms

*Not functional -  
they come for  
their Bills.*

CONCLUSION

If you agree to the above recommendations, these Committees would constitute the main standing committees of the Cabinet (and you will note what I have suggested in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the draft of "Questions of Procedure for Ministers" about the question of appeals from them). There will be a need for a handful of less important committees (e.g. Science and Technology, Security, Terrorism and Statistical Policy) and I will let you have recommendations for these shortly.

  
John Hunt

6th May 1979

Please keep the committees  
down at the start. They have  
a tendency to grow anyway so we  
will start with only a few - the  
various committees through time.  
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