



CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

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During the course of the flight home you criticised the draft Cabinet paper on Regional Policy and asked whether Ministers had guidance on the form which Cabinet papers should take. I said that they had.

This guidance is set out in paragraph 13 of Questions of Procedure for Ministers (C(P)(79) 1). This paragraph reads as follows and I have underlined the key sentence:-

"Memoranda for the Cabinet and Committees of the Cabinet should be as clear and as brief as possible, not exceeding two pages at maximum. Time spent in making a memorandum short and clear will be saved many times over in reading and in discussion; and it is the duty of Ministers to ensure by personal scrutiny that this is done and that, where necessary, memoranda submitted to them are revised accordingly. The model memorandum explains at the outset what the problem is, indicates briefly the relevant considerations, and concludes with a precise statement of the decisions sought. To facilitate reference in discussion, paragraphs should be numbered."

The paper on regional policy does not altogether conform to this criterion but in mitigation two points should be made. The first is the complexity of the problem. The second is that Sir Keith Joseph was reporting a discussion which he had chaired at E(EA) and at which a good deal of disagreement had been expressed with his own views: in an attempt to be fair to his dissenting colleagues he decided to present the issues as neutral as possible to Cabinet i. e. in the form of a series of questions.

I am however reminding the Cabinet secretariat of the guidance given in paragraph 13 of Questions of Procedure and we will do our best in future to see that it is observed.

John
John Hunt

4th July 1979

Cabinet

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

Sir John Hunt

The Prime Minister has seen your minute A09898 of 4 July, 1979, about the preparation of Cabinet papers, and is glad to learn that you are reminding the Cabinet Secretariat of the guidance given in paragraph 13 of Questions of Procedure.

C. A. WHITMORE

5 July, 1979.

Cabinet

SIR JOHN HUNT

The Prime Minister read the Cabinet conclusions for last Thursday's Cabinet meeting and commented that she thought they were far too long. In particular she found the four pages on teachers' pay very long indeed (her underlining). The Prime Minister is, of course, aware of the great pressure under which these minutes were produced, particularly in view of your own departure to the pre-Tokyo meeting in Washington. She would, however, be grateful if the Cabinet Office Secretariat would reduce substantially the length of the record of Cabinet conclusions.

M. R. STONE

21 May 1970

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Prime Minister.

- 1. Do you wish to see these each week? No.
- 2. Do you have views on brevity - 4 pages on Teachers Pay?

K.R.S.
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CC(79) 2nd
Conclusions

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CABINET

I do hope the minutes can be cut-down. I find them very long indeed. M.T.

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet
held at 10 Downing Street on
THURSDAY 17 MAY 1979
at 10.00 am

PRESENT

I have written to Sir J. Hunt.
K.R.S.

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

The Rt Hon Lord Hailsham
Lord Chancellor

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph MP
Secretary of State for Industry

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP
Secretary of State for Defence

The Rt Hon Lord Soames
Lord President of the Council

The Rt Hon James Prior MP
Secretary of State for Employment
(Items 4-9)

The Rt Hon Sir Ian Gilmour MP
Lord Privy Seal

The Rt Hon Peter Walker MP
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP
Secretary of State for the Environment

The Rt Hon George Younger MP
Secretary of State for Scotland

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP
Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon Humphrey Atkins MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for Social Services
(Items 4-9)

The Rt Hon Norman St John-Stevas MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

The Rt Hon John Nott MP
Secretary of State for Trade (Items 4-9)

The Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Energy

The Rt Hon Mark Carlisle MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science