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70 WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

PS(84) 23

30 October 1984

Dear Private Secretary,

Ministerial Correspondence and Memoranda for Cabinet
and Cabinet Committees

As the new Session gets under way Private Offices may find it useful to be reminded of a number of points concerning the submission of Cabinet and Cabinet Committee memoranda and the circulation of Ministerial correspondence.

Memoranda for Cabinet and Cabinet Committees

Departments should ensure that, save in the most exceptional circumstances, all memoranda for Cabinet or Cabinet Committees are circulated at least seven days in advance of the meeting at which they are to be discussed. This is necessary to allow Ministers sufficient time to read, digest and to be properly briefed on memoranda.

This and other guidance on the preparation of business for Cabinet and Cabinet Committees is contained in Questions of Procedure for Ministers C(P)(83) 5. In addition, this office is of course always ready to answer any questions you may have on these procedures.

Ministerial Correspondence

- a. Wherever possible, Ministerial correspondence should be given a title; this makes correspondence easier to identify.
- b. When the subject of Ministerial correspondence has any Parliamentary implications Private Offices should ensure that it is copied to the Chief Whip's Office, even when the subject concerns a Cabinet Committee of which the Chief Whip is not a member.

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c. It would be helpful if Private Offices could ensure that the names of originators and copy addressees are clearly marked on correspondence. When letters are copied and recopied many times, names can easily be lost or become faded into illegibility. Security classifications should similarly be marked to avoid their suffering the same fate.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to all members of the Cabinet, the Law Officers, the Chief Whip and the Paymaster General. I should be grateful if recipients would ensure that this information is made available to all concerned within their Departments.

(Signed) R P HATFIELD

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