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MR BUTLER

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Ministerial Structure in the Department of the Environment

I am offering this minute by way of background for when the Prime Minister is thinking about a possible Ministerial reshuffle.

2. The Department of the Environment at present has a team of seven Ministers; the Secretary of State, three Ministers of State (one of them in the House of Lords) and three Parliamentary Under Secretaries.

3. The usual quota of Ministers for this Department has been six (one Secretary of State, two Ministers of State and three Parliamentary Under Secretaries). The third Minister of State was added to provide extra support on local government issues, and particularly on the abolition legislation.

4. In the longer term it is considered that six Ministers should be enough. One of the six should clearly be in the House of Lords; but, if there are only to be two Ministers of State, it would be preferable that both of them should be in the House of Commons and that one of the three Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State should be in the House of Lords.

5. In the immediate future the Department probably needs to continue to keep one extra Minister to help to deal with the problems of abolition until April 1986. But the ideal configuration would be one Secretary of State, two Ministers of State (both in the Commons) and four Parliamentary Under Secretaries (one in the Lords).

RCA

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