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FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE
AND THE CHIEF WHIP

7 January 1986

Dear David

ROSKILL REPORT

attached

In your letter of 31 December to William Fittall you mentioned that Lord Roskill had drawn attention to the convention in the House of Lords that the Chairman and members of a Committee could not speak on its report in the House. You asked Joan MacNaughton to arrange for this point to be considered, as the convention seemed on the face of it to be outdated.

There is no generally recognised convention of the kind suggested by Lord Roskill. He may perhaps have in mind the so-called Addison Rules, which limit the part which may be played by a Lord who is a member of a public board in a debate on matters affecting the board of which he is a member. These rules, however, are not normally taken as applying to members of Committees appointed to undertake inquiries. They apply to boards in a more limited sense - the National Coal Board or the Parole Board, for example.

I have found two instances in the last twenty years of a Peer speaking in a House of Lords debate on a report of a Committee under his chairmanship: on 24 July 1968 Lord Fulton spoke in a debate on the Report of the Committee on the Civil Service, and on 12 December 1973 Lord Kilbrandon spoke in a debate on the Report of the Royal Commission on the Constitution. Lord Hunt of Tanworth did not speak in the debate on 23 November 1982 on the Report of the Inquiry into Cable Expansion and Broadcasting Policy, but that can hardly be regarded as establishing a convention. Indeed, the Lord President is anxious that Chairmen and members of Committees should be encouraged to take part in debates in the House of Lords on their Reports.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours: William Fittall (Home Office), Richard Stoate (Lord Chancellor's Office), John Mogg (Department of Trade and Industry), Rachel Lomax (HM Treasury), Andrew Lansley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Michael Saunders (Law Officers Department) and Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

David Beamish.

D R BEAMISH

David Norgrove Esq
Private Secretary to
The Prime Minister

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