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

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

5 February 1986

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you very much for your letter. It was characteristically kind of you to write, and very good for my morale: it is so difficult, when one is on stage (so to speak), to judge one's own performance. So it is reassuring to know that people have told you that it went well.

I was nervous beforehand, I must admit; but once the session had got going I rather enjoyed it (I don't mean I wasn't relieved when it stopped). Thanks to the fact that I had done the inquiry and lived through the drafting of your statements, I felt reasonably confident that I knew my

facts and was well prepared for dealing
with the questions; and in a way it
is a sort of game, with your wits
pitted against theirs. I now feel that
I have had a taste of what you face when
you answer questions; I am thankful that
I don't have to go through it every Tuesday
and Thursday.

I devoutly hope that it will have
helped to take the heat out of the affair,
and off you. It's unbelievable that
so relatively trivial a business should
distract you - and so many others -
from the serious business that is true to be done.
And the officials concerned - particularly Charles
and Bernard, and Wolke Bow - have had a very
disagreeable time: they have earned some relief.
Thank you again for writing.
Yours ever Robert

Personal

The Prime Minister

RCA