

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL



McWicks
Prime Minister
I am sure this is right.

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01-233 8319

N. C. W.
22.7.

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

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A086/2149

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Yes

Thank you for your minute of 22 July.

2. As you know, the Prime Minister has suggested - and I gather you are content - that you should reply separately on the point about whether you knew that the disclosure had been authorised by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when you authorised me to offer immunity from prosecution to Miss Bowe. The latest version of the draft Written Answer by the Prime Minister still includes the material on this, but on the understanding that it would in fact become a separate Answer.

3. When I discussed these matters with the Chief Whip^h and others on the evening of 22 July, the view was taken - particularly by the Chief Whip and Mr Ingham - that it would be better not to try and deal at this stage with the point that at the time the inquiry was instituted you did not know that the disclosure had been made by Miss Bowe. The point can be dealt with when we come to the Government's full response to the Select Committee's Report: if you add that to your answer now, it will give the scrutineers and critics something else to fasten on and make an issue of during Thursday and Friday, when there are likely to be a number of

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Parliamentary opportunities to take these matters up: in Prime Minister's Question Time, on the Business Statement, on the Motion for the Adjournment, perhaps during the Consolidated Fund debate, and in Mr Dalyell's adjournment debate.

4. I am sending copies of this minute to the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chief Whip and Mr Wicks.

Robert Hursting

22 July 1986