3.21

CONFIDENTIAL

cc Sir A.P.
Policy Unit

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

N. L. P. R.

A. & C. 13/9

FOREIGN SECRETARY

UK PAPERS ON THE SAFETY NET AND THE STRICT FINANCIAL GUIDELINE

You wrote to me on 8 September about the publication of these papers.

2. I am content with your suggestion that we should publish precis versions of the two papers and I have accordingly asked my officials to clear suitable texts with yours.

3. I accept that the published versions should be distinct in style and format from the negotiating texts. But, while some of the inessential detail can no doubt be omitted, the precis must be sufficiently full to enable us to assure Parliament, if asked, that we have held back nothing of significance.

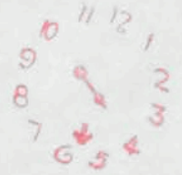
4. I have also seen Michael Jopling's minute of 8 September, which refers to the difficulty of our negotiating position. I recognise that we may have to compromise on some of the detailed procedural points in the strict financial guideline paper. But I think we must recognise now that, unless something close to our guideline is adopted in a binding juridical form and a strict procedure is included to make Supplementary Budgets the exception rather than the rule, there will be no guarantee of effective control of agricultural expenditure.

5. Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, members of OD(E) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

(N.L.)

13 September 1983

EURO Poz: CAP Pt II



CONFIDENTIAL

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH

From the Minister

8/9.

FOREIGN SECRETARY

8 September 1983

PUBLICATION OF UK PAPER ON SAFETY NET AND STRICT FINANCIAL GUIDELINE

I have seen the minute from Nigel Lawson to you of 2 September urging that the UK paper on a strict financial guideline for the CAP should be published. I am not convinced that this is the best way to proceed.

This paper is, as we all recognise, a negotiating document and we are unlikely to be able to persuade our partners to accept it in precisely the form in which we have put it forward. If we are not to make our negotiating position even more difficult than it presently is we must not give hostages to fortune and must allow ourselves some flexibility in changes that may be necessary to bring about agreement. Against this background it seems to me to be counter-productive to publish the paper and far from seeing the positive advantages in doing so it seems to me we limit our options and make it more likely that any fallback is interpreted as a defeat instead of a tactical victory.

In his letter the Chancellor also refers to the "added advantage" that the papers can be referred to in the written evidence to the House of Lords Sub-Committee A enquiry. I do not see this as an advantage nor do I see the need to table what are essentially negotiating documents in the House of Commons library. It would be a most unfortunate precedent to accept that because texts had been leaked in Brussels they should be made available to the House. In explaining our stance to the House of Lords Sub-Committee A, a specific document setting out the points relevant to their enquiry would be more appropriate.

/I am sending...

CONFIDENTIAL

4. The right course now must I think be to publish both papers together at a time and in a form of our own choosing. This should clearly be done as soon as possible. We have an excellent opportunity in the next edition of the Treasury's Economic Progress Report due out on 10 September. Publication then has the added advantage that the papers can be referred to in our written evidence to the House of Lords Sub-Committee A enquiry, which has to be provided by 19 September. The texts will also have to be laid in the House of Commons Library. I suggest that this should be done in the usual way through the Cabinet Office.

5. I am sending copies of this minute to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture, the members of the Ministerial OD(E) Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

N.L.

2 September 1983