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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Rt Hon Tom King MP
Secretary of State
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

28 March 1983

2 Tom,

SELECT COMMITTEES: DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM ON MAIN ESTIMATES

Many thanks for your letter of 24 March, letting me know about the approach from the Environment Committee for a memorandum on the DOE main Estimates for 1983-84.

I do not think this creates a precedent. The Treasury know of similar memoranda from the FCO, the Ministry of Agriculture and DHSS; there may well be others.

As the departmental Select Committees extend their activities, following the report from the Procedure Committee last year, we must expect similar requests. I am sure it is right that we should cooperate. We have already improved the presentation of Estimates to make them more informative and useful to Parliament (and the wider public). A good deal of relevant information is also provided in the annual Public Expenditure White Paper. As your officials know, we are thinking of ways of improving this and relating it more closely to the content of the Estimates. But I am sure the Select Committees will require further explanations, and I believe it is right that we should provide them with the material they need to understand the Government's proposals for Supply. The larger departments may indeed find it prudent to anticipate such requests, and start preparing such memoranda once the Estimates themselves have been finalised. My officials would be glad to see copies of such memoranda, and if necessary to discuss them in draft with departments.

I am sending copies of this reply to all members of the Cabinet and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Y
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C

LEON BRITTAN

29 MAR 1967



24 MAR 1963

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