



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

28 June 1983

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 27 June about the publication of the Review Body reports just before the dissolution of Parliament.

Our problem was that the Prime Minister was most anxious that the contents of all four reports should be confined to the closest possible circle. Given the propensity of such things to leak, therefore, we kept access to the reports to the absolute minimum until the last possible moment. It was most unfortunate that, once we were able to widen the circle, it became necessary to proceed very rapidly towards publication. This, of course, put the whole machinery under great pressure.

We shall, no doubt, face all these problems again next year, and in future years. Your letter is most helpful, and it is particularly useful to have the names of the people at HMSO security press with whom we can deal direct. We shall certainly aim to involve the practitioners at HMSO at the earliest possible date.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

Yours ever,

Robin Butler

W.J. Sharp, Esq., C.B.
Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

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kc questions



Her Majesty's Stationery Office

St Crispins, Duke Street
Norwich NR3 1PD

Telephone Norwich (0603) 22211

W J Sharp CB
Controller and Chief Executive

1 July 1983

F E R Butler Esq
Principal Private Secretary
No 10 Downing Street
Whitehall
London SW1

Michael Schdar

Dear Robin

Many thanks for your letter of 28 June about future arrangements for printing sensitive documents for No 10.

I am glad you feel able to deal direct with my press managers. I am particularly proud of the fact that none of the extremely valuable documents they receive direct from Treasury, the Revenue and Customs & Excise at certain times has ever leaked. These papers are kept very tightly within the Press and no-one else in HMSO - including myself - is informed of their content, unless this is unavoidably necessary in order to facilitate their production. So there should be no cause for concern on future occasions.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Murdo Maclean (CWO).

Yours ever
Bill

Keen Tel,
TSRB, P75

The Minister's Secretary Office
Department of Justice
Parliament Buildings
Wellington



Michael J. Keen

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Charles Pl. could you see MCS.



W J Sharp CB
Controller and Chief Executive

Her Majesty's Stationery Office

St Crispins, Duke Street
Norwich NR3 1PD

Telephone Norwich (0603) 22211

27 June 1983

F E R Butler Esq
Principal Private Secretary
No 10 Downing Street
Whitehall
London SW1

Michael Scholar

How should I reply, please?

Don Rubin

FERB 27.6.

1. Sorry to trouble you about a procedural matter, but Murdo Maclean and I think it important that the appropriate people in No 10 should be briefed on HMSO capability.
2. The occasion which gives rise to this letter was the publication of the 4 reports on pay and allowances just before the recent dissolution of Parliament. I returned to my office from a meeting late afternoon on Friday 6 May to find No 10 wanting to speak to me. Their message was that the PM wanted these 4 reports published by close of play the following Wednesday, 11 May. They had felt unable to speak to anyone else in my absence because of security considerations, and stressed that the reports must be printed in the most secure conditions.
3. Unfortunately the HMSO security press - the one which does the Budget - still has the old letter press technology which requires type setting and hot metal production. Taken with the fact that the printing industry in the normal course go home early on Friday afternoon, there was no way in which the reports could have been printed by the following Wednesday evening. Murdo Maclean and I had a fairly robust exchange about this, but it subsequently emerged that he himself had not been alerted to the imminent problem and had not therefore been able to proffer advice to No 10.
4. In the end the reports were produced in time reprographically by HMSO and the Treasury in sufficient quantity to meet Parliamentary requirements, followed by later publication in the normal printed format for wider distribution and sale.
5. I suggest 2 points for consideration:
 - a. the HMSO security press is completely reliable - nothing has ever leaked from it. There is no reason why No 10 should not deal direct with it, as do the Treasury on the Budget. The manager is R M Gair. There is also no reason why No 10 should not speak direct with complete confidence to any of the following 4 HMSO staff on any production matters:

K A Allen - Director General of Printing
E B MacKendrick - Director of Production
D G Forbes - Director of Parliamentary and Classified Printing
F E Grigson - Parliamentary Liaison Officer

- b. involvement of HMSO at the earliest possible date, either direct or through Murdo Maclean, who is of course vastly experienced in these matters and holds a weekly liaison meeting with our Parliamentary Liaison Officer. It is probably rare for No 10 to become involved directly in printing problems, and I'm sure it would be helpful to involve the practitioners in good time.
6. I am sending a copy of this letter to Murdo Maclean.

Yours ever
Bill

28 JULY 1951



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