



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 April 1988

CDP
18/4.

John Coles

Prime Minister's Meeting with Australian Parliamentarians

In your letter of 13 April, you said that the Australian Parliamentary Delegation had asked the Prime Minister to reconsider the decision not to allow one of the two original copies of the Australian Constitution Act to be presented to Australia.

We had no indication that the Delegation would raise this with the Prime Minister, but the question was recently raised with John Coles in Canberra by one of Mr Hawke's Advisers, and we will look into the question again with John Coles and let you have our recommendation as soon as possible. Meanwhile, it may be helpful if I attach copies of the earlier correspondence between Mr Hawke and the Prime Minister.

I am copying this letter to Paul Stockton (Lord Chancellor's Department).

Yours ever

Robert N. Culshaw

(R N Culshaw)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

✓

RESTRICTED



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

Dee Robert

13 April 1988

LRD

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS

The Prime Minister had a talk with a group of Australian Parliamentarians this morning. The discussion covered Fiji, trade relations with Japan, the prospects for the GATT round and Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister commented that we were grateful to Australia for making arrangements which enabled British ships to continue to visit Australian ports, in contrast to New Zealand. In reply to the delegation's suggestion that British firms should be encouraged to invest in Australia as a good jumping-off point for expanding their activities in the Pacific area, the Prime Minister said that this would depend on the extent to which the trade unions could be brought under control. Her impression was that there was still a long way to go in this area.

The delegation pressed the Prime Minister hard on the question of allowing one of the two original copies of the Australian Constitution to be presented to Australia. The Prime Minister said that she had been sympathetic to the original request. But on closer examination, the wider repercussions had proved considerable and we had very reluctantly concluded that we could not agree. In response to continued and repeated questioning from the delegation on this point, she said that she would be prepared to look at the matter again, without giving them any reason to think that our decision would change.

This last point was not covered in briefing for the meeting. I suppose I should have thought of it. But we shall now have to look at the matter again and reply to the leader of the delegation at some point (although not necessarily while they are still here). I should be grateful if you could set this in hand.

I am copying this letter to Paul Stockton (Lord Chancellor's Department).

C. D. Powell
(C. D. POWELL)

Robert Culshaw, Esq., M.V.O.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

RESTRICTED

SPX/14/

please let me have a draft letter
forward on X. I have told Mr
Powell that this subject was not
expected to come up.

cc/PS
PS/hand General

Mr. Gilmour

Mr. Mahon

13
w

x