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PRIME MINISTER

This is interesting - and, in my view, welcome. Contact to give it your blessing?

FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE  
AND THE CHIEF WHIP

13th November 1979 MJS

Yes - very much so  
mb

ralxi

Dear Nick,

PROPOSED LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

In view of the Prime Minister's correspondence in August with Ian Lloyd on the administration of science policy, I enclose a copy of a letter from the Lord President to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster seeking his agreement and the agreement of colleagues on Legislation Committee to the line he proposes to take in a meeting of the Lords Procedure Committee on 20th November.

The Procedure Committee will report to the House on the proposal by Lords Shackleton and Sherfield that a Select Committee should be set up in the House of Lords on Science and Technology. It is likely that the Procedure Committee will make a recommendation in favour of the new Committee, and it will be a matter for the House to decide.

The Lord President is personally in favour of the Committee being established. He also attaches considerable importance to securing a recommendation to the Procedure Committee that an experimental Committee previously under discussion should not be established, as it could lead to a number of permanent Committees being set up which could extend the time required to get legislation through the House of Lords. The proposal for an experimental Committee has a considerable history, on which I can provide you with further information if required.

Yours ever,

Charles Cumming-Bruce.

C.H. CUMMING-BRUCE

N.J. Sanders, Esq.  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street



FROM THE ... TO THE ...

13 NOV 1978



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Handwritten text, possibly a name or address, in the lower middle section.

cc LCO  
LPO  
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Parliament

MPS



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 November 1979

Proposed Lords Select Committee  
on Science and Technology

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 13 November. She is very much in favour of the proposed Select Committee.

I am copying this letter to Private Secretaries to the members of Legislation Committee and to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

MPS

Charles Cumming-Bruce, Esq.,  
Chief Whip's Office.

CO



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2AT

28 November 1979

*Parliament*  
*VMS*  
*De Christoph*

You wrote to me recently about the Lords Procedure Committee decision in favour of a Select Committee on Science and Technology.

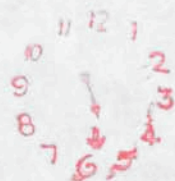
As I said in my letter of 15 November, I would not object to this, provided colleagues who are departmentally concerned are content. It is reassuring to know that the Procedure Committee have agreed not to pursue the experimental Select Committee on the lines of recommendation 16 of the First Report of the 1976-7 Ad Hoc Committee. This could have been much more difficult from a Commons viewpoint.

I am copying this to the recipients of yours.

*Jan e AC*

The Rt Hon Lord Soames, GCMG, GCVO, CBE  
Lord President of the Council  
Civil Service Department  
Old Admiralty Building  
Whitehall  
SW1

28 NOV 1979



*With the compliments of the*  
*Private Secretary to the Leader of the House*  
*and the Chief Whip*  
*House of Lords*

✓  
MS



Parliament

FROM THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE  
HOUSE OF LORDS

November 1979

Dear Norman,

The Procedure Committee have agreed not to proceed with an experimental Committee on the lines proposed in Recommendation 16 of the first report of the Practice and Procedure Committee (Session 1976-1977). They have agreed instead to the Shackleton/Sherfield proposal to establish a Committee on Science and Technology.

Colleagues have expressed concern that the proposed Committee will overlap with the new Commons Committees. I accept that we do what we can to avoid duplication of work. On the other hand, the new Commons Committees will cover the work of all the main Government Departments and this could be used as a reason for opposing the appointment of most Lords Committees. I think that the Lords European Communities Committee has demonstrated that Lords' Committees have a role and can complement those of the Commons, even when they are working in the same field. Science and technology is not the responsibility of any one Commons Committee and many Peers feel that a Lords Committee on the subject would be worthwhile for that reason. Moreover, there are some 80 Peers with knowledge of the field of whom 13 are Fellows of the Royal Society.

I should expect the House to agree to a recommendation from the Procedure Committee that a Committee on Science and Technology should be established as soon as practicable. Francis Pym expressed concern about the inclusion of defence research in the Committee's terms of reference. I shall consult the usual channels and Lords Shackleton and Sherfield on this point and write to colleagues when I have done so. The view of the Procedure Committee was that the new Committee should be set up as soon as staffing and accommodation considerations permitted. At present, it appears unlikely that the Committee could begin work before Easter 1980.

The Rt Hon Norman St-John Stevas, MP  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

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FROM THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE  
HOUSE OF LORDS

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, Members of Legislation Committee, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, the Secretary of State for Defence, the Secretary of State for Industry, the Secretary of State for Trade, the Secretary of State for Energy, the Minister of Transport, Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir Ian Bancroft.

Yours ever

Christopher

The Rt Hon Norman St-John Stevas, MP  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster



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Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

VMS

15 November 1979

*A. Chapple*

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

You wrote to me on 12 November about the proposal from Lord Shackleton and Lord Sherfield for a Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology, and I have now seen your further letter of 14 November.

My main concern is of course with any possible repercussions on our room for manoeuvre in dealing with the outstanding Commons Procedure Committee proposals, and more generally on the implications for the passage of Government legislation. I am therefore glad to know that you are intending to resist the proposals in recommendation 16 of the First Report of the Lords Ad Hoc Select Committee on Practice and Procedure, Session 1976-77. As regards a Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology, I would certainly not object to this - subject to the views of the Secretary of State for Education and Science and of other colleagues who may be departmentally concerned - and I agree that it might be useful in its own right and that our acceptance of the proposal might be a helpful indication of a constructive attitude in the context of the discussion on recommendation 16.

I am copying this to the recipients of your two letters.

*Yours ever*  
*AC*

The Rt Hon Lord Soames  
Lord President of the Council  
Old Admiralty Building  
Whitehall



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

15 November 1979

The Rt Hon Lord Soames PC GCMG GCVO CBE  
House of Lords  
LONDON SW1

*Peer Christopher,*

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Thank you for your letter of 14 November about the proposed establishment of a Lords Committee on Science and Technology.

Although the papers circulated with your letter suggest that the Committee's main function might be to scrutinise Bills and other proposals, I am assuming that in practice it will operate in much the same way as the former Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology ie that it will examine and report on questions of current interest in the whole area of science and technology.

I think that the creation of such a Committee could be a useful addition to our constitutional arrangements provided that it did not give rise to unnecessary duplication and work. I foresee a serious risk of overlap not only with the work of the Lords and Commons Scrutiny Committees of EEC questions and proposals, where science and technology matters come up, but also with the work of the subject committees which are being set up in the Commons. The latter can be expected to concern themselves with science and technology questions as they examine the work and policies of the departments in their field, simply because science and technology responsibilities are so widely diffused under our system. I think it important therefore that means should be found of ensuring that the proposed Lords Committee avoids this kind of overlap.

I am bound also to make the point that the creation of the Committee will add to my Department's administrative burden and make it more difficult to pursue the policy, which you are urging on me, of reducing tasks in order to reduce civil service manpower. We really cannot have fewer civil servants while we are creating new work for them to do.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the Secretaries of State for Industry, Defence, Employment, the Environment, Trade, Energy, Social Services, Scotland and Wales, the Ministers of Agriculture and Transport, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours ever*

*Mark*

MARK CARLISLE

19 NOV 1951  
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11 21 30



DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY  
ASHDOWN HOUSE  
123 VICTORIA STREET  
LONDON SW1E 6RB

TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-212 3301  
SWITCHBOARD 01-212 7676

Secretary of State for Industry

The Rt Hon Lord Soames PC GCMG GCVO CBE  
Lord President of the Council  
House of Lords

15 November 1979

*Jim Christopher.*

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of yesterday to Mark Carlisle about your proposal to suggest at the meeting of the Procedure Committee on 20 November that a Select Committee on Science and Technology should be appointed in the House of Lords. In the time available I can give you only a snap reaction.

The proposal is unwelcome. The disappearance of the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology means that this subject area will be covered by the new departmentally-related Select Committees. It is to be expected that this Department will continue to be involved in inquiries in the science and technology field undertaken by the new Industry and Trade Committee, and if we also have to cope with inquiries initiated by a separate subject Committee in the House of Lords, the net result is likely to be an addition to our workload. There will be in addition an obvious danger of overlap. However, I realise that it would be difficult to resist the current pressure for establishing a Science and Technology Committee and if you and our other colleagues feel that the course of action you propose is the best way of bowing to the inevitable, I do not dissent.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

*Jim*

*Kevin*

16 NOV 1979

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*With the compliments of the*

VMS

*Private Secretary to the Leader of the House*

*and the Chief Whip*

*House of Lords*





FROM THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE  
HOUSE OF LORDS

14 November 1979

Dear Mark,

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

On 20 November, the Lords' Procedure Committee will be considering Select Committee structure. It is already clear that there will be strong pressure for the Government to support the establishment of a Committee on Science and Technology. The background to this is set out in my letter of 12 November to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. That letter should also, of course, have been copied to you and the other recipients of this one and I am, therefore, hastening to let you and our other colleagues know the position and how I propose that it should be handled.

Time is now pressing and I should be grateful, therefore, if you and our colleagues would let me know by tomorrow evening if you and they are content with the course of action I am proposing.

I am sending copies of this letter, and the enclosures, to the Prime Minister, and to the Secretaries of State for Defence, Industry, Trade, and Energy and to the Minister of Transport as the Ministers with the primary concern with science and technology. Copies of this letter only are being sent to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and to Sir Robert Armstrong for information.

Yours ever

Christie

SOAMES

The Rt Hon Mark Carlisle  
Secretary of State for  
Education and Science

(15) While the use of Public Bill Committees would improve the quality of the legislative work of the House, the function of a Public Bill Committee would most profitably be performed within the context of the new committee structure summarized in Recommendation (16) below. (*Paragraph 38.*)

(16) There should be a number of Select Committees, matching policy areas, which would scrutinize Bills and other proposals within the relevant area. All Public Bills, except where otherwise ordered, should be considered by one of these Committees both in the manner of a Select Committee and in the manner of a Public Bill Committee; Commons Bills should be referred to the appropriate Committee after Second Reading in the House of Commons. Initially a small number of such Committees might be set up as an experiment. The Procedure Committee, or a sub-committee of that committee, should consider the detailed implementation of the scheme. (*Paragraph 52.*)



## House of Lords

### SELECT COMMITTEE ON PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

The First Report of the Committee was published on 26th April 1977 and was debated on 5th July 1977. The motion before the House was to take note of the Report, but an amendment was tabled inviting the House to agree that "one or more Select Committees matching policy areas" should be established in order to scrutinise Bills and other proposals as proposed in Recommendation 16 of the Report. The Leader of the House, Lord Peart, secured withdrawal of the amendment by agreeing to set up an experimental Committee to test the proposals in Recommendation 16. As a result, the matter was then referred to the sessional Procedure Committee.

When the matter was considered by the Procedure Committee, the Leader of the House raised a number of detailed objections to the proposals. In particular, he argued that the procedural difficulties involved were sufficiently serious as to make a substantial part of the recommendation impracticable. The Procedure Committee set up a Sub-Committee to consider in detail how the experimental Committee could be set up to consider Public Bills falling within a particular policy area. On 26th July 1978 the Procedure Committee considered the Sub-Committee's Report and decided that no action should be taken until the House of Lords had had an opportunity of studying the proposals made by the Commons Procedure Committee which had not reported at that time. This postponement of consideration was challenged in the House, and the Chairman of Committees gave an assurance to the House that the matter would be considered at the next meeting of the Procedure Committee. This meeting takes place on 20th November.

14 NOV 1979

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FROM THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE  
HOUSE OF LORDS

12 November 1979

Dear Norman,

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Lord Shackleton and Lord Sherfield have proposed that a Select Committee on Science and Technology should be appointed in the House of Lords. The proposal has already attracted considerable support, particularly among members of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee which includes members of both Houses.

The matter will be considered by the Procedure Committee on Tuesday 20th November when I propose to suggest that the Committee on Science and Technology should be established as an alternative to the experimental Committee previously under discussion. The latter Committee was intended to test the proposals in Recommendation 16 of the First Report of the Lords ad hoc Select Committee on Practice and Procedure (HL 141, Session 1976/77, copy of Recommendation 16 attached), and was regarded as the precursor of a new Committee structure in the Lords, consisting of a number of permanent Committees matching policy areas. The background to consideration of Recommendation 16 is summarised in the attached note. Unless I have heard to the contrary by 14th November, I will take it that I have your agreement and the agreement of colleagues to the course of action I have proposed.

I am sending copies of this letter to members of Legislation Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever

Christopher

The Rt Hon Norman St-John Stevas, MP  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

(15) While the use of Public Bill Committees would improve the quality of the legislative work of the House, the function of a Public Bill Committee would most profitably be performed within the context of the new committee structure summarized in Recommendation (16) below. (Paragraph 38.)

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