



Miss Stevens ✓ Cfpa
Pse tell that
time is OK

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Tim Flesher Esq
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9th April 1984

Dear Tim,

TREASURY MINUTE REPLYING TO THE 10th, 11th AND 12th REPORTS OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE, 1983-84

You may recall that the Treasury published replies to a number of reports of the Public Accounts Committee last month:

- (i) Cmnd 9178 dealing with PAC Reports 1 - 8
- (ii) Cmnd 9191 about Hamilton College (9th Report)

2. The PAC published three further reports (10th - 12th) during March. The texts of the replies to these Reports have been agreed between the Departments concerned, including the Treasury, and the Financial Secretary has approved the reply to the PAC being presented in his name, as is customary. We should now like to publish the Government's response in the usual form of a Treasury Minute, before the House rises for the Easter Recess.

3. H M Stationery Office will publish the Treasury Minutes as a Command Paper. Timing is rather tight to achieve publication before the House rises. Subject to your approval, we propose publication at 4.00 pm on Thursday 12th April. We shall also arrange for pre-publication (ie CFR) copies to be available as normal prior to publication. We suggest laying the Command Paper before both Houses of Parliament at 3.30 pm on 12th April. Information Division of the Treasury will provide copies for the Lobby. Copies will also be resleased to the Departments which have contributed to the text, to PAC Members and to the National Audit Office.

4. I attach a note explaining the background to the particular PAC Reports and the intended response. We believe that it is most unlikely that this Treasury Minute will attract much, if any, attention (unlike the previous Minute on Hamilton College).

5. I should be grateful for an early indication that you are content with the proposed arrangements - a telephone call will suffice.

6. I am copying this letter and enclosure to Murdo Maclean and to David Heyhoe.

Yours sincerely

K J SALVESON
Parliamentary Clerk

10TH REPORT: EXCESS VOTES

A formal report recommending Parliament approves departments' Excess Votes for 1982-83. This ^{is} part of the standard Parliamentary Supply procedure. There is no action other than to take note of the Committee's recommendation.

11TH REPORT: GENERAL LIGHTHOUSE FUND

Basically a progress report on the report of the Committee's predecessor (29th Report, 1981-82). Endorses action taken so far but urges renewed Government efforts to obtain a more equitable cost-sharing arrangement between HMG and the Irish Government of the expenditure incurred on the lighthouse service in the Republic of Ireland. Arguably a rather superfluous report but can be seen as enabling the Government to point to Parliamentary pressure for a fair settlement between the UK and Eire.

12TH REPORT: PREMATURE RETIREMENT IN THE NHS

A critical report of the way use was made of premature retirements in the NHS to achieve the desired re-organisation *in* the service; and of departments' (particularly DHSS) limited oversight of the policy. The main criticisms were failure to set clear objectives; no proper monitoring; decisions too readily delegated to individual health authorities allowing inconsistent application across different regions. Much of the topicality of the subject has been removed through the House's debate on NHS Supplementary Estimates on 8 March. This dealt extensively with the Committee's report and thus, unusually, resulted in the main (and immediate) Government response to the report in advance of the formal written reply by Treasury Minute.

Taking the replies to the three reports together, therefore, there is little in them to which the Government reply should stimulate interest. And there is no real interest to the Government in doing so.

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