

PRIME MINISTER

*MS*

RICHMOND YARD

I am sorry to bother you with two further papers on this subject!

At Flag A there is a minute from Sir Robert Armstrong responding to my minute of 22 October regarding the future of Richmond Yard, the old Home Office building and the need for a review of the Whitehall estate. Robert's response seems satisfactory.

Do you want:

to take the first meeting of the Ministerial sub-committee? or

wait until you see the papers?

At Flag B, Norman Fowler lodges an anguished cri de coeur for better accommodation for DHSS. The purpose of his minute is not, as he emphasises, to reopen the Richmond Yard decision. Rather it is to put in an early plea for better accommodation for his Ministerial team and senior officials. I have some sympathy with him here. On his points, I suggest:

- (i) I speak to the Chief Whip about the possibility of getting him a slightly larger room in the House of Commons. Very difficult, I know, but worth some exploration.
- (ii) Sir Robert Armstrong is instructed to take DHSS's position fully into account in the review of the Whitehall estate now underway.
- (iii) DHSS should be represented on the Ministerial sub-committee.

*What about that of the F.C.S. ?!*

*Yes*

*Yes*

- (iv) Although Norman Fowler does not ask for this, they should also be represented on the Official Committee which supports the Ministerial sub-committee.
- (v) On Mr. Fowler's points about presentation of the decision on Richmond Yard, there will in fact be no "presentation" in those terms. But it should be made clear in any public statements about Whitehall accommodation that the needs of DHSS are being given full consideration.

(The Efficiency Unit are following up the points which you raised with them today about the rental charged to ODA for Richmond Terrace).

N.G.W.

N. L. Wicks

24 October 1986