

Ref. A086/2183

PRIME MINISTER

1. Mr. Wicks - to see.
2. Prime Minister ①
Agree de line et X?

MEA 30/7

Yes

Lord Sherfield (formerly Sir Roger Makins) came to see me this afternoon in his capacity as Chairman of the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology.

2. The Select Committee is coming to the end of an inquiry into the funding of civil research and development. It is the custom of the Select Committee, at this point of an inquiry, to invite the Minister concerned to come and give evidence. Since you have accepted responsibility for co-ordinating questions on science and technology, they feel that it would be discourteous not to give you the opportunity to come to give evidence yourself to the Select Committee, if you would like to take advantage of it. Lord Sherfield emphasised, however, that the Committee would entirely understand if you felt that you were likely to be too busy in October, when this stage will be reached, to come and give evidence yourself. In that event they will invite the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Trade and Industry.

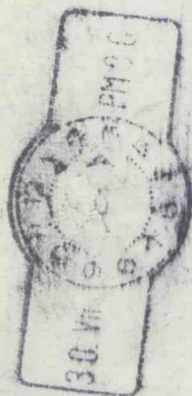
3. Neither Mr Fairclough nor I think that you either need or should accept this invitation. Quite apart from the other demands on your own time, if you were to accept the invitation from the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology, it would become very much more difficult to refuse invitations from, say, the House of Commons Select Committee on Defence.

X { 4. If you agree, therefore, I will let Lord Sherfield know that you are grateful for the invitation, that you fear that your other commitments in October are such that you are unable to come and give evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee, but you hope that they will be content to hear evidence from the two Secretaries of State.

RA

29 July 1986

ROBERT ARMSTRONG



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From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG, G.C.B., C.V.O.

The Prime Minister has seen your minute of 29 July, about Lord Sherfield's invitation to give evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology.

The Prime Minister is content that you should respond to Lord Sherfield in the terms proposed at paragraph 4 of your minute.

MARK ADDISON
31 July 1986

BM