

Ref. A082/0418

MR BUTLER

Professor Hambleton

I have just learned that Professor Hambleton, who had originally pleaded not guilty, this morning changed his plea to guilty, and has been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

2. This may mean that there will be questions put to the Prime Minister at question time this afternoon.

3. We had better go through the process of consultation of the reference to the Security Commission (first, seeking the view of Lord Bridge; second, consulting the Leader of the Opposition). I think it likely, however, that we shall be recommending that there should be no such reference in this case. Professor Hambleton was a Canadian rather than a British spy; he was in NATO as a representative of Canada, not of Britain. If any security procedures are in question as a result of this case it is Canadian (and NATO) rather than British procedures.

--- 4. I attach a Speaking Note for the Prime Minister.

R. H. H.

Approved by
ROBERT ARMSTRONG
and signed in his absence.

7 December 1982



SPEAKING NOTE

I confirm that Professor Hambleton, who had pleaded not guilty to offences under the Official Secrets Act, changed his plea this morning and pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

2. The nature of the charges has been very fully set out in the statements by my rt hon and Learned Friend the Attorney General in his conduct for the prosecution and I do not propose to make any further statement on those matters.

3. In accordance with the normal procedure, I shall now seek the view of the Chairman of the Security Commission as to whether an investigation by the Commission would be likely to serve a useful purpose. I shall consult the rt hon Leader of the Opposition, taking into account the views of the Chairman of the Security Commission, before deciding whether or not to refer the case to the Commission. I shall, of course, keep the House informed of developments on this aspect of the matter.