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From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

PS(84) 14

11 September 1984

Dear Private Secretary,

Ministerial Changes

There are a number of matters arising from changes in Ministerial appointments to which I should draw your attention.

Papers

When Ministers leave or change office, the practice is for them to leave for the use of their successors the copies of any memoranda or minutes of the Cabinet or its Committees that were issued to them. Papers which are no longer in current use should be destroyed. I should be grateful, therefore, if the Private Secretaries concerned would:

- (a) confirm that their new Ministers have taken over the Cabinet and Cabinet Committee documents needed for current administration;
- (b) confirm that their predecessors have not taken away any Cabinet or Cabinet Committee documents no longer required for current use. May I remind you that the destruction of all secret and top secret documents should be supervised by two individuals, both of whom sign a destruction certificate.

Questions of Procedure for Ministers

On first appointment to the Government, the Secretary of the Cabinet writes to all new Ministers enclosing a copy of Questions of Procedure for Ministers and drawing their attention to the guidance it contains. Some of this advice may assume particular relevance if a Minister subsequently assumes a new appointment or responsibilities, particularly in relation to potential conflicts (whether real or apparent) between his private interests and new Ministerial responsibilities (Section IX).

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I would draw your attention particularly to the paragraphs in this section relating to membership of Lloyd's (paragraphs 74 to 77).

Parliamentary Private Secretaries

I should also remind you of procedures for the appointment of Parliamentary Private Secretaries in case your Minister wishes, where appropriate, to appoint a new Parliamentary Private Secretary. The Chief Whip should be consulted about all such appointments and, in view of the special position which Parliamentary Private Secretaries occupy in relation to the Government, the approval of the Prime Minister should also be sought before any such appointment is offered and announced.

Ministerial Memoirs

--- Ministers leaving the Government should also be reminded of the recommendations of the Radcliffe Report on Ministerial Memoirs. For this purpose, I enclose a copy of the Report for Private Secretaries in the offices concerned, for them to pass to their former Ministers.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to Cabinet Ministers in all departments affected by the changes and to Private Secretaries in all other Ministerial offices affected. I am also sending a copy to Robin Butler at No 10, for information.

(Signed) R P HATFIELD

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