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*CP*  
*Please chase**X in a week or so.**DES**17/10.**17* October 1985*Dear David,*

Thank you for your letter of 2 October about the training given by the armed services. I am sorry for the delay in replying, which has been occasioned by the need to discuss the issues the Prime Minister has raised with colleagues at the Ministry of Defence.

It is clear that the training provided by the armed services in certain occupations can be useful to the private sector when the recipients leave the Forces. We should certainly ensure that due credit for this is taken by the Government.

The general training statistics issued by this Department do not indicate the amount, level and nature of training which takes place in the Services. In publicising the level of Government support our current practice is to concentrate on spending by the Manpower Services Commission. Statistics for adult training reflect the assistance given to industry to help it meet its skill needs. The Commission seeks to identify and help with training needs which employers have difficulty in meeting themselves, for example where technology is changing rapidly. The Commission also provides broad-based training through the Youth Training Scheme in order to improve the skills of those entering the labour market for the first time.

The Armed Services carry out a small amount of youth training which is reported separately from the Manpower Services Commission figures. However the great bulk of its training is carried out specifically to meet its own skill needs. As the Prime Minister has noted, there is an undoubted and significant spin-off for private industry from such training, but this is not its main purpose. There is a fundamental





difference between the MSC's programmes which are directed specifically at improving industry's skill supply, and armed services' training which achieves this objective only indirectly (and in a sense fortuitously). We believe that it would be wrong to include the latter in the statistics for Government support for training.

X | There remains the question of the way in which Armed Services training meshes in with private sector skill needs, and the extent to which recognition is given to the investment involved. This must be a matter for the Ministry of Defence, and I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram who may wish to write to you further on this.

I am copying this letter to Paul Pegler at the Treasury.

*Yours sincerely,*

CHRISTOPHER SNELL  
Private Secretary





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