



Cabinet JLR

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONGMINISTERIAL CHANGES: CABINET COMMITTEES

The Prime Minister has seen your minute A08087 of 8 April 1982 and has approved all your proposals for changes in the composition of Cabinet Ministerial Committees following last week's Ministerial changes, with one exception.

She does not think it would be right to ask the Home Secretary to take on the Chairmanship of OD(AI): she has commented that he already has too much to do. Instead she would prefer to abolish the sub-committee and bring its business either to OD or, if appropriate, to H.

C. A. WHITMORE

11 April 1982

LW

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PRIME MINISTER

*L. (Imm) Minister.
Agree with proposals?
R
P*

See version

Ministerial Changes: Cabinet Committees

Following the Ministerial changes which were announced on Tuesday, 6th April, I have considered whether any changes are needed in the composition of Cabinet Ministerial Committees.

2. In the case of Committees which are chaired by the Prime Minister (E, E(EX), E(TP), E(NI), OD, OD(SA) and OD(T)) I would recommend that Lord Cockfield should take the place of his predecessor, although for E(TP) I would also recommend inviting Mr. Biffen to stay on the Sub-Committee in his new capacity as Lord President. We had included Mr. Biffen in the original composition not only because of his departmental responsibilities but also because of the broad political contribution which he would be able to make personally. He will in any case have an interest as Lord President because the new telecommunications proposals, if approved, will be a major element in next Session's legislative programme.

3. The change in the Ministerial offices of Lady Young and Mr. Parkinson necessitates some consequential changes. Both Lady Young and Mr. Parkinson were members of E but Mr. Atkins, as the previous Lord Privy Seal, was not. I suggest that they should both remain members in spite of the change in their titles. Lady Young was also a member of OD as Chancellor of the Duchy. She would remain a member as Lord Privy Seal. I suggest that, as Mr. Parkinson is a member of the South Atlantic Sub-Committee (OD(SA)), he should be added to OD. This would mean that the number and titles of the members of the committee would stay the same as hitherto, even though there would now only be one Foreign Office Minister.

4. A further consideration in respect of OD is whether the Minister of State in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office responsible for European questions (Mr. Hurd), should be invited to attend OD when European Community business is to be discussed. This would no doubt relieve Mr. Pym of some of the burden of his post as well as ensuring the presence of the Minister in day-to-day control of European Community matters.

*Agree with...
with...
Hurd*

Mr. Pym will have to do the final negotiations on the 'mandate' ministry.

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5. The Prime Minister chairs MISC 7 and the previous Lord President of the Council was a member. This was largely a consequence of Mr. Pym's former tenure as Secretary of State for Defence. I would not recommend that Mr. Biffen should take over Mr. Pym's position on MISC 7.

Answer

6. Although Mr. Pym was not a member of the Ministerial Committee on Economic Strategy (E), he had a standing invitation to attend if he so wished. In view of Mr. Biffen's former membership of this committee, I would recommend that that standing invitation should continue for Mr. Biffen. *Yes*

In view of Mr Biffen's former membership of this committee, I would recommend that that standing invitation should continue for Mr. Biffen.

7. As for other Committees of which Lady Young is a member (E(PSP), E(PU), H, H(HL), L, OD(MD) and QL), she attends either as Leader of the House of Lords or as Minister in day-to-day charge of the Management and Personnel Office, and I recommend that she should remain a member as Lord Privy Seal. Mr. Parkinson was a member of H, HL, L and QL and should remain a member as Chancellor of the Duchy and Paymaster General.

8. There is one more difficult problem: the chairmanship of OD(AI) (the Sub-Committee of OD which deals with Anglo-Irish affairs). When OD(AI) was first set up last year, it was suggested that it should be chaired by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. Lord Carrington was unhappy about this and said that he would prefer the chairmanship to be held by a Minister without a direct departmental interest and that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office should be represented on the Committee by the Lord Privy Seal. The chairmanship went to Mr. Pym as Lord President (after an initial period during which it was held by Sir Ian Gilmour when he was Lord Privy Seal). I doubt whether Mr. Biffen will want to take this on. The two obvious candidates are the Home Secretary and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. This would be an additional responsibility for Mr. Pym and it might be preferable for him to be a member if the Home Secretary could be persuaded to take the chair. Although the Home Office is involved in the Anglo-Irish Joint Studies their interest is less than that of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. If the Prime Minister agrees, I should like to try to prevail upon the Home Secretary to take this on.

The Home Secretary already has too much to do. We had better abolish the subcommittee or to have Ministerial Committee



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9. As for other Committees of which the Prime Minister is not Chairman, I recommend that Lord Cockfield should take the places of his predecessor, Mr. Biffen. The fact that there is now only one Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister in the Cabinet creates a problem for the membership of L and OD(E). It is certainly necessary for there to be Foreign and Commonwealth representation on L since it considers legislative questions related to the European Community. But I do not think that the attendance at L Committee would be a proper call on the time of the new Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. I therefore think that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office should be represented by one of their Ministers of State (there are already five non-Cabinet Ministers on the Committee). Mr. Atkins was also a member of OD(E) in addition to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary as Chairman. Again, I would recommend that this should be a Minister of State, presumably Mr. Hurd.

Hurd

RTA

Robert Armstrong

8th April 1982

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