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cc Cabinet
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

23 September 1981

AF

You wrote to Clive Whitmore on 22 September with proposals for making public the Government's written evidence to the Megaw Inquiry. She is content with the proposals subject to one proviso relating to (i). She has suggested that the Government's evidence should be exchanged with the unions' simultaneously. Otherwise she feels that, if our evidence goes in first, they will concentrate their evidence on refuting it.

It may be that this suggestion is impractical, but I would be grateful if you would consider it.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of Cabinet, Ministers in charge of Departments, the Attorney-General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

I. P. LANKESTER

Jim Buckley, Esq.,
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office.

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CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Civil Service Department

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cg Venetker

signed

Arms (handwritten)

Agree with proposals

below for making

Clive Whitmore Esq
Principal Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Your reference public the Government's

Our reference written evidence to

Date Megaw? They

22 September 1981 seem quite

Dear Clive,

Suggest we exchange

evidence with unions simultaneously. R

Otherwise then evidence of other

The Chancellor of the Duchy has been considering the question of making available more widely the Government's written evidence to the Megaw Inquiry on Civil Service Pay. The Committee will not itself be publishing with its report written evidence presented to it but has said that those giving evidence are free to make it public as and when they wish.

unexceptionable.

ours 19 could

concentrate

on reporting it.

not

There would be considerable advantage for the Government if we could arrange to receive the written evidence of the Civil Service unions as it is submitted to the Inquiry. To obtain this we will need to offer the same service to them (centralised for convenience through CSD). We can assume that others giving evidence, eg the CBI, will in any case make their material publicly available. There will of course be considerable Parliamentary and public interest in some of the more substantive parts of the Government's evidence. The Chancellor of the Duchy therefore proposes

Yes but see above

- i. that the Government should agree with the unions that each side should automatically copy to the other all the written material it submits to Megaw;
- ii. that copies of all written Government evidence to the Committee should also, as a matter of routine, be placed in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament;
- iii. that, equally as a matter of routine, the same material should be given to the Clerk of the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee; and
- iv. that the Government should be ready to make all its written evidence available to the Press and other interested enquirers on request. To do less than this would, the Chancellor thinks, invite unnecessary charges of secrecy. There might also be positive advantage from these procedures in that they are likely both to stimulate public debate and to provide a body of factual material which could inform that debate.

The Chancellor of the Duchy would be grateful to know if these arrangements have the approval of the Prime Minister.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to all Members of the Cabinet, Ministers in charge of Departments, the Attorney General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours sincerely,
Jim Buckley.*

J BUCKLEY