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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

01-233 4749

T J Flesher Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

22 February 1985

Dear Jim,

TREASURY MINUTE REPLYING TO THE 1ST TO 4TH REPORTS OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE 1984-85

The Treasury wishes to publish as a Command Paper a Treasury Minute in response to the Public Accounts Committee's 1st to 4th Reports of 1984-85 Session.

2. The texts in reply to the PAC's reports covered by the Treasury Minute have been agreed between the relevant departments, including the Treasury. The Financial Secretary has approved the Government's reply being presented in his name as is customary.

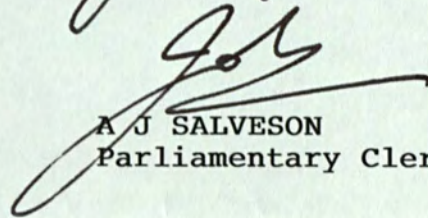
3. We aim to have the Government's reply to these PAC reports published in time for the debate on the PAC which we understand is currently planned for 14 March. Therefore, we propose publishing the Command Paper at 3.30pm on Wednesday 6 March. As usual, we expect to provide pre-publication (ie. CFR) copies prior to publication, including laying the Command Paper before both Houses of Parliament on the previous day (ie. 3.30pm on Tuesday 5 March). Treasury Information Division would supply copies to the Lobby on the usual arrangements. We shall also release copies to the departments which have contributed to the text, to PAC members, and to the National Audit Office on 5 March.

4. For convenience I enclose a note explaining the background to the particular PAC reports. We expect the Treasury Minute to attract little attention in the press etc: except that the existence of a reply to a report relating to Inland Revenue work will inevitably attract greater notice than usual because of the proximity of the Budget. Although the original report

and the reply are both innocuous in themselves, you should be aware of this aspect.

5. I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure to Murdo Maclean and David Morris.

Yours ay

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'A J Salvesson', written over the typed name.

A J SALVESON
Parliamentary Clerk

SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE'S 1ST TO 4TH REPORTS

1st Report: Maintenance of major RAF equipments (Ministry of Defence)

The Committee were generally content with operational effectiveness of RAF maintenance but thought there should be a review of the balance of work carried out in house by RAF and externally in the private sector. It also urged greater civilianisation and improvements in MOD's management information systems.

2nd Report: Control of Diplomatic Service manpower (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)

A generally favourable report, noting that staffing of the Diplomatic Service is scrutinised regularly and carefully. The Committee welcomed Treasury participation in a sample of FCO staff inspections.

3rd Report: National Audit Office Estimates for 1985-86

Really addressed to Public Accounts Commission, since the House made the Commission responsible for recommending the NAO's Estimates to Parliament, after listening to any advice from the Committee (hence this report) and the Treasury (which submitted separate comments).

4th Report: Control of investigation work (Inland Revenue)

Another generally welcoming report of what the department is already doing to achieve greater taxpayer compliance, further action against the 'black economy' and more effective deployment of investigative resources.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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