

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

House of Lords to chair the sub-committee?

Home Minister.  
Consent with the terms of reference?  
Omit or leave in the words in brackets?  
Agree the membership proposed in paragraph 4 below?  
Do you wish to add Lord Home and/or Mr Shannon?  
Ready to see Mr Lyon to ask him to chair the sub-committee?  
Table b.iv.

You asked me at the end of your meeting on 1st April to let you have proposals for the terms of reference and membership of the proposed sub-committee of H Committee. You would wish to show these to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, whom you would ask to chair the sub-committee.

2. I suggest the sub-committee should have very general terms of reference; viz:

"To consider and report on possible options for reforming the composition [and increasing the powers] of the House of Lords".

My recollection of the meeting was that the sub-committee was to address itself only to composition and not to powers, but Mr. Whitmore's letter of 1st April records you as summing up that the sub-committee should also consider powers. Hence the square brackets.

3. As regards membership, I assume that you would not wish either the Lord Chancellor or the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to serve on the sub-committee. Both are very senior and busy Ministers, although both are personally interested in House of Lords reform and were members of the previous sub-committee, of which, of course, the Home Secretary and not the Chancellor of the Duchy was chairman. I am not sure that the Lord Chancellor will want to be left out! I also assume that in considering the names of junior Ministers you would look first at those who were members of the Review Committee on the House of Lords which you set up under Lord Home's chairmanship while in Opposition. They are Mr. Neil Marten, Mr Kenneth Baker and Baroness Young.

4. On those assumptions I suggest that the following Peers might be members of the sub-committee:-

- The Lord President\* ✓
- The Minister of State, DES (Baroness Young) ✓
- The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office ✓ (Lord Belstead)
- The Captain of the Gentlemen at Arms\* ✓

\*Members of previous sub-committee of H.

Home Minister.  
It is true that Whitmore's minute proposes that only composition should be looked at. But everybody at your meeting quickly agreed that any group charged with studying the composition of the Lords would soon get on to the question of powers, simply because it is inescapably bound up with membership.  
A.M.





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The other members might be:

- ✓ The Secretary of State for Scotland\*
- ✓ The Attorney General\*
- ✓ The Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury\*

~~The Minister of State, Department of Industry (Mr. Baker)~~

5. A committee of 9 is probably large enough, but if you wanted to enlarge it two possible candidates ~~from the Lords~~ would be:-

~~The Minister of State, Department of Employment (Earl of Gowrie)~~

- ✓ The Minister of State for the Arts (Mr. Channon).

RA

Robert Armstrong

6th April 1981



CONFIDENTIAL



File AN

10 DOWNING STREET

Baroness

From the Principal Private Secretary

BF to check program.

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

HOUSE OF LORDS

The Prime Minister has seen your minute A04634 of 6 April 1981 about the proposed terms of reference and membership of the new sub-committee of H Committee on the House of Lords.

She agrees that the sub-committee should have very general terms of reference and has decided that they should be:

"To consider and report on possible options for reforming the composition and powers of the House of Lords".

As you will see, she takes the view, as did other Ministers at her meeting on 1st April, that it would be difficult for the sub-committee to review the membership of the House of Lords without getting on to the question of its powers, and she thinks that we should allow for this from the outset by a suitable reference in the sub-committee's formal remit.

The Prime Minister has decided that the membership of the sub-committee should be as follows:

- The Lord President
- The Secretary of State for Scotland
- The Attorney General
- The Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury
- The Minister of State for the Arts (Mr Channon)
- ~~The Minister of State, DES (Baroness Young)~~
- Gowrie. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Belstead)
- ~~The Captain of the Gentleman at Arms~~

The next step is for the Prime Minister to see the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to ask him to chair the sub-committee, and we shall be arranging this in the next day or so.

ms

AW.

8 April 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

AW



C O N F I D E N T I A L

FILE

VLS

Robert Armstrong

MR. WRIGHT  
CABINET OFFICE

Sub-Committee on the House of Lords (H(HL))

The Prime Minister has seen Sir Robert Armstrong's minute, reference A05722, about the suggestion that the Paymaster General might be added to this Sub-Committee.

The Prime Minister is content that the Paymaster General should be invited to serve on the Sub-Committee if the Lord President is content. She has also commented that the result of the debate at the Party Conference - no reform during this Parliament - will provide clear guidance for the Sub-Committee.

M A PATTISON

19 October/1981

C O N F I D E N T I A L

A



Ref. A05722

MR WHITMORE

*Yes - but make the  
 mention of the debate  
 at the Party conference  
 i.e. no reform  
 this Parliament*

*Prime Minister  
 The Chief Whip wrote  
 to you about this.  
 Content to include Mr  
 Parkinson on HCHL if  
 Mr Pym concurs?*

*MAJ 16/x*

Sub-Committee on the House of Lords (H(HL))

I attach the revised composition and terms of reference of the Sub-Committee on the House of Lords following the recent Ministerial changes.

2. The Chief Whip thinks that it might be helpful if the Paymaster General was added to this Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee is already fairly large at 11 Members; and the addition of the Paymaster General would weight the balance even further in favour of Members in the House of Commons (from 6-5 to 7-5). But there is clearly a strong "Party" element in the Sub-Committee's work, and this may make it appropriate to add the Paymaster General to its membership. If the Prime Minister agrees I will consult the Lord President; and, if he is content, I will then invite the Paymaster General to serve on the Sub-Committee.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

14 October 1981





lv  
Robert

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

Mr. Wright

Ministerial Sub-Committee on House of  
Lords Reform

The Prime Minister has considered  
Sir Robert Armstrong's minute of 17 July  
(Ref. A05246), and agrees with his proposals.

**T. P. LANKESTER**

20 July, 1981.

LD



1. CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister.

Ref. A05246

MR. WHITMORE

Since both Mr Pyon and Lord Denham  
oppose Mr Pyon's group on House of Lords reform  
should be augmented ~~by~~ by Lord Denham and  
the Lord Advocate, I suggest that you approve  
what is proposed.

17/7/81

Ministerial Sub-Committee on House of Lords Reform

As you will remember, this Sub-Committee of the Home and Social Affairs Committee was recently reconstituted with revised composition and terms of reference (attached). We are in trouble about the composition of the Sub-Committee.

2. The Captain of the Gentlemen-at-Arms (Lord Denham) was a member of the earlier Sub-Committee, but the Prime Minister decided that he should be excluded from the revised membership. I now understand that Lord Denham made representations to the Chancellor of the Duchy and the Lord President, who in turn made representations to you, about the question of his reinstatement; and that agreement was given. That has no doubt been conveyed to Lord Denham.

3. Representations have also reached us from the Lord Advocate, expressing concern that he has not been invited to be a member of the Sub-Committee. It is suggested that the Lord Advocate is highly respected in the House of Lords, and that there are important differences between the law concerning peerages in Scotland and that in England and Wales. If membership is to be extended to the Captain of the Gentlemen-at-Arms, it would, I think, be difficult to refuse it to the Lord Advocate, who has no less strong a case in his favour.

4. The addition of both would increase the size of the Sub-Committee from 9 to 11, and the balance of Commons Ministers to Lords Ministers from 6:3 to 6:5. Nonetheless, I think that it would be best to add both the Captain of the Gentlemen-at-Arms and the Lord Advocate to the Sub-Committee, without the addition of any extra Commons Ministers. I have consulted the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Lord President, who both agree with this.

5. May I proceed accordingly?

Yes no

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

17th July, 1981

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This was all  
Mr Pyon's  
suggestion.  
When he subse-  
quently told me  
that he was, after all,  
ready to have Lord  
Denham on his  
committee, I  
decided it was too  
trivial a matter to  
bother you with and  
I told him to go  
ahead.



H(HL)

HOME AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE HOUSE OF LORDS

(Authority: H(HL)(80) 1, H(HL)(81) 3)

Composition

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Paymaster General (Chairman).  
Lord President of the Council.  
Secretary of State for Scotland.  
Attorney-General.  
Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury.  
Minister of State, Department of Industry (Mr Baker).  
Minister of State, Department of Employment.  
Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Minister for  
the Arts).  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office.

Terms of reference

"To consider and report on possible options for reforming the  
composition and powers of the House of Lords."

Secretariat

Mr W N Hyde, Cabinet Office.  
Mr M W Townley, Cabinet Office.  
Mr J W M Rogers, Cabinet Office.



Parliament

MR. WHITMORE

Michael Pownall raised the question of H(HL).

I understand that Lord Denham was included on the Committee in its earlier existence, but has not been included in the recent reconstruction. Mr. Pownall believes that both the Chief Whip and the Lord President are likely to raise this question as soon as a notice of meeting is circulated. Have we taken a conscious decision to exclude Lord Denham?

~~Mr Patten~~  
Mr Patten ~~MP~~

30 June 1981

Yes. You will see from my  
minutes of 8 April that <sup>the</sup> Captain of  
the Gentlemen or Arms was at one  
stage in but he went out at the  
Prime Minister's meeting with Mr (you).  
Lord Soames knows of his  
exclusion: so he should not complain.  
But I do not believe the Chief Whip,

knows: he may raise it  
later.

Phil  
30/6





ru 10  
Parliament

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

29 May 1981

House of Lords

I am sorry that I have not followed up more quickly my letter of 30 April to you about the Chancellor of the Duchy's new sub-committee of H on the House of Lords.

The Lord Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary have now both been told about how it is proposed to proceed, and the way is therefore clear for the establishment of the sub-committee to be formally promulgated. I should be grateful if David Wright, to whom I am sending a copy of this letter, would arrange for this to be done.

CAW.

David Heyhoe Esq  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office.

So





10 DOWNING STREET

File AH  
cc. C.O.  
Patterson

From the Principal Private Secretary

30 April 1981

Dear David,

HOUSE OF LORDS

When I saw the Chancellor of the Duchy yesterday, he told me that he would like to add Mr Kenneth Baker to his sub-committee of H on the House of Lords.

I have consulted the Prime Minister and she is content that Mr Baker should be a member of the sub-committee.

It only remains for the Prime Minister to have a word with the Lord Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary to let them know how it has been decided to proceed, and the way will then be clear for the establishment of the sub-committee to be formally promulgated.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Marie Whitmore.

David Heyhoe Esq.,  
Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

AH



PRIME MINISTER

HOUSE OF LORDS

When you saw Mr Pym yesterday about the future of the House of Lords, you agreed to his request to be allowed to reflect a little further on the membership of his sub-committee of H.

He has now done this and has only one additional name to suggest. He would like to have Mr Kenneth Baker on his group. He particularly wants him in order to provide a link between this latest study and Lord Home's Review Committee on the House of Lords, of which Mr Baker was of course a member. I told Mr Pym that you had earlier considered including Mr Baker in the membership of the sub-committee but had in the end decided against doing so. I went on to say, however, that I did not think that you felt at all strongly about this and I was confident that if he particularly wanted Mr Baker, you would agree.

May I let Mr Pym know that you are content?

Yes

ms

taw.

29 April, 1981