



Ministers

Ref. A03823

MR. PATTISON

*MR*

Ministers' Business Interests

Sam Brittan of the Financial Times has asked Sir Robert Armstrong for details of the rules governing action which Ministers should take over their business interests on assuming office. I attach a copy of Sir Robert's reply since I think that you will wish to note that he has referred Mr. Brittan to the answer which the Prime Minister gave on this subject in the House on 20th March this year and has also sent him a copy of the Memorandum on Ministers' Private Interests submitted to the Royal Commission on Standards of Conduct in Public Life by the Secretary of the Cabinet in March 1975. The Memorandum is not only available in the Library of the House, but along with other written evidence submitted to the Royal Commission it is also available in the Public Record Office when it can be consulted and photocopied.

*D. J. Wright*

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17th December, 1980





CABINET OFFICE

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*From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO*

Ref: A03818

17th December 1980

Thank you for your letter of 4th December asking about the rules on the business interests of members of the Government.

The Prime Minister set out the rules on this in an Answer to Mr. Douglas Jay in the House of Commons on 20th March last: I enclose a copy of the relevant extract from the Official Report.

The Prime Minister's answer refers to a memorandum on the subject submitted by my predecessor to the Royal Commission on Standards of Conduct in Public Life. This memorandum, along with other written evidence submitted to the Royal Commission, is available in the Public Record Office. However, for ease of reference, I enclose a copy of the Memorandum.

As for farming, the guiding principle for members of the Government is the same as that for other private interests, namely that Ministers should conduct their private affairs so that no conflict arises with their official duty, as you will see from the attached copy of an Answer which the then Prime Minister gave to a Question by Mr. William Hamilton on 5th February 1974.

Samuel Brittan, Esq