



Prime Minister

Ref. A083/0110

MR BUTLER

There is no reason of propriety against the Chancellor's becoming a patron of the Bow Group, but do you agree that he should be advised against it, for the reason at X/?

F.E.R.B.

Thank you for your minute of 7th January about the invitation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to become a patron of the Bow Group.

2. On balance I should have thought that the Chancellor would be well advised to decline this invitation. The balance is a fairly fine one, because as a patron the Chancellor would presumably not be involved in the Bow Group's individual activities, and the risks of conflict of interests are not very great. But I should have thought that one could not exclude the possibility of some embarrassment to the Chancellor himself if he was a patron of the Bow Group and the Bow Group took a public position on some matter of economic policy which was contrary to or inconsistent with the policy of the Government. There does not seem to be any particular advantage about the patronage to set against this potential risk.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

13th January 1983

He was a founder member on at least very active in the earlier stages. I have no objection therefore to his being patron. He does not have to endorse all their views.



File AH
cc Sir Armstrong
Ministers

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

17 January 1983

PERSONAL

Dear John,

I am sorry not to have replied more quickly to your letter of 5 January about the invitation to the Chancellor to become a patron of the Bow Group.

I agree with you that there is nothing in questions of procedure for Ministers which touches on this. The argument against it is that there could be embarrassment to the Chancellor and the Government if the Bow Group took a public position on some matter of policy which was contrary to or inconsistent with the policy of the Government. I have therefore had a word with the Prime Minister, and she is content that the Chancellor should accept the invitation since he has such a long association with the Bow Group and on the basis that he would not have to endorse all their views.

Yours etc,

John Kerr Esq.,
HM Treasury.

Robin AH

Mr Richard Hatfield
Cabinet Office

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has been invited to become a "patron" of the Bow Group to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Sir Siegmund Warburg. Mr Harold Macmillan, Lord Eccles, Lord Harlech and Sir John Baring are all current patrons. The office carries no remuneration.

I doubt whether acceptance of this office would give rise to any difficulty, but I should be grateful for your advice on the proprieties.

sgd ROBIN BUTLER

7 January 1983

Thanks. .

MR. BUTLER

FERB

You asked whether there were any previous cases of Ministers being invited to become patron of the Bow Group or of similar political bodies.

There is nothing on the file dealing with Ministers' outside "interests", directorships, etc., which would help in this particular case.

We usually seek Cabinet Office advice when consulted about something like this and, in case you wish to do so on this occasion, I attach a minute to Mr. Hatfield.



7 Jan. 1983

PERSONAL



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

F E R Butler Esq
No 10 Downing Street

5 January 1983

See Robin,
Do we have any previous cases of invitations to Ministers to be patron of the Bow Group (presumably not, in view of the names below) or of similar political bodies?

FEBS 5.1.

The Chancellor has been asked to become a "patron" of the Bow Group. The current patrons are Mr Macmillan, Lord Eccles, Lord Harlech, and John Baring, and the vacancy has arisen through the death of Sir Siegmund Warburg.

OK, you may feel, but what has it got to do with you? Not a lot, but knowing what a cautiously bureaucratic operator I am, you won't be surprised to hear that I have had a look at "questions of procedure for Ministers", for which you are the Supreme Patron and Guardian. I can find nothing in them which suggests that I need advise the Chancellor against acceptance of the Bow Group's offer; indeed it would be rather absurd if they did exclude acceptance of a quasi-Party quasi-office which carries no remuneration. But such is my caution that I wanted to check that you, as SP and G (Q of P for M), agree with my conclusion that I need do nothing.

Could you give me a ring?

Yours ever,

JOK

J O KERR