



CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

MR. BUTLER

I attach a submission to the Prime Minister about the arrangements for scrutinising proposals for legislation to confer new powers of entry on public officials.

2. There is one piece of background which I mentioned to the Prime Minister when I discussed this with her last January, on the basis of a manuscript note which I sent your predecessor on 5th January, but which cannot for obvious reasons be reflected in this submission.

3. It is not merely officials with the Law Officers' Department who are diverted from their main work as legal advisers in order to carry out this work. The Attorney General feels strongly that he does not get the support he is entitled to expect from the Solicitor General on the ordinary work of the Law Officers; he has said to me that he has to do about 80 per cent of that work himself. One of the reasons which the Solicitor General gives for being unable to play a larger part in the legal advisory work is that he is preoccupied with the function of scrutinising proposals for new powers of entry. This is of course part of a deeper problem in relations between the Attorney General and the Solicitor General, and reflects the Solicitor General's preference for political rather than purely legal responsibility. But the Attorney General would like to be able to ask the Solicitor General to take a larger share of the burden of work falling on the Law Officers and would be helped in doing so if the Solicitor General could be relieved of scrutinising proposals for new powers of entry.

Robert Armstrong

6th October 1982

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