

11 May 1988

SECRET AND HONOURS IN CONFIDENCE

MR N WICKS

You are aware that the Political Honours Scrutiny Committee has considered carefully the name of Mr Cyril Smith proposed for honour, for his political services, in the Birthday Honours List 1988. The Committee have asked me to write to you about him.

... 2. The Committee have seen articles in Private Eye and the Rochdale Alternative Press, copies of which I enclose, about alleged offences in the early 1960's, and a police enquiry in 1970.

3. But they dislike the risk of doing injustice on the basis of press reporting from such sources. They have noted Mr Smith was made an MBE in 1966, when an Alderman, for his political and public services in Rochdale: and that he subsequently became Mayor. He also became a Member of Parliament in 1972 after the police enquiries.

4. They have noted also that it was decided not to prosecute Mr Smith. Had there been a prosecution and an acquittal, it is reasonable to suppose that the Committee would not have wished to stand in the way of honour. The Committee feels that the benefit of the doubt should be more readily given where there was no prosecution.

... 5. The Committee have accordingly signed the Certificate attached, and are content for the final decision to be taken by the Prime Minister herself.

DPA

MRS M E HEDLEY-MILLER
(Secretary of the PHSC)

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