

hurn halley.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

4th September 1980

8th September 1980

LETTERS PATENT

It has been suggested to me that we ought to reconsider the practice whereby Letters Patent appointing Counsellors of State are engrossed on vellum and have the Great Seal affixed to them.

The point is that each time this is done, it costs about £390. The procedure, as you know, is for a Warrant to be typed on good quality paper, to be submitted for the Queen's signature and, when the Warrant duly signed is returned, the Letters Patent are engrossed on vellum at a cost of £15 a sheet, and subsequently put in a leather pouch which costs £10; the engrossing fee is £50. When the Letters Patent have passed the Great Seal, notice of that fact is reported in the three Gazettes at a cost of £95 for each insertion. As I understand it, the Letters Patent are then sent to you and remain in the Privy Council Office until, presumably, the time comes for them to be sent to the Public Record Office.

The suggestion is that we could make a minor economy by substituting, for engrossment on vellum, typescript on good quality paper and by using the Wafer Seal. This suggestion may well be worth pursuing if (as I believe to be the case) the Letters Patent are never publicly exhibited or sent to (or retained by) any of the Counsellors of State named in them. On that assumption, they seem to fall into a quite different category from Letters Patent creating a peerage, appointing to a great office of State, or embodying a Royal Charter - each of which is cherished and proudly exhibited by its recipients.

However, before I take the matter any further, I would be grateful for your views.

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J.W. Bourne

BMH