

Chambers et Commere

TRADE

November 1989

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
16.11.89							
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MEETING RECORD
Subject cc Master

CONFIDENTIAL



Mr Mln
C: / economic / chambers.mln

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

21 February 1990

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

The Prime Minister had a bilateral meeting with your Secretary of State yesterday. Most of the discussion concerned developments in Eastern Europe.

But your Secretary of State also mentioned to the Prime Minister that he had been thinking further about his earlier ideas for developing an enhanced role for Chambers of Commerce. The more he had considered this, the greater the difficulties appeared; the Chambers were a very mixed bunch, and it would be hard to re-vamp them into organisations who could take a leading role in implementing operations like advice on export services; they also had no powers to levy finance from members.

Continuing, your Secretary of State said a further consideration was that recent months had seen the successful initial development of a network of Training and Enterprise Councils, which would be initially focussing on the development of training policies. But the TECs would be well-placed also to carry out the sort of functions your Secretary of State had in mind; there would be dis-advantages in setting up a separate parallel set of employer-led organisations. He would therefore be considering further how best to develop the changes in the organisation of services to business that he wished to implement.

PAUL GRAY

Martin Stanley, Esq.,
Department of Trade and Industry

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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT CC MASTER

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

When the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry saw the Prime Minister this evening he described his concerns about the current weak performance of Chambers of Commerce in this country. This contrasted sharply with the position of similar organisations in other European countries. He was keen to see what could be done to improve their role in the UK so that Chambers might take over from the DTI the provision of a wide range of services to business. But to achieve this he thought it would be necessary to make it compulsory for firms to belong to Chambers of Commerce and to give them the power to charge fees to raise sufficient finance to provide services efficiently.

The Prime Minister responded that she had a strong dislike of levies of this sort, and she did not think this aspect of the proposals would be acceptable. The Secretary of State said he would re-consider his ideas to see if a revised approach could be developed without the compulsory levy aspect.

I passed on the gist of the discussion to Neil Thornton in Mr Ridley's office, who undertook to ensure the Prime Minister's comments about compulsory levies were taken into account in further work.

Rec.

PAUL GRAY

16 November 1989

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Grey Scale #13



A 1 2 3 4 5 6 **M** 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 **B** 17 18 19



Inches 1 2 3
Centimetres 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Colour Chart #13

Blue Cyan Green Yellow

