

SUBJECT

CONFIDENTIAL

bc Mr. Vereker
Mr. Walters
Mr. Hoskyns
Mr. Wolfson

NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN MINISTERS AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DOCTORS' AND DENTISTS' REVIEW BODY IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S ROOM AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AT 1615 HOURS ON TUESDAY 20 JANUARY 1981

Present:

Prime Minister	Sir Robert Clark (Chairman of the Doctors' and Dentists' Review Body (DDRB))
Chancellor of the Exchequer	
Secretary of State for Social Services	
Sir Robert Armstrong	
Mr. T.P. Lankester	

* * * * *

The Prime Minister said she had invited Sir Robert to discuss the forthcoming review of the DDRB. She understood that Lord Plowden had already reported to him on the meeting she had had with Lord Plowden on the TSRB. Like the TSRB, the DDRB had very wide terms of reference. She hoped that, in undertaking this year's review, they would take fully into account the general economic situation. She did not believe that their task would be as difficult as the TSRB's since the DDRB's recommendations for 1980 had been fully implemented. But it was still desirable for them to consider very carefully what was happening in the private sector. Private sector settlements were now coming in at a low level, whereas recent public sector settlements had been very substantial; and it was essential for the Government to contain the level of public spending. She was concerned that the DDRB should avoid relying too much on comparability: in so far as they felt obliged to use it, she hoped that they would look at ongoing settlements and not just at settlements over the last year. Other factors which she hoped they would take into account were job security, which the figures for redundancies going back over many years revealed was far greater for Government employees than in the private sector, and also supply and demand considerations.

Sir Robert Clark said that the Review Body were only just beginning discussions with interested parties. They had already seen the British Medical Association, who had acknowledged that they

CONFIDENTIAL

/would

would have to take into account the general economic situation. The Review Body itself, which had received written evidence from the Government, certainly accepted this. As the Prime Minister had said, there would be no element of "catching up" for the doctors and dentists this year, in contrast to TSRB groups; and they would take into account the various factors which she had mentioned. It was likely that they would recommend differential rates of increase for different grades, since the supply and demand situation had changed over the year. For example, there now seemed to be a surplus of applications for junior doctor posts. (Mr. Jenkin added that the same situation seemed to apply in the case of the anaesthetists.) As regards the Government's evidence, Sir Robert said that they strongly endorsed the suggestion that there should be no more staging of awards.

The Prime Minister showed Sir Robert a copy of the draft letter which had been circulated by the Cabinet Office under cover of a minute dated 20 January (Ref: A04045). Sir Robert indicated that there was nothing in the letter which would cause the Review Body any difficulty. But he did not think it was necessary or desirable for the Prime Minister to send it. One consideration which he had to bear in mind was that the doctors were suspicious of them, and a letter on the lines proposed - if it got out - would add to these suspicions.

The Prime Minister said that she was grateful to Sir Robert for what he had said. She agreed that she should not write to him as had earlier been proposed.

20 January 1981