

MANAGEMENT - IN CONFIDENCE

NOTE FOR THE FILE

WASTE, EFFICIENCY etc

Sir Derek Rayner, Mr Allen and I had an informal talk with Mr Pattison, the private secretary at No 10 who deals with papers on W&E in the Civil Service, last evening. (Mr Lankester deals with those on local government and the NHS.) The main points which emerged were as follows.

2. The rush of ideas for reducing the size, scope and "excesses" at the outset of the Administration had been somewhat random. Most ideas had not developed the kind of momentum the PM wanted and there was the obvious problem that neither she nor her private office had the time to read the papers and convert the "rush" into something more systematic. It seemed clear from the returns on Quangos, waste and efficiency that while Ministers might have found out how many Qs they were responsible for, they had very different interpretations of the W&E remit. What was required was someone to get hold of all the separate issues and advise on how to pursue them, eg which should be tackled schematically? which need not be? (The PM associated Sir DR rather than CSD with the attack on "excesses".)
3. Against that background, the letters of 12 and 18 June from No 10 should be seen as holding the position and as reminders that further (if indeterminate) action would be needed. The letter of 18 June could also be seen as a collective acknowledgement of Ministers' minutes, most of which were not worth individual replies.
4. The reference to "some more specific guidance" from Sir DR in the letter of 18 June should be interpreted as meaning that more substantive responses were needed from Ministers than so far received but that in order to advise them, a clearer directive on the work to be done was also needed. The main need was to set targets for the various different exercises now in hand and perhaps to eliminate the dividing lines between exercises; it was no good having general exhortations from the centre and then (say) quarterly reports on how little had been achieved.
5. It would be helpful if Sir DR's next submission to the PM brought the various strands together and suggested a more organised programme, making it clear what could be contributed by him and his office and by the CSD. The programme should not aim at conclusion by a single, set date but provide for reports of real results at sensible intervals. Such reports should come into No 10 through an office capable of dealing with them authoritatively.

6. Sir DR said that he could produce a "co-ordinating" paper, but that his main message, because of the way he worked, must be that one must go for specific things. He knew that this was the approach the PM favoured. (The "Rayner departmental studies" would put the probe into departments and enable him to make recommendations on what should be done next. Apart from that he would like to see, say, 6-monthly reports on progress to achieve particular things. The letter of 12 June on Circulars, by contrast, dealt with good intentions, not action.)

7. Mr Pattison said that it would help the PM to receive such help. At the present, she was being offered the "sick lamb" in the Civil Service flock, which she didn't want: she wanted advice on how to push things forward so as to get results.

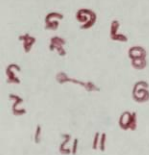
8. I suggested that, in order to get a suitable response to the political urgency of the "campaign" on W&E etc, that is "suitable" in respect of political timing, the timing of the Lord President's exercise and the collective responsibility of the Cabinet, it would be helpful for Cabinet to have a paper at a point after Sir DR's next submission to the PM. Mr Pattison thought this was right: a Cabinet-backed programme could work, if suitably helped by a memorandum from Sir DR and if well-timed, eg during the Recess when agendas were less likely to be crowded. It would be helpful if Sir DR's submission covered this.

9

C PRIESTLEY
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Circulation:

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Mr Allen
✓ Mr Pattison



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