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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 July 1980

~~B/F 29-7-80~~

cc. MOP.
cc: 410
DHSS
HM
DES
WPO
MOD
cc Master Set.
cc: B. Ingham
cc: Services DSG

As you know, Dr. Alec Dickson, the Director of Community Service Volunteers, called on the Prime Minister last evening. He was accompanied by Mrs. Hoodless and Mr. Hanson. Your Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Industry were also present.

At the outset, Dr. Dickson suggested that the country needed a major national programme of youth service. This was needed to alleviate the problems of growing youth unemployment, and there were many tasks which such a youth programme could undertake at relatively low cost and with benefits for the community as a whole. For example, there were huge areas of dereliction which could be improved. One of the pre-requisites for the success of such a programme was the involvement of young people from privileged educational and social backgrounds. As U.S. experience showed, if it were to cater only for disadvantaged young people, it would acquire a reputation for being a programme for layabouts and it would lack the essential element of leadership which more privileged youngsters could provide. Dr. Dickson also argued that one way of preventing the nation from becoming increasingly divided was to include privileged young people in programmes of this kind.

The Prime Minister said that she was not disposed to consider the setting up of a programme of national youth service particularly if (as Dr. Dickson seemed to be implying) there was to be an element of compulsion in it. Such a programme would be extremely costly, it would involve a vast bureaucracy and - if it were compulsory - it would be unacceptable to many young people and their parents. However, she was quite prepared to consider expanding the existing youth programmes, and in particular to see whether voluntary agencies such as CSV could make a bigger contribution.

The discussion then turned to the enclosed note which Mrs. Hoodless handed to the Prime Minister. Referring to page 2 of the note, Mrs. Hoodless said that CSV had the administrative capacity to expand their programme significantly, provided they were able to obtain some additional funding, continued support from the trade unions, and increased private sector assistance. In addition, it would be very helpful if the Government could second, say, another twenty civil servants to CSV, and also possibly some Army personnel. CSV's experience with seconded civil servants so far

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had been quite excellent, and Army personnel - particularly those with trade skills - could be very helpful in supervising particular projects. Furthermore, CSV would find it easier if they could be released from funding by the MSC and funded direct from the Department of Employment: the present MSC funding arrangements involved an excessive amount of bureaucracy. Mrs. Hoodless went on to explain that CSV had in mind the expansion of their main volunteer programme by the addition of 1,000 volunteers; the addition of 500 volunteers in local Springboard slots and 1,000 in their Service Away from Home scheme; and finally, the setting up of an advisory service whereby CSV would, drawing on their own experience, assist other groups such as hospitals and local authorities to develop their own volunteer programmes.

Mr. Prior said that he would consider these proposals, including the possibility of direct funding from the Department of Employment. One additional point which he would look into was the question of how employers such as health authorities financed their contribution to supporting those volunteers whom they took on: if trade unions could be sure that volunteers were not being paid out of funds which might otherwise have financed the employment of their own members, they would be less resistant to the use of volunteers; and this argued, where possible, for a separate channel for volunteer funding.

Mrs. Hoodless then went on to suggest various ideas for expanding youth programmes, not necessarily under the aegis of CSV. These are set out on pages 3 and 4 of the CSV note. The Prime Minister said that she was not prepared to commission a report as suggested under Item 1; but the other specific suggestions were worth looking at on an individual basis. Most of the ideas were for the Department of Employment to consider. Mr. Prior said that he was certainly prepared to look at them. He suggested that Mrs. Hoodless should have an early meeting with Lord Gowrie or Mr. Lester to explain them further. Sir Keith Joseph said that his Department would consider Item 8 - the suggestion that companies might help in establishing and managing Springboard-style schemes. The Prime Minister said that DHSS would need to consider the proposal under Item 9(a) - that social services departments should introduce competitive tendering for the provision of meals on wheels and residential and day care with a view to enabling young people to provide these services. The Home Office would need to consider the proposal under Item 10 - that unemployed youngsters could help promote police crime prevention programmes.

In the light of the discussion, the Prime Minister would be grateful if your Secretary of State would submit a report to her in three weeks' time setting out his conclusions on CSV's immediate proposals for their own programmes, and also on their ideas more generally. It would be helpful if the report could include the DHSS's and Home Office's comments on the two proposals which are within their ambit. No doubt you will make arrangements for Mrs. Hoodless to see Lord Gowrie or Mr. Lester.

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EMP.

S/S to submit report
on CSU's ideas.

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I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Don Brereton (Department of Health and Social Security), Martin Hall (H.M. Treasury), and Peter Shaw (Department of Education and Science), Jim Buckley (Lord President's Office) and Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence).

T. P. LANKESTER

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