

Suggest I see
Sir Derek read

PRIME MINISTER

write as

non-possible

"THE RAYNER PROJECT"

ms

Prime Minister

Are you content with

these vigorous ideas?

I have some doubts

about 3b: this general
prescription might not fit all
dept'l situations. KRS

25/5

1. Since I returned from the Far East a week ago, I have begun a round of consultations with Ministers and senior officials and have thought further about the commission you gave me, taking into account the Cabinet decisions on 10 May. I have met the Lord President, Mr Channon and Sir Ian Bancroft. I should have seen enough senior Ministers to enable me to submit a plan to you and your colleagues in July, allowing for 2 weeks absence from London on business.

2. My purpose in writing to you now is to tell you the provisional shape of my thoughts and to say that I should welcome a brief meeting with you, so that I can answer any questions you might have and you can give me any further thoughts of your own.

3. My present view is that I should undertake three types of work. These are, in ascending order of importance, as follows:-

a. An eye-catching demonstration to illustrate that central Government has over-burdened the citizen, business and industry with requests for information. I have it in mind to collect together and exhibit all such requests sent out in a recent year. The intended effect would be to generate more awareness on the part of Government of the cost and impact of such activity, which I suspect is not essential and should for the most part cease.

b. I should like each Minister to appoint a small high quality team to work full-time to him through a senior official for a period of 3-6 months. These teams, in the design, conduct and reporting of whose work I should want to have a hand, should be free to examine an agreed part of their department's functions in detail and to ask awkward questions, eg "Why is this work done at all? Why is it done as it is? How could it be done more efficiently and more effectively at less cost?" The selection of topics would need care. Broadly speaking, I should want a combination of topics which illuminate matters common to the Civil Service as a whole (eg use of accommodation and other common services; the progression of business through each point in the hierarchy; the cost of meetings) and of topics which are specific to particular functions of Government (eg the payment of benefits; inspection; procurement; and the formulation of policy.) In the case of one or two small departments, it might be possible to look at the whole organisation from both aspects.

c. I know that you are keen to avoid buying short-term benefits at the price of forgoing lasting reform. I therefore see the heart of my commission as the examination of barriers to the effective management of business and resources by

This is like
PAR!
It got nowhere
and both of
top people were.

is there such a word?

Ministers and their officials. Here, too, I believe there are two sorts of issue. First, there are such rules of administration as the "annuality rule", which was an issue when I was last in Whitehall and still is. I would want to explore these with the central and other departments and, as appropriate, with the Comptroller and Auditor General. Secondly, and much more important, while there has been a good deal of recent thinking among Parliamentarians and officials about the general framework within which Ministers and officials manage business, there are several loose ends. I want to offer you and your colleagues, in say six months, suggestions worked out in detail on how they should be tied up. The scope of this work also needs careful thought. At present I see it embracing such matters as the role of the Accounting Officer and how it is used, the development of real accountability for efficient business and resource use down the line and relevant policies for personnel management, including the rewarding and advancement of successful managers. I am convinced that there is room here for substantial and permanent reform.

4. I have discussed this approach in outline with the Lord President and find that it generally commends itself to him.

5. The publicity following my appointment has generated a great deal of correspondence; some of it will be useful to my enquiries. In particular, a number of Civil Servants have written, some in a detailed way and some in simple statements, such as the attached. I intend to harness the good will that undoubtedly exists within the Civil Service to bring about useful economies. Sir Ian Bancroft has arranged for me to speak to all the Permanent Secretaries on 6 June. This is in addition to the appointments I have made with Permanent Secretaries of important departments. My impression is that there exists in Whitehall a great deal of unfinished business, reports and management studies which need action to bring about agreed changes. I shall seek out such work and establish what action is proposed. This may well prove unpopular in some quarters; for example, my business experience suggests that some parts of the CPRS Report on overseas representation, although much criticised, have a lot to commend them.

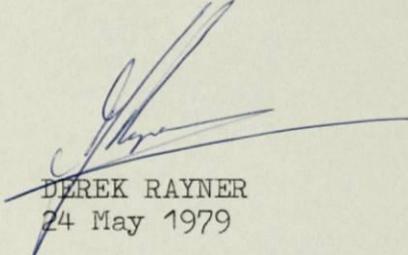
6. May I now turn to the relationship between Ministerial action following the Cabinet decisions of 10 May and my exercise? What I am to do is complementary to Ministerial action in pursuit of efficiency within their own departments, although I am of course available to any Minister who wishes to consult me before he commits himself to a particular line; in general, indeed, I think there would be merit in Ministers deciding what should be done in their own departments in the light of general Cabinet discussion of their reports on action to promote efficiency and of the proposals requested by Cabinet for further action.

7. The Lord President and Sir Ian Bancroft said they saw every reason for my seeing copies of Ministers' reports to you called for by 7 June. We shall consult each other closely about them and I shall,

if you agree, let you have my observations on them at about the same time as Sir Ian Bancroft offers you and the Lord President his. In addition and subsequently, I shall take account of these reports in offering you my proposals for my own exercise.

✓ 8. I am receiving a number of letters from people about local government in addition to those I am getting on central Government. The line I am taking in response to these is that I am to begin with central Government, but that I may later be asked to go on to advise on other parts of the public sector.

9. I am copying this to the Lord President, Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir John Hunt.


DEREK RAYNER

24 May 1979

Quangde's and
Quangaroos?
Presumably that is part
of the exercise.