



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

19 May 1983

Dear Professor Jowell.

Thank you for your letter of 4 May.

I have taken, and intend to go on taking, a close interest in CERN - in its scientific achievements as well as in its funding. I recognise the excellence of its science and was very pleased to learn only a few days ago of the evidence for what is thought to be the Z_0 particle. I can picture, from my visit there last year, the excitement at CERN and throughout the community at this event, coming so soon after discovery of the W.

I am equally conscious of the need for consistent funding for planning research on this scale; and of the problems that external events can unexpectedly create. I have been kept fully informed about the 1983/84 position in which SERC finds itself but have not thought it right to intervene. The system of cash limits is a hard, but necessary, discipline with which, I believe, we must learn to live.

That said, I would certainly want officials to spare no efforts in exploring what accommodation is possible between the principles of cash planning and cash limits on the one hand and the desirability of the UK taking its proper and effective part in international scientific collaboration on the other. I know that officials of the two Departments mainly concerned - the Treasury and the Department of Education and Science - are planning further discussions with the SERC

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and I have asked Dr. Nicholson from the Cabinet Office to join in, because of his particular responsibilities within Whitehall for international scientific collaboration. I cannot say what might come from this work but I hope that it will be some reassurance to your community, and to the SERC, to know that the problems are recognised, and are being examined.

Yours sincerely
Raymond Clarke

Professor J.D. Dowell