

PRIME MINISTER

We have another awkward dispersal problem - remember Bootle!

Cabinet agreed in July that 650 ODA posts were to go to East Kilbride. This was confirmation of Hardman proposals.

Lord Carrington (A) says that he always maintained that staff cuts would make this difficult to achieve. The departments to be dispersed under Hardman have now shed staff, and now consist of only 436 posts. The recent aid programme cuts may reduce this further. He finds no scope for making up the numbers from other ODA functions or from the FCO. He points out that it would in any case be illogical to try to send more functions to Scotland just when ODA is being much more closely merged with FCO.

Mr. Channon (B) supported by Mr. Younger (C) say that the Government cannot now go back on its Glasgow/East Kilbride commitment without considerable political difficulty. Mr. Channon accepts that there has been a reduction in staff fulfilling the functions previously identified for dispersal, but argues that the full total of 650 should still be found from somewhere within the overall FCO.

Cabinet Office paper (D) adds the alternative of seeking more Defence dispersal to Scotland, even though this would probably have to be to Glasgow and not to the office space now being prepared in East Kilbride. Paragraph 4 of the Cabinet Office note offers the best approximation to the judgement of Solomon that they can devise. I doubt whether Defence will be all that keen to offer special favours in the dispersal field just now, but it might be worth a try.

There is a real political problem here. Figures for dispersal to Scotland have been announced. But most FCO political wing functions need to be based in London, and those ODA functions not already ear-marked for dispersal do belong in London, near the FCO, Embassies, etc., if they are to continue to be performed.

/The possible

Frank Why can't the Quintessential of Overseas
Survey, go? I understand why
Laboratories can't be moved but surely
that doesn't apply to mapping? Overseas - long
initials!

The possible exception is the scientific units, in which you have taken some interest. But as Lord Carrington points out, moving them would involve a much higher capital cost for building specialist facilities, and would not necessarily work: existing staff would disappear, and specialist replacement staff might not be available.

I do not think there is much chance of finding the missing 200 posts from a shrinking Department which is in the process of being more effectively merged with the FCO. But do you regard paragraph 4 of the Cabinet Office note as an acceptable compromise? Given the Bootle experience there is nobody other than Defence who could be persuaded to fill the gap.

MAP

27 February 1980



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Ref. A0154Z

MR. PATTISON

Dispersal

You asked for advice on Lord Carrington's minute to the Prime Minister of 22nd February and Mr. Channon's reply of 25th February.

2. The FCO warned last July that this problem might arise. (CC(79) 12th Conclusions, Minute 4 records that "staff cuts would make the target of 650 posts more difficult to achieve".)

3. I think there are three alternatives worth considering -

(i) Accept that the cut-back in staff means a cut-back in dispersal.

Mr. Channon argues against this line and no doubt Mr. Younger will do the same.

- (ii) Make the FCO find another 200 staff to disperse, either from the ODA or from the Diplomatic Service. But the possibility of dispersing more ODA staff has been thoroughly examined and rejected on operational grounds. Cabinet itself rejected the idea of dispersing Diplomatic Service staff, when considering how to make up the package for Bootle.
- (iii) Make the Ministry of Defence - the other Department which is dispersing to Scotland - find another 200 staff to disperse. In a Department the size of Defence, this must be a possibility. They would of course argue strongly against it but that in itself need not be an overriding objection. There is however another difficulty: the Ministry of Defence would argue that if they must provide the extra posts, they should send them to Glasgow, where the rest of the dispersed MOD staff will be situated, not to East Kilbride. So there will still be a problem of 200 empty office spaces at East Kilbride.

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4. A further possibility, somewhere between options (i) and (iii), would be to accept that there may have to be a reduction in total dispersal, but to ask the Secretary of State for Defence to see what he can do to bridge the gap, and to say that Scotland should have the first claim on whatever is the next area of Civil Service work designated for dispersal. This might be the best course.

(D.J. Wright)

27th February, 1980

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27 FEB 1960



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PRIME MINISTER

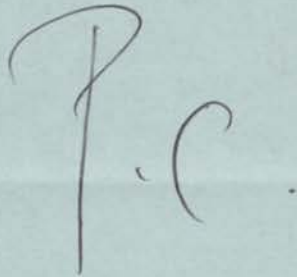
ODA DISPERSAL

1. I appreciate the problem the Foreign Secretary sets out in his minute to you of 22 February. However, I am certain that we must stick to the figure of 2,000 posts for Glasgow and East Kilbride, which we announced in Parliament last July. You will recall the strong feelings of our colleagues in Scotland about this. The Ministry of Defence dispersal is to take place to Glasgow, but not until the mid-80s. One of the difficulties is that the 650 ODA posts for East Kilbride are to be dispersed in 1981-82. They will therefore be the only evidence of our intentions on dispersal to Scotland during the life-time of this Parliament.
2. You will remember the great difficulties we had about deciding on the HSE dispersing to Bootle; I am sure it will be no easier at this stage to get Departments to go to the West of Scotland.
3. The news that the total of 650 posts is now not firm has already leaked to Scottish Members. I have had a letter from Maurice Miller. At least one of the Civil Service unions knows about this. Therefore the matter must be settled one way or the other quickly.
4. I accept the Foreign Secretary's view that to disperse one or more of the scientific units of ODA would be very costly and would not be achieved within the timetable. But even discounting the specialist units there is a total headquarters staff of 1,400 in ODA.
5. I believe there is no practical way of keeping to our timetable and fulfilling our commitments except to either (a) stick to the original figure of 650 posts from ODA despite all the difficulties or (b) to find further posts from FCO itself to cover the gap.

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

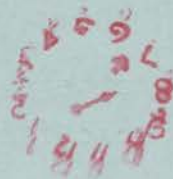
6. Now that FCO and ODA are to be merged, I would have thought that the merged Departments could come to a sensible arrangement as to which groups should be dispersed.

7. I am copying this minute to members of the Cabinet, the Minister of Transport, Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Handwritten initials 'P.C.' in a cursive script.

PAUL CHANNON

25 February 1980



25 FEB 1980

A civil
SERVICEPM/80/12PRIME MINISTERDispersal

1. I must bring to your attention and that of colleagues the serious problem that has arisen over the number of ODA posts to be dispersed to Scotland as part of the package of posts for East Kilbride and Glasgow. The background is set out in the attached memorandum.
2. The plain fact is that it is now impossible to find the 650 posts which were the then complement of those parts of ODA which the previous Government decided in 1974 should be dispersed to East Kilbride. Organisational and functional changes compounded by staff cuts have reduced the posts in the ODA departments due for dispersal to 436. The recent cuts in the Aid Programme are likely to reduce this number further. I have considered carefully whether there is any scope for making up the numbers from the rest of ODA Headquarters staff but I have concluded that there is not. Any further reduction in ODA Headquarters numbers would cause disproportionate disruption. Further, when we are working hard to make the merger of FCO and ODA an effective reality we ought not to add to the problems by a major physical separation.
3. I have also considered whether the numbers could be made good by dispersing one of the ODA's Scientific Units. There are three main reasons against this. To get anywhere near the proposed numbers would be a very expensive operation given the need to build specialised laboratories and move laboratory equipment. Secondly, any Unit(s) so selected could very well break up on dispersal because their professional staff would be likely to refuse to go to Scotland; and their range of experience and skills could not be replaced by local transfer or recruitment. Thirdly, the units have important links with institutions accessible from the sites where they have been long established. I do not, therefore, regard this as a viable alternative.

/4.



4. Finally, I have reconsidered whether there are any suitable blocks of work in the political wing of the FCO which could be sensibly transferred to East Kilbride. My conclusion is that we could not fill the gap in this way largely because of the fact that many of the staff working in areas which might be thought possible for dispersal are Diplomatic Service staff on home postings.

5. In the circumstances, therefore, the maximum number of posts the FCO/ODA could now contribute to the west of Scotland dispersal package is between 400 and 450. There is simply no way that I could increase that number without doing unacceptable damage either to the administration of the aid programme or to other FCO work. The only solutions I can see are either that we reduce the overall dispersal package - which would no doubt lead to protests from Scottish MPs - or that colleagues agree to meet the shortfall. I think we must ask Paul Channon to investigate the latter possibility.

6. I am copying this minute to Members of the Cabinet and to Paul Channon and Norman Fowler. I am also sending copies to Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir Robert Armstrong.

C

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

22 February 1980

DRAFT

DISPERSAL

Memorandum by the Overseas Development Administration

1. The Hardman Report of 1973 suggested that the parts of the ODA Headquarters which could be dispersed without intolerable loss of efficiency were the Overseas Manpower Division and Accounts Department and part of the Statistics Division. In July 1974, when the then Government decided to implement the Hardman report, the number of staff in those departments was 650.

2. With greater efficiencies in working and the shedding of some responsibilities, the number of posts in the relevant parts of ODA Headquarters has steadily dropped and is still dropping. In July 1979 when the present Administration considered the dispersal programme again the number was about 500. This was made clear in the ODA paper for the Dispersal Review but in the Economic Strategy Committee, which considered the matter, the discussion centred on whether the relevant part of ODA should be dispersed at all and the question of how many posts this represented was not in the forefront of the minds of Ministers considering the issue. The final decision in Cabinet as recorded on 26 July was that the ODM should disperse 650 posts. Since then the ODA has repeatedly reminded the CSD of the position. Staff cuts in the departments concerned have now reduced the number of officials concerned to 436 (details in Annex A). Of these nearly 400 will be new to the ODA since only some 40 existing staff have agreed to transfer.

3. It is impossible for the ODA to disperse more staff from Headquarters. The operational departments left - a breakdown is at Annex B - will be the geographical departments and the international and UN departments, which must be close to the Minister, Parliament and their colleagues in the political wing of the FCO, Treasury, DOT etc and which can no more be dispersed than the departments in other Ministries with which they work closely; the Advisers supporting these departments; the remaining functional and subject departments which are performing particular tasks which can only be carried out in London; and the common services which clearly cannot be separated from the departments which they are servicing.

4. The case for the dispersal of the Directorate of Overseas Surveys to the Glasgow area has already been considered and rejected by the present Government. There are three Scientific Units - the Centre for Overseas Pest Research (138 staff in post), the Tropical Products Institute (295) and the Land Resources Development Centre (62). They need to be reasonably close to professional colleagues at ODA Headquarters and the various institutions with which they have long-standing contacts. Great expense, for which new funds would need to be found, would be involved in building laboratories and moving laboratory equipment. But in any case the Units might well break up on dispersal because the staff would be unwilling to go and their range of skills and experience could not be replaced by local transfer or recruitment.

5. Furthermore, all parts of the ODA, including the Units, are likely to be affected by the outcome of the Management Review and the Rayner projects. The manpower implications of reductions in the aid programme and of a redirection of aid resources following the Aid Policy Review may lead to further staff cuts. A reduction in Technical Cooperation would have direct staffing implications for the departments of ODA concerned with overseas staff which constitute the bulk of the ODA dispersal package.

Overseas Development Administration
February 1980



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