



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 September 1980

The Prime Minister has seen Scottish Office Ministers' proposal for a scrutiny of the Inspectorate of Schools in Scotland. This is a potentially sensitive subject, given the Manifesto commitment on the Inspectorate.

The Prime Minister is most interested in the topic, but she is not convinced that a scrutiny in Scotland would necessarily be the most useful way to initiate a look at questions of the role of the Inspectorates of Schools in all three territories.

She would therefore like to have a discussion on this subject with Education Ministers for Scotland, England and Wales. We had hoped to be able to arrange a meeting this month, but this has not proved possible. The Prime Minister will now be overseas until 29 September, and the meeting will therefore have to be after the Party Conference.

I should be grateful to know if all three Departments could be represented by a Minister, perhaps with the Heads of their Inspectorates, at a meeting at 3.00 p.m. on Monday 20 October.

I am sending copies of this letter to Peter Shaw (Department of Education and Science), John Craig (Welsh Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS) and Clive Priestley (Sir Derek Rayner's Office).

M. A. PATTISON

B.R. Morgan, Esq.,
Scottish Office.

9

Overtaken -
See
CS to S.O.
1.10.



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From The Secretary of State for Wales

✓
MS

3rd October, 1980.

Dear Mike,

Inspectorate of Schools.

MAP(OE)

Thank you for copying me your letter of 18 September to the Scottish Office about the Prime Minister's meeting with Education Ministers which I now understand is arranged for 30 October.

to see MS
6/10

I confirm that my Secretary of State will attend from the Welsh Office and will be accompanied by a senior member of the Inspectorate in Wales in the absence of our Chief Inspector who is at present on sick leave.

Yours sincerely,

D.M. Rolph
Private Secretary

M.A. Pattison, Esq.,
Private Secretary,
No. 10 Downing Street,
London, S.W.1.

PERSONAL

BF 13/x. *Education*

Mr PATTISON



HM INSPECTORATES OF SCHOOLS

1. I should be glad of a personal word some time about briefing for and the desired outcome of the intended meeting on the above.
2. I have suggested to CPRS that they and we should provide a single brief, to cut down the paper for the Prime Minister, and that in it we should suggest what might be the outcome.
3. You may like to know that the Scots will probably suggest that their Minister should be accompanied by the Head of SED as well as the Senior Chief Inspector; and that Sir James Hamilton (DES) has taken at least the provisional view that he should accompany his Minister, being superior to his SCI. (I must say that there is some sense in this, as my information is that the SCI has the Minister in a fast grip.)
4. We may run into difficulties over Sir Derek Rayner's diary and therefore have to ask whether I would be an acceptable substitute for him on this occasion.*

CP

C PRIESTLEY
1 October 1980

** Now fixed for 30th October, when he can attend.*

P. R.

Education

NOTE FOR THE FILE

Those attending the meeting on Thursday ^{30th}
October at 1600 hours in the House of
Commons will be:

Secretary of State for Education
and Science

Secretary of State for Scotland

Secretary of State for Wales

Sir Derek Rayner and a representative
from CPRS

Miss Sheila Browne
Senior Chief Inspector, England

Mr. L. Davies
Chief Inspector, Wales

Mr. J.F. McGarrity
Chief Inspector, Scotland

1 October 1980



35
BF 29.10.80

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 October 1980

Mike Pattison wrote to you on 18 September regarding a meeting to discuss a scrutiny of the Inspectorate of the Schools in Scotland.

This has now been arranged for Thursday 30 October at 1600 hours in the Prime Minister's room at the House of Commons. Those present will be your Secretary of State, the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Wales, Sir Derek Rayner and a representative from CPRS, together with the relevant three Chief Inspectors.

I am sending copies of this letter to Peter Shaw (Department of Education and Science), John Craig (Welsh Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS) and Clive Priestley (Sir Derek Rayner's Office).

CAROLINE STEPHENS

B.R. Morgan, Esq.,
Scottish Office.

SP

PRIME MINISTER

Scrutiny of H.M. Inspectorate of Schools, Scotland

You say that you are loth to allow this scrutiny to go ahead.

We could simply say that you would prefer to set this aside at this stage in view of the Manifesto commitment. But as you know there has been some questioning of the current role of the Inspectorate in England by both Derek Rayner and Ken Berrill, and we now have the separate sugges-tion in respect of Scotland. Do you think it would be useful for you to have a discussion about the use of the Inspectorate, to see whether any new initiatives or studies would be helpful? I think the meeting would need to include Education Ministers for England, Wales and Scotland, someone from C.P.R.S., perhaps Sir Derek Rayner and perhaps the Head of the Inspectorate.

MPD

Yes please

no

27 August 1980

I am both to show the scrutiny to go ahead. This truth is what

Mr PATTISON

The Inspectorate is not being used properly. It should embark on a more full inspection of schools.

Prime Minister

This promises to be an interesting topic, and may produce results with implications for the English Inspectorate. But in view of 'x' below, it should not go ahead without your authority - given

THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME: HM INSPECTORATE OF SCHOOLS, SCOTLAND

1. The Secretary of State for Scotland has proposed a scrutiny of his Inspectorate of Schools in the shape of the attached scheme. The scrutiny would be supervised by Mr Alex Fletcher, MP, Minister for Industry and Education.

2. Sir Derek Rayner welcomes the proposal and commends it to the Prime Minister for approval.

Political aspects

3. Ministers propose a scrutiny on the grounds that, owing to changes in the circumstances in which their Inspectors work (including the abatement of traditional functions and the rise of LEAs' own advisers) there may be a case for a substantial reduction in the resources committed. These consist of 118 highly paid staff, their supporters and associated expenditure, costing some £3.25m at 1979 prices. The proposal notes at A/ that the study will be seen by some as incompatible with the Manifesto commitment to strengthen the Inspectorate.

4. In response to this, the examining officer is therefore required to take all factors into account and to advise whether reducing expenditure on the Inspectorate might have serious disadvantages for education in Scotland.

5. It might be prudent to announce that the scrutiny was to take place in terms likely to forestall adverse criticism.

6. Sir Derek Rayner's preliminary view is that a slimmer Inspectorate (if so recommended and agreed) need not be a weaker Inspectorate. If its role were clear and it were better adapted to Ministers' policy for good education the effect should be one of re-inforcement even if numbers are lower.

Length of review

7. The proposal is to employ a recently retired Under Secretary on a part-time basis and to require a report after six months (late March 1981). This period is longer than the 90 days normally allowed and should I think be queried.

Wider implications

8. Sir Derek Rayner has seen your minute of 5 August on schools expenditure to Mr Ibbs (to whom I am copying this for information).

understanding with the N.U. It is time that we changed regular full inspections resumed

X

the Welsh TV channel precedent. I think the study should be announced, Agree to the study?

MAD 22/8



9. He agrees with the emphasis placed by the Prime Minister on the need for high quality heads, chairmen of education committees and directors of education. With regard to the proposed scrutiny in Scotland, he thinks the key point is how Inspectors can best help secure that education in general and establishments in particular are of good quality and merit public confidence. He hopes that the scrutiny will, among other things, show what the Inspectorate can do to produce good heads and effective management of the resources for which heads are responsible.

10. He was impressed last year on meeting the heads of two large secondary schools in the West Midlands by the nature and scale of their educational and managerial tasks - one had 1,500 pupils, the other 1,100 - and by their disappointed hopes of getting advice and guidance from the Inspectorate. He formed a very clear impression that with the withdrawal of the Inspectorate from some of their traditional roles in the schools, they are becoming steadily more remote from and indeed unknown to the rising generation of future heads and deputy head teachers.

11. Sir Derek Rayner expects that the review in Scotland, despite the differences between it and England and Wales, to produce lessons applicable or at least relevant to Inspection down here. He suggests that this should be registered with a view to a possible follow-up exercise in London and Cardiff.

CP

C PRIESTLEY
20 August 1980

Enc: Scheme of proposed scrutiny



EFFICIENCY AND WASTE IN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT - THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME

The review, of which details are given below, is proposed as the next Scottish Office study to be carried out under the direction of Sir Derek Rayner:

a. Subject

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools in the Scottish Education Department.

b. Cost of Carrying Out Activities

Staff costs - 1980/81 Estimated Outturn £2.2m.

Travel and Subsistence - Approximately £190,000 to £200,000 per annum.

As a guide, the basic staff costs plus accommodation and common services of the Inspectorate and their support staff would be about £3.25m (based on the 1979 edition of the Ready Reckoner for Staff Costs).

c. Reasons for Selecting this Subject

The last external review of the Inspectorate was carried out by the Commons Select Committee on Education and Science in 1967-68; its Report recommended relatively minor changes. In 1973 a review was carried out by the Management Services Division of the Scottish Office: its main recommendations resulted in changes in the senior staff structure and closer liaison between HM Chief Inspectors and administrative divisions, but it did not suggest any basic changes in the overall role or objectives of the Inspectorate.

With changes in, or the disappearance of, traditional HMI functions such as formal inspection, assessment of probationary teachers and the conduct of examinations, combined with the growth in "specialist advisers" on the staff of education authorities, there seems, against the background of the Government's general policy of disengagement from local government, to be a prima facie case for a substantial reduction in the resources devoted to Inspectorate work on schools and further education. In considering our contribution to the manpower savings target, we must clearly examine carefully the existing and prospective functions of the Inspectorate, presently numbering 118 officers on scales well above the average. Although the study will be seen by some as incompatible with the Manifesto commitment that "the Scottish Inspectorate will be strengthened" it will be a specific purpose of the exercise to assess whether a reduction in the Inspectorate would have serious disadvantages for Scottish education.

A



d. Terms of Reference

The following are proposed:

"To consider and report on the role, organisation and staffing of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools in the Scottish Education Department, including the main priorities of work to be undertaken, and arrangements for collaboration between the Inspectorate and the rest of the Scottish Office, taking account in particular of the following considerations:

1. the present and prospective needs of the education service;
2. the role of staff employed by education authorities;
3. the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to education authorities and other bodies concerned with education and training;
4. Government statements of policy relating to the quality of education and to the Inspectorate; and
5. the Government's plans to reduce public expenditure and Civil Service manpower."

e. Proposed Starting and Finishing Dates

The review will start about the end of September this year. It is likely to take about 6 months.

f. Name of Examining Officer and Reporting Arrangements

Mr Alex Fletcher, the Minister responsible for Industry and Education, has agreed to be responsible to the Secretary of State for Scotland for this exercise. Since it will involve considerations of major educational policy, we consider that it should be undertaken on a part-time basis by an experienced Under Secretary, Mr P C Rendle, who has just retired from the post of Principal Finance Officer, and has made wide experience not only in the Scottish Education Department but in other parts of the Scottish Office.

Scottish Office
21 August 1980



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21 AUG 1980

