

FILE

V68

Education



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 November 1980

Lan Alex

The Prime Minister has seen Lady Young's recent correspondence with Sir Derek Rayner about the proposed scrutiny on HM Inspectorate of Schools.

Mrs. Thatcher believes that this scrutiny should be undertaken by a civil servant, in line with the practice adopted for the rest of the programme undertaken under Sir Derek Rayner's auspices. The use of a major outside figure would turn the exercise into a full-scale national Inquiry, with attendant publicity, and this is not the nature of the exercise which the Prime Minister had in mind.

I am sending copies of this letter to Godfrey Robson (Scottish Office), John Craig (Welsh Office) and Clive Priestley (Sir Derek Rayner's Office).

Yours ever

Mike Pattison

Miss A. J. Stewart,
Department of Education and Science.

V66

cc for information *MP*

Sir Derek Rayner

✓ Mr Pattison
Mr Bailey (HM Tsy)
Mr Charkham (CSD)
Mr Russell (CSD)

SCRUTINY OF HM INSPECTORATES OF SCHOOLS, ENGLAND AND WALES

1. We had a word on Saturday morning about the letter from Lady Young of the previous day (copy attached) for copy addressees other than Mr Pattison.
2. We both felt that the employment of a "top hat" or "figurehead" was not on the face of it necessary but agreed that I should speak to Sir James Hamilton this morning.
3. I did so, when I began by registering reservations but saying that we might have got it wrong. Sir JH thought that we had. His conviction, which seemed to grow upon him as we spoke, was that the exercise must be done from outside DES.
4. It was not just another "Rayner" scrutiny. There would be much public interest in it and he was surprised if we did not recognise the advantage there would be in having an unbiased outsider. The level at which the examination needed to be conducted was at least US, indicated by the fact that the Scottish Office was going for a recently retired PEO. Their own view was that the special circumstances of England and Wales (a larger Inspectorate, a more controversial history) pointed to someone at an even higher level, either a retired official or somebody else. DES had serving officials capable of doing the work, but the load on the Department was such that it would be difficult to spare a good AS or US for the work.
5. Sir John Boynton was known to Lady Young and was very much her choice, although he might be too busy.

6. Sir JH said that they were not looking for a figure-head but for someone who would go in and ask mordant questions. He volunteered the thought that going for an outsider was "not an underhand attempt to sabotage the scrutiny". He was keen that the inquiry should be definitive and carrying the Insepectorate well forward. The examining officer would have to get around and spend some time on the work, although he would have a Principal to do the devilling.

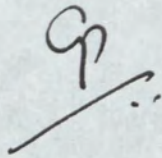
7. Sir JH said that his conviction was that an inside job could not be as effective as an outside one. Everyone in the DES had some involvement in the Inspectorate but very few had experience outside the Department or of management. He was very anxious to have a proper investigation done by someone with, about all else, other experience.

8. If you did not agree to that they would, he thought, find someone from inside the Department for the work but he obviously believed that you would prefer an outsider on "freedom from bias" grounds.

9. I have drafted a reply to Lady Young in which you agree, reluctantly, to the appointment of an outsider. It does of course represent a serious departure from the scrutiny format so far adopted but if, as suggested in the letter, you can influence the commission given to the outsider, I think that would be preferable to making the relationship with DES Ministers even less friendly than it is now. There is also the point, of course, that we might not come out on top if we made a fuss.

10. However if you did not like the idea of an outsider or objected to any of the names or had other names to put forward yourself, we could think again. I am interested by the emphasis which Sir JH places on "management" in this context. This explains the inclusion of the names of Barron, Runciman and Wardale in additon to that of Boynton. I detect

two clear motives here. One is the desire to break out of the stiffling cocoon of education and to bring other values to bear. The second is to do so at a level to which even the most hostile critic within the Department can make no reasonable objection. It seems plain that in proposing an outsider, Sir JH thought that he would have your strong support.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'C Priestley', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

C PRIESTLEY

10 November 1980

PRIME MINISTER

Lady Young's letter below shows that DES would like to put an outsider in charge of their Inspectorate Scrutiny. They have some pretty powerful names in mind.

This will inevitably change the nature of the exercise. The scrutiny system supposedly benefits from the fact that the exercises are carried out by members of the department under review. What Lady Young has in mind will be seen as a national Inquiry (capital letter deliberate). But on the other hand, I understand that DES are not confident that any Principal or Assistant Secretary in the Department will be capable of standing up to Miss Browne on this exercise.

Content to leave Lady Young and Derek Rayner to sort this out between them?

MAK

*It must be
someone in the
Civil Service*

10 November 1980

ms

CONFIDENTIAL

CMA



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON, SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-928 9222
FROM THE MINISTER OF STATE

Sir Derek Rayner
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2AS

7 November 1980

Dear Sir Derek Rayner,

HM INSPECTORATE OF SCHOOLS

I wrote to you on ⁴5 November about the terms of reference for the scrutiny of HM Inspectorate in England and Wales. I now want to deal with the equally important question of appointing an examining officer.

Given the importance of the Inspectorate and the national character of its operations, I see great merit in appointing someone who is not currently in the Whitehall circuit. In considering a list of those who might be approached I have been struck by the name of Sir John Boynton, MC who seems to me to be admirably suited to the task. As an ex-Chief Executive of Cheshire County Council he has a local authority background which I believe to be a considerable asset in the job to be tackled. In the wider field, he led the electoral commission in Zimbabwe, and, most recently headed the Rampton Special Hospital Review Team, whose Report has been well-received in the DHSS. I know that Nicholas Edwards considers that he would be an admirable choice.

We are, of course, writing at very short notice and it may be possible that Sir John Boynton will not be available to take on the job. I am therefore letting you have, as a reserve list, the other names I have considered. I would like to move ahead on this aspect of the scrutiny very quickly and unless you have any reservations, I would propose to write to Sir John early next week. He may of course refuse, in which case we shall have to look again

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

at our reserve list.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, and the Secretaries
of State for Scotland and Wales.

Yours sincerely,

AJ Stewart

BARONESS YOUNG
(agreed by Lady Young
and signed in her absence)

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CIVIL SERVICE

Sir Nicholas Morrison (62): ex-Permanent Secretary, Scottish Office.

Sir Geoffrey Wardale MC (62): ex-Permanent Secretary, DOE.

INDUSTRIALISTS

Sir Donald Barron (59): Chairman, Rowntree Mackintosh Limited, member of University Grants Committee.

Hon Gary Runciman FBA (46): Chairman, Walter Runciman and Co Ltd; Fellow Trinity College, Cambridge.

ACADEMIC

Sir Henry Fisher (62): President, Wolfson College, Oxford.

Trevor Thomas (66): ex-Vice Chancellor, Liverpool; Barrister.

CONFIDENTIAL