



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

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mes to see WM 23/3

Handwritten scribble

Prime Minister 2

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Willie Rickett Esq
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A word processor is not as cost effective as a competent secretary with an electric typewriter if you are going to change almost every paragraph of a paper: in that case, manipulating the text takes longer than retyping. That is what the last paragraph of this letter means. But in this case MPO did not retype: they circulated a paper with manuscript amendments. I don't think they have an excuse for that, but, despite this letter, I think Lady Young's office have got the message.

Dear Willie,

WM
22/3

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION: EVIDENCE TO MEGAW - WORD PROCESSORS

We had a word on the phone on Wednesday about the paper on this which I sent to the Treasury on 15 March. You told me that the Prime Minister was content with the paper but was moved to ask, because of the number of manuscript amendments, whether we had a word processor in MPO.

I can now confirm what I told you on the telephone: we have several. There are four machines in London, and they have been there for two years. There are also four at the Civil Service Commission in Basingstoke together with three magnetic card machines. Following the re-organisation and transfer of work to the Treasury, studies have begun to consider this Office's long term requirements.

Because this paper for Megaw was needed urgently it was judged best to produce it by ordinary electric typewriter. I understand that the initial input to a word processor can be slower than to an electric typewriter; but, more importantly, it was recognised that there would be a significant amount of redrafting and that it was not cost-effective to put this work on a word processor.

Yours sincerely,
Jim Buckley.

J BUCKLEY