

MASTER
SUBJECT



HLF

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

27 July 1982

Dear Tim,

As you know, the Lord Privy Seal met the Prime Minister today to discuss the Government response to the report of the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee on Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Civil Service. The Prime Minister took the view that the existing draft did not give a strong enough commitment to a common system of management information in Departments and in particular MINIS. The common system was necessary partly to enable comparisons to be made & partly because without such a system the movement of senior managers between Departments would be seriously inhibited. MINIS had proved itself in the Department of Environment and the Prime Minister was unconvinced by arguments that it could not effectively be applied elsewhere. Without a commitment to a common management information system, there was a danger that the Government's pursuit of better management and greater efficiency would lose momentum. The Lord Privy Seal agreed that the momentum for change should be continued and the draft response went a long way in the direction of central prescription. Departments had, however, argued with some justification that MINIS was not appropriate in all cases; so long as there was strong central oversight, for example through a Cabinet Committee, it would be better to ask Departments to develop their own systems. The discipline of the regular publication of reports would be a further incentive to develop practical and comprehensive systems. Such an approach was consistent with the current financial management initiative which was proceeding under the direction of the Chief Secretary, whereas the imposition of MINIS might well under-cut that initiative. The Lord Privy Seal felt that the existing draft response represented the best way forward; the Chancellor and Sir Derek Rayner were of the same mind. The Lord Privy Seal further said that she would submit a note setting out what was already being done in Departments. The Prime Minister said that she would reflect further on the draft.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Kerr (HM Treasury), Terry Mathews (Chief Secretary's Office), David Wright (Cabinet Office) and Clive Priestley (Management and Personnel Office).

Yours ever,
Tim Fisher

J. Buckley, Esq.,
Lord Privy Seal's Office.

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