

PRIME MINISTER

Here is a report from Sir Leo Pliatzky about arrangements for the publication of his Report.

You will see that he intends to talk personally to selected journalists, and to take part in the daily lobby briefing on the date of publication.

He attaches a proposed Question, which would be put down to you for Written Answer.

I have agreed with him that we should use the figure "about 3700" in the answer, and have amended it for this purpose. He had originally quoted a lower figure, partly because a significant number of appointments to be discarded are to subsidiary bodies of MSC, and are made by the Commission itself, not Ministers. But that is no reason for failing to take credit for the number of posts saved. (These figures also exclude changes in tribunals, but his Report gives tribunals somewhat different treatment.)

You will want to consider the final part of his fifth paragraph, which is a very clear statement of position on further hiving off. You agreed some time ago to take this opportunity to make your attitude clear. I hope you do not find this statement too strong. It might possibly offend Mr. Heseltine, who is still trying to get his Accounts Commission for Local Government established. But the formulation does not completely exclude exceptions to the general rule - and I think that there is still plenty of resistance to the Accounts Commission scheme.

*Did we have a letter for Mr. Heseltine? I am LHM's with the statement*

If you wish, we could expand the final paragraph to be more consciously flattering to the staff and members of all these bodies. Many have felt vulnerable and undeservedly criticised over recent months.

*I don't think there is any need for*

Subject to the above points, are you content with these arrangements for publication and publicity? I have it in mind that Ian Gow might invite Philip Holland to table the Question.

*MAC*

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM SIR LEO PLIATZKY

MR PATTISON

REPORT ON PUBLIC BODIES - PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT  
AND PRESS HANDLING

1. After consultation within the Civil Service Department and with the No. 10 Press Office, may I now let you have proposals about the announcement and publicity relating to the Report on Non-Departmental Public Bodies. On the assumption that the printing is completed in time, as we expect it to be, we are still planning on publication of the report as a White Paper (Cmd. 7797) next Wednesday, 16 January.

....  
2. The Prime Minister has agreed to give a Written Answer to an arranged Parliamentary Question. I enclose a text for this purpose. If this is approved, may I take it that you will make the necessary arrangements for the question to be asked and answered.

3. We will need to have confirmation of the approved text of the Written Answer a reasonable time in advance, so as to attach the text to the Press Notice which it is planned to issue after the White Paper has been laid.

4. The text refers to a reduction of well over 3,000 in the number of public appointments to executive and advisory bodies, as a result of the decisions so far taken about particular bodies. For your information, the actual figure of reductions, including appointments to subsidiary bodies of the Manpower Services Commission, which are made by the Commission and not directly by Ministers, will be 3,772, out of a starting total of 26,316. Although obviously a great number of public appointments will remain, the reduction will be over 14% of the starting total (or over 10% if we leave out the MSC bodies) and it seems worth taking credit for this, since appointments make considerable demands on the time of Ministers and senior officials. These figures, incidentally, have been put together since the report was completed, and are not in the report itself.

5. It is proposed to make confidential final revises of the report available to the Press a little in advance.

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I have been asked to join Press Officers from No. 10 and the CSD in meeting Lobby Correspondents on the afternoon of publication date. Earlier on that date I plan to have a more informal briefing meeting with a very small number of journalists from the "heavies", as I used to do with Public Expenditure White Papers.

6. Press Offices have advised that all this Press briefing should be non-attributable. This means that no radio or television interviews can be involved.

7. I expect to give one and perhaps more separate interviews to individual journalists, but the aim will be to keep these too on a non-attributable basis so far as possible.

8. I am sending you a separate minute about the handling of any enquiries on the question of the system of public appointments by Ministers.

9. I am sending copies of this to Mr Paul Channon's office and to Sir Ian Bancroft. I should not think it necessary to clear the draft reply with Departments generally, but I have let Permanent Secretaries know in general terms of the arrangements for publication and announcement of the White Paper and put them on notice that it will be for the Departments concerned to answer any questions and provide any further information needed about particular bodies with which they are concerned.

4.5.

LEO PLIATZKY

9 January 1980

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9 JAN 1980



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To ask the Prime Minister what further progress has been made in her review of various public bodies.

Draft reply

At the end of August 1979 Sir Leo Pliatzky was retained in the public service for the time being to help me in carrying this review forward. I received his report on Non-Departmental Public Bodies last month and I am presenting it to Parliament today as a White Paper (Cmnd. 7797).

A substantial part of the report consists of a factual survey of executive, advisory and judicial bodies. I believe that this information will be of considerable value to Parliament and the public.

The report also brings together the Ministerial decisions which have so far been taken about the future of individual bodies. The effect of these decisions, including measures taken or announced at earlier stages in the review, will be to reduce the number of executive bodies by 30 and the number of advisory bodies by 211, with a consequent reduction of ~~well over~~ <sup>about around</sup> 3,700 in the number of public appointments. Five judicial bodies are also to be wound up.

The administrative economies from these measures, when fully implemented, will be roughly £11 million in a full year. These will be additional to the financial savings of about £350 million in 1980-81 from reductions made in the previously planned programmes of the largest



executive-type bodies as a result of the general public expenditure exercise.

The report also suggests some lessons for the future, based on a study of past experience. A general conclusion indicated is that a more cautious and selective approach should be adopted in the future towards the creation of non-Departmental bodies, and in particular towards the "hiving off" of Departmental functions to such bodies. The Government endorse this view. I can assure the House that we will look critically at all fresh proposals for new bodies and that we should be opposed to a policy of further hiving off of functions to non-Departmental public bodies.

Other suggestions relate to control and accountability as regards new and existing non-Departmental bodies. The Government endorse these suggestions also, including the suggestion for taking a fresh look at each of the executive-type fringe bodies from time to time in the future. A stocktaking will be carried out later this year of a number of cases where decisions about individual bodies have still to be taken in the current review, and the Government will also carry out further reviews from time to time in later years.

It will remain my objective to encourage the good management of public bodies which continue to serve the country, while dispensing with those for which there is no further need.

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Govt  
Machinery

14 January 1980

I attach a copy of the draft Parliamentary Answer for the Prime Minister to give on Wednesday, as promised in Mike Pattison's minute to you of 11 January.

N. J. SANDERS

Sir Leo Pliatzky, K.C.B.,  
Civil Service Department.

TKR

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cc NSS  
Neville Giffin

MS

10 DOWNING STREET

B/F 17-1-80  
for Hansard.

*From the Private Secretary*

SIR LEO PLIATZKY  
CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT

The Prime Minister has seen your minute to me of 9 January about press and Parliamentary handling of your Report on Public Bodies.

She is content with the arrangements which you propose for briefing. She has also agreed the draft Question and Answer enclosed with your minute, subject to the one amendment which we have already discussed, replacing "well over 3,000" by "around 3,700" in the third paragraph of the draft reply.

We will now arrange for the Question to be tabled, and we will let you have a copy of the Question and Answer in final form on Monday.

M. A. PATTISON

11 January 1980

SB

FROM SIR LEO PLIATZKY

MR PATTISON

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES:  
PUBLICATION DATE FOR REPORT

1. As you know, I plan to let you have my report in proof form next week; and, as I have also told you, if the Prime Minister were prepared then to read it over the weekend and then immediately authorise its circulation to members of Cabinet, it would just be possible, provided that there were no snags, to issue the report as a White Paper before the House rises for Christmas - probably on the very last day. You felt that the Prime Minister, without holding up clearance by members of Cabinet before Christmas, would almost certainly want to hold publication over until the House comes back after Christmas. On this basis, the report would escape getting caught up with Christmas events; a much more considered presentation would be possible; and we would not be at the mercy of unforeseen snags.
2. Nevertheless, I had it in mind to keep open the options of publication before or after Christmas until the Prime Minister has seen the report. However, I am now told that, in order to keep open the pre-Christmas option, HMSO would have to preempt printing capacity at overtime rates, with the risk of nugatory expenditure if the report was not after all printed for publication before Christmas and if HMSO were unable to fill the slot with some other rush job. I am also told that HMSO need to know almost at once whether to make contingency arrangements for publication before Christmas.
3. In the circumstances, can we decide now on publication after Christmas? May I stress, however, that there has been no slippage on my part.
4. I am sending copies of this to Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir Robert Armstrong.

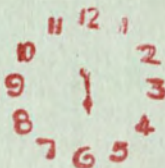
L.P.

LEO PLIATZKY

27 November 1979



27 NOV 1979



NO. 100/100

FOR THE HONORABLE LORDS JUSTICES  
OF THE SUPREME COURT

As you know, I also asked you to report in your  
final report and I have also asked you to  
report on the progress of the work you have  
done in relation to the work which you  
undertake. It would be possible, of course, to  
ask you to report on the progress of the work  
you have done in relation to the work which  
you undertake, without asking you to report  
on the progress of the work which you undertake.  
On this point, the work which you undertake  
ought to be reported on, but it is possible  
that you would be reporting on the work which  
you undertake.

In your report, I am interested to know  
of the progress of the work which you  
undertake in relation to the work which  
you undertake. It would be possible, of course,  
to ask you to report on the progress of the  
work which you undertake, without asking you  
to report on the progress of the work which  
you undertake. In this respect, the work  
which you undertake ought to be reported on,  
but it is possible that you would be  
reporting on the work which you undertake.

In the circumstances, I am sure that you  
will be able to report on the work which  
you undertake in relation to the work which  
you undertake. It would be possible, of course,  
to ask you to report on the progress of the  
work which you undertake, without asking you  
to report on the progress of the work which  
you undertake.

THE SECRETARY

10 Downing Street



Gant M...  
M...  
M...

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

SIR LEO PLIATZKY

Publication Date for the Report on  
Non-Departmental Public Bodies

Thank you for your minute of today's date. In the circumstances you describe, I am sure that the Prime Minister would not wish contingency arrangements to be made for publication of the Report before Christmas.

I am sending copies of this minute to David Laughrin (Civil Service Department) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

M. A. PATTISON

27 November 1979

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FROM SIR LEO PLIATZKY

MR PATTISON

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

1. Following our telephone conversation last week, and a further conversation which Mr Morris had with you today on my behalf, I understand that you propose to ring the Private Offices of those Departments whose contributions to the exercise had not reached here by mid-day today. The Departments in question are as follows:-

- ✓ Defence
- ✓ Environment
- ✓ FCO/ODA
- ✓ Inland Revenue (jointly with Customs & Excise)
- ✓ Scottish Office
- ✓ Welsh Office

2. The contributions now involved are not the purely factual lists which we got at the beginning of the exercise but draft Departmental chapters reporting Ministerial decisions on which bodies are to go and which to stay. The deadline set for these reports was the end of last week, and Departments were reminded of this at last week's meeting of Permanent Secretaries. We are told that at least some of these pieces will be sent by the end of the week, but we really cannot afford any further slippage. We cannot start putting the total results together until we have all the returns.

3. We have just had the Northern Ireland Office piece, but it has not been cleared with senior officials or Ministers in that Department, so a call to their Private Office also is indicated. Ministerial endorsement is essential.

4. I am sending a copy of this to Sir Ian Bancroft.

LEO PLIATZKY

7 November 1979



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

SIR LEO PLIATZKY

Thank you for your minute of 7 November, about progress on your study of non-Departmental public bodies.

I have been in touch with Ministers' Private Offices in respect of the seven Departments whose contributions to your report are still outstanding. I am confident that six of them now understand that their delays will come to the Prime Minister's attention if they do not respond by the end of the week. The Scottish Office claim that you are fully aware of their position; Ministers are reviewing the position this week, and a submission will reach you early next week.

**M. A. PATTISON**

7 November 1979

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