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FROM SIR LEO PLIATZKY

PRIME MINISTER

Sir Leo's thoughts on public appointments procedure - not an immediate issue, but it may arise from reactions to his report.

Agree that we should resist pressure for any more formal or more public procedure?

MR PATTISON

Yes
PUBLIC BODIES - APPOINTMENTS

M.P. 2/1

1. The report on Non-Departmental Public Bodies describes the arrangements for making appointments to these bodies, and suggests that more information should be given about salaries and expenses paid, but says that it would have been outside the practicable scope of this exercise to review the basic principle of filling posts solely through appointments by Ministers. I am sure that a different sort of exercise would have been needed in order to do justice to a political and constitutional issue of this kind.

2. We must reckon, however, with the possibility - though of course it may not materialise - that questions may be put, either at the Press briefings when the report is published, or to the Prime Minister in questions in the House at a later stage, about the Government's attitude on this matter, and especially on the idea, which has been canvassed recently in Parliamentary debate, of submitting proposed appointments to an appropriate Select Committee. It will of course be for the Civil Service Department to brief the Prime Minister if such questions are put to her, but they do not propose to initiate any response themselves to such ideas.

3. So far as the Press briefings are concerned, it will be best not to encourage expectations of further developments on this subject. I propose, therefore, if occasion should arise, to take the following line: "These are matters for the Prime Minister but, so far as I know, there are no plans for a change in existing procedures or for a special review of this subject."

4. It may just be worth briefly recording some comments of my own on the question of substance, since I did in fact discuss it with a number of people during the review as a matter of interest. From the Government's point of view, a crucial objective is to appoint the best possible people. The present arrangements may be a bit hit and miss - there is no substitute for actually knowing someone who is suitable and available, and often one does not know any such person - but neither I nor those to whom I talked had any clever ideas for doing better. Some people have expressed to me the hope that party politics can be left out of the choice of candidates so far as human nature allows, and some think that more use could be made of "headhunters" and advertisements; there is nothing in the present system to prevent that, or to

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*a Govt machinery
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prevent particular Ministers from casting their nets wider in any other way that occurs to them.

5. Giving a role in this matter to Select Committees might go down well with the school of thought which hankers after something like an executive role for backbenchers, but it would not help to get good people for public posts, and some of the best people would probably decline to submit themselves to this procedure. Therefore, if there were serious cause for concern about the patronage issue, it would be better to think in terms of a scrutiny procedure not involving the Select Committees. But I imagine that the Prime Minister will prefer to stick to her own policy of reducing the amount of patronage by holding down the number of public bodies.

6. I am sending copies of this to Mr Paul Channon's office and to Sir Ian Bancroft.

L.P.

LEO PLIATZKY

9 January 1980

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cc Govt Machinery DSC
May 79 - Public Appts.



File

bc: Mr. Peterson

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR LEO PLIATZKY

The Prime Minister has seen your minute to me of 9 January about appointments to public bodies.

She is content with the line that you propose to take on this topic if it arises in your press briefings associated with the publication of your Report.

The Prime Minister is not attracted by the possibility of introducing Parliamentary Select Committees into public appointments procedure. As you suggest, her preference is to stick to a policy of reducing the scale of patronage by holding down the number of public bodies. For the present, she has no intention of making any further adjustment in public appointments procedure.

I am sending copies of this minute to Mr. Green (Minister of State's Office, CSD) and to Mr. Laughrin (Sir Ian Bancroft's Office, CSD).

M. A. PATTISON

KRB

14 January 1980

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SIR LEO PLIATZKY KCB
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WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2AZ
TELEPHONE 01-273 3759

10 January 1980

Dear Sir,

Public Bodies - Appointments

1. Information which has now been collected from Departments shows that the decisions taken about the future of various public bodies, including subordinate bodies of the MSC, will reduce the number of public appointments to executive and advisory bodies by over 3,700. No. 10 have proposed that the Prime Minister should quote this figure in her statement about the review of these bodies. Following my habit of making sure that Departments are aware of and concur in the Departmental figures which are subsumed in collective totals, I enclose a breakdown of the total referred to above.

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2. This represents a reduction of a little more than 14% in the number as it stood at the start of the review, or a little over 10% if MSC bodies are excluded. The statement will not lump in appointments to tribunals with the rest because of the complications about figures for tribunals which are explained in the report.

3. I am sending copies of this to the recipients of my previous letter to you dated 4 January. With luck, this will be the last of my round robins.

Yours,

L-20
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LEO PLIATZKY

Sir Ian Bancroft GCB
Civil Service Department
Old Admiralty Building
Whitehall
London SW1

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Sir Brian Hayes	Agriculture
Mr Lawrence Brandes	Arts and Libraries
Sir Robert Armstrong	Cabinet Office
Sir Douglas Lovelock	Customs & Excise
Sir Frank Cooper	Defence
Sir James Hamilton	Education and Science
Sir Kenneth Barnes	Employment
Sir Jack Rampton	Energy
Sir John Garlick	Environment
Sir Michael Palliser	FCO
Sir Patrick Nairne	Health and Social Security
Sir Brian Cubbon	Home Office
Sir Peter Carey	Industry
Sir Lawrence Airey	Inland Revenue
Sir Wilfrid Bourne	Lord Chancellor's Department
Sir Peter Preston	ODA
Sir Kenneth Clucas	Trade
Sir Douglas Wass	Treasury
Sir Peter Baldwin	Transport
Mr Ken Stowe	Northern Ireland Office
Sir William Fraser	Scottish Office
Sir Hywel Evans	Welsh Office

DEPARTMENT	APPOINTMENTS ELIMINATED			APPOINTMENTS RETAINED		
	EXECUTIVE & ADVISORY	TRIBUNALS ETC		EXECUTIVE & ADVISORY	TRIBUNALS ETC	
		STANDING TRIBUNALS	PANELS		STANDING TRIBUNALS	PANELS
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food	242	-	-	936	41	19
Office of Arts & Libraries	10	-	-	317	-	-
Cabinet Office	-	-	-	16	-	-
Central Office of Information	-	-	-	7	-	-
Civil Service Department	8	-	-	80	-	-
Customs & Excise	-	-	-	-	5	153
Ministry of Defence	358	-	-	386	-	-
Dept of Education & Science	90	-	-	357	-	3
Dept of Employment Group	1,557*	-	-	8,560**	-	2,914
Dept of Energy	30	-	-	86	-	-
Dept of the Environment	606	-	-	771	3	620
Foreign & Commonwealth Office	19	-	-	155	-	-
Overseas Development Administration	37	-	-	182	-	-
Dept of Health & Social Security	180	1	580	840	-	10,250
Home Office	50	-	-	2,330	5	65
Dept of Industry	80	-	-	168	3	-
Inland Revenue	-	2	42	-	6	5,855 (est)
Lord Advocate's Dept	-	-	-	4	-	-
Lord Chancellor's Dept	11	-	-	3,000	-	50
Northern Ireland Office & NI Dept	99	-	-	1,831	40	998
Scottish Office	164	-	12	1,823	4	1,778
Dept of Trade	90	-	-	330	20	-
Dept of Transport	46	-	-	49	248	-
Treasury	25	-	-	89	-	-
Welsh Office	70	-	-	227	4	52
TOTALS	3,772*	3	634	22,544**	379	22,757

* Figures include 1,529 appointments made by Manpower Services Commission and Health and Safety Commission

** Figures include 3,223 appointments made by Manpower Services Commission and Health and Safety Commission

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