



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

PRIVY COUNCH OFFICE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2BT

MAP to see

Hayes

MJS 25/3

23 March 1981

Mr Brock,

LEGISLATION ON MANPOWER SAVINGS

Thank you for your letter of 17 March about legislation needed in order to achieve manpower savings.

The purpose of my letter of 13 March to Patrick Jenkin was to safeguard the ability of QL Committee to look, as we have just done, at the bids for legislative time next session on their merits without any prior public commitments having been made to particular measures. It is always a difficult business to assess the undoubtedly varied merits of different proposals for legislation in the next session and it becomes more difficult to do so if the Government is or appears to be publicly committed to legislation on a particular subject beforehand.

I entirely agree that we must not allow the Government's drive for administrative reform to lose impetus. Bills which achieve manpower or financial savings have had a generous allocation of the legislative time available so far in this Parliament, and I can assure you that QL had the importance of manpower savings very much in mind in planning the programme for next session. However the balance of the legislative programme is also important and it has to be borne in mind that our manpower policy is only one of the policies competing for scarce legislative time. I could not accept, nor, I am sure, would you suggest, that it should automatically have priority over other aspects of policy. But we shall continue to find space for bills which serve the aims you have in mind.

/Cont

Sir Derek Rayner
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2AS



I would, however, like to add one general comment. It is of course in the very nature of our Parliamentary system that legislative time is scarce and that savings reliant on legislation are bound to be less graspable, or at least less immediately graspable, than savings which are not. This consideration is something which I am sure we need to have very much in mind when looking at the quickest and most efficient ways of achieving the staffing improvements which are our common objective.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to the other recipients of yours and, with a copy of your letter, to the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Francis Pym

FRANCIS PYM

25 MAR 1981

