

Ovo

Prime Minister:

~~CNO~~

9

Sir Keith Joseph's minute is

W.0945

attached. His proposals stop short of full devolution

21 December 1984

PRIME MINISTER of responsibility to researchers, but Dr Nicholson concurs. Agree proposed

EXPLOITATION OF RESEARCH COUNCIL INVENTIONS

Statement?

No - 1
see no reason why
21/12

You announced the lifting of the BTG monopoly on the exploitation of inventions developed with Research Council funds more than a year ago and the proposed policy statement by the Secretary of State for Education and Science is intended to define the new arrangements.

an individual researcher should be allowed

2. Like the Secretary of State, I had originally been in favour of new arrangements in which authority and accountability were more fully devolved to the individual researcher. But, again like him, I have become convinced that such an enormous step from the present protective bureaucracy would not be wise and might, indeed, jeopardise the whole process of liberalisation of exploitation of research through the occurrence of a few "scandals". But the proposed arrangements do go a very long way towards opening up the system and encouraging a much more commercially-minded approach within the research environment. It also allows the direct involvement of the private sector in the exploitation process and so can be seen to meet both the spirit and the letter of your Lancaster House announcement. Indeed the rapid increase in the last year of private sector companies involved in technology transfer is an encouraging sign for the future.

why?

the right to dump his own research in this country & be within. We can meet the other funds privately developed in research

3. The longish delay between your announcement and the statement on the present proposal indicates the difficulty in reaching a position acceptable to all Departments. I recommend that this proposal is accepted and that the transfer of responsibility for exploitation to the Research Councils, and on to the Universities, is carried out as soon as is practicable.

RBN

ROBIN B NICHOLSON
Chief Scientific Adviser