

SECRET

Prime Minister (4)



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

March 1983

Mrs g/s

*Thanks on in don't
expect the Home Office
to reduce expenditure
in the Prisons on
law order: but has
in the Prisons sent
up death
with?*

Dear Leon

PRISONS MANPOWER AND LONG TERM EXPENDITURE

Within the Home Office the detailed review of Civil Service manpower after 1984 requested in your letter of 7 January is now nearing completion. I shall be taking stock of the results myself within the next few weeks, and shall write to you before the end of the month, as you have asked. But there is one major issue on the horizon, of which I feel I ought to give you the earliest possible notice. And this letter also gives me the opportunity to consult you about my response to the Prime Minister's minute of 4 February about long term expenditure.

*Subd on
Gen Pol
Public Exp Pt 21*

PRISONS MANPOWER

In last year's Public Expenditure Survey, although you were able to accept an increase in prisons manpower in 1983-84, for which I am very grateful, we agreed to leave unresolved the question of further additions in later years. I have recently reviewed the position in the light of our political acceptance that no significant changes can be organised in sentencing practice. We now have to plan on the basis that the prison population will remain at present levels, 44,000-45,000, or go higher.

I am convinced that substantial increases in prisons manpower will be necessary. There is a minimum essential requirement for the staffing of new prisons due to become available in the latter part of the decade. There is also, as you know, a deep seated problem arising from the service's dependence on undesirably high levels of overtime. I noted the existence of these requirements in my "forward look" for the Prime Minister before Christmas.

I realise that, since prison officers count as civil servants, this will go against the drift of our policy on Civil Service numbers. But I believe that the combination of continuing pressure and known additional commitments leaves me with no choice. I propose that, if you agree, our officials should meet urgently to discuss how best to take the matter forward, on the basis of a note which Sir Brian Cubbon will be sending to Sir Anthony Rawlinson within the next few days. I would hope that we could carry the results of these discussions into both your manpower review and, in due course, this year's Public Expenditure Survey.

LONG TERM PUBLIC EXPENDITURE

The existence of this important prisons requirement, and the general priority which I believe we must continue to attach to law and order, are

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2.

bound to condition my response to the Prime Minister's minute. Over 80% of the expenditure for which the Home Office carries PES responsibility is on law and order. I see no prospect of major strategic changes which would enable me to contribute to the substantial reduction in public expenditure which was discussed in Cabinet on 9 September.

In my "forward look" I identified two areas - police and prisons - where some further growth seemed necessary. There may be others. But, even with the major prisons requirement which I have signalled in this letter, I do not see the Home Office programme growing in real terms by more than a few percentage points between now and the end of the decade. If that could be achieved, it would represent considerably less rapid growth than was postulated by the report by officials which we considered on 9 September. But I can see no prospect of being able to contribute to a substantial reduction in public expenditure from present levels.

That does not mean that my mind is closed to the possibility of reductions at the margins in areas other than law and order, although these by their nature would not make any significant contribution to the Prime Minister's exercise. And even here one finds that the money is supporting policies (such as civil defence, immigration control and support for the victims of crime) to which we attach high priority. I shall, however, be looking critically at these areas in the context of this year's Public Expenditure Survey.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to George Younger.

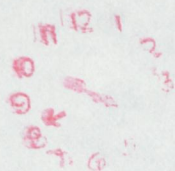
Yours truly

Waller

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Econ Pcs Public Expenditure. 1-21

19 MAR 1983





Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Rt Hon William Whitelaw CH MC MP
Secretary of State
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AT

29 March 1983

2 Wm.

DT 21/3

PRISON MANPOWER AND LONG TERM EXPENDITURE

It was good of you to write to warn me, in your letter of 9 March, of the way you would like to take forward the resourcing of prisons. I have since then seen the Prime Minister's comments of 17 March.

I am, of course, well aware of the problems you face on prisons. I was therefore glad to hear that officials have already met to explore some of the options involved in your bid for 7,000 extra staff for the prisons. This is a big (25 per cent) increase and, as you say, contrary to our line on civil service numbers. I am sure, however, that we all endorse your intention to find cost-effective ways of breaking the prison service's dependence on excessive overtime working, and other undesirable practices. I am equally confident you will want to maximise all the productivity gains we hope for from the work which officials are carrying out in studies on manpower and resource control.

I gather that there may also be positive proposals on privatisation and/or contracting out: I look forward to seeing them in due course.

Finally, I am grateful for your comments about the non-law and order aspects of your long term public expenditure programme, just as I welcome your readiness to take a hard look at the law and order side, even though a substantial reduction would be difficult.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, and to George Younger.

Lea
Lea

LEON BRITTAN

Home Agg
Prison Service
Policy Pt 2.

29 MAR 1983





10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

17 March 1983

The Prime Minister has now seen the Home Secretary's letter of 9 March to the Chief Secretary about prisons' manpower and long-term expenditure. She recognises that given the continuing pressure on the prison service and the additional commitments deriving from the Government's programme of new prison building it would be unreasonable to expect reductions in expenditure on prisons; or on law and order generally. She is also sympathetic with the Home Secretary's wish to reduce the dependence of the prison service on high levels of overtime. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister is concerned to ensure that every opportunity is taken to improve efficiency in the prison service and make the best possible use of its existing manpower. In this context she will be interested to see the outcome of the recent resource control review of the prison service as well as the steps being taken generally to achieve greater efficiency in the service.

BK.1
The Prime Minister would be grateful therefore if, when the Home Secretary is in a position to reach conclusions on the recent review, he could arrange for a note covering these and wider issues of efficiency in the prison service to be sent to her, with a view to a discussion in the reasonably near future. None of this need impede the progress of the official discussions envisaged in the Home Secretary's letter.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Lyon (Northern Ireland Office), Muir Russell (Scottish Office), John Gieve (Chief Secretary's Office) and Mary Brown (Lord Privy Seal's Office).

TIMOTHY FLESHER

Mrs Lesley Pallett,
Home Office.

NR

1. MR. SCHOLAR
2. MR. BUTLER
-

OK by me MJS
And by me PERB

You showed me the attached papers on prison manpower. I attach a note which suggests a way of approaching the Home Office in the context of the Rayner Review about which the Prime Minister has already indicated a wish to see the Home Secretary. There are a considerable number of sensitivities within the Home Office about the resource control review and I think it would be unwise to intervene directly in the process of ^{considering it.} ~~consideration~~. Equally, however, there is no doubt that while the Home Secretary has a strong case for an increase in prison manpower, existing manning levels, in a number of prisons, are extravagant in the extreme. The essential reason for this is that the Mountbatten Report gave carte blanche for a massive expansion in the service which enabled the POA to gain a grip over the internal management of prisoners which more vigorous management from the centre has been unable to dislodge in recent years. The draft letter is intended therefore to remind the Home Office that endless bids for extra manpower in the face of clear evidence of inefficiency will not go unchallenged without treading on too many toes.

17.

16 March 1983

DRAFT LETTER TO MRS LESLEY PALLETT, HOME OFFICE

The Prime Minister has now seen the Home Secretary's letter of 9 March to the Chief Secretary about prisons' manpower and long term expenditure. She recognises that given the continuing pressure on the prison service and the additional commitments deriving from the Government's programme of new prison building it would be unreasonable to expect reductions in expenditure on prisons; She is also sympathetic ^{with} to the Home Secretary's wish to reduce the dependence of the prison service on high levels of overtime. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister is concerned to ensure that every opportunity is taken to improve efficiency in the prison service and make the best possible use of its existing manpower. In this context she will be interested to see the outcome of the recent ^{Resource Control Review} ~~Rayner scrutiny~~ of the prison service as well as the steps being taken generally to achieve greater efficiency in the ~~prison~~ service.

The Prime Minister would

~~I~~ should be grateful therefore if, when the Home Secretary is in a position to reach conclusions on the recent ~~Rayner~~ ^{Resource Control Review} ~~scrutiny~~, he could arrange for a note covering these and wider issues of efficiency in the prison service to be sent to ~~the~~ ^{her} ~~Prime Minister~~ with a view to a discussion at some convenient stage. None of this need impede the progress of the official discussions envisaged in the Home Secretary's letter.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Muir Russell (Scottish Office) and John Gieve (Chief Secretary's Office).

for on
law and
order
generally.

gls
From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

COVERING



SECRET

Tim Flesher
HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

15 March 1983

IX 18/3

Dear John,

.....
It occurs to us that we ought to let you have a copy of the Home Secretary's letter of 9 March to the Chief Secretary on prisons manpower and the Prime Minister's long term public expenditure exercise. I enclose a copy, with apologies for our earlier omission.

I am copying this letter, without enclosure, to Tim Flesher and John Gieve.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Pallett.

MRS L PALLETT

J. M. Lyon, Esq.

COVERING

SECRET

