

PRIME MINISTER

Agree X?

MA 1/11

Ref. A09687

PRIME MINISTER

Population Questions

Following a report from the Select Committee on Science and Technology in 1971 about the implications of population trends, it was considered desirable for a co-ordinating Minister to be designated to deal with any questions arising in this area and not specifically falling within the field of any one Department. During the last Administration this role was filled by the Lord Privy Seal, Lord Peart.

If you wished to designate a co-ordinating Minister I would recommend the Lord President, both because combining this co-ordinating role with day-to-day responsibility for the CSD has worked quite well and also because the House of Lords have tended to make the running in debating population issues. On the other hand the need for special co-ordinating arrangements on population questions seems to be less than was originally envisaged: and Lord Peart did not in fact have much to do. I think it would be perfectly possible for the subject to be handled on a "lead Department" basis inviting the Secretary of State for Social Services, who has Departmental responsibility for the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, to accept responsibility for handling any general population questions which cut across Departmental boundaries. If this is the course you would prefer, I will ensure that Mr. Jenkin is aware that he has this responsibility.

x

Must prefer this basis. An of course

1st June, 1979

Jenkin

JOHN HUNT

- co-ordinating Minister. out



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 June 1979

Population Questions

The Prime Minister has considered Sir John Hunt's minute of 1 June about Ministerial responsibility for population matters.

She is in general against the appointment of "co-ordinating" Ministers. In this case, she would much prefer the subject to be handled on a lead Department basis, and she agrees that it would be appropriate for the Secretary of State for Social Services to take lead responsibility. She would be grateful if Sir John Hunt would confirm this arrangement with Mr. Jenkin.

M. A. PATTISON

M.J. Vile, Esq.,
Cabinet Office.

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