



Prime Minister ①

Agree?

Reluctantly - Yes mb AT 21/10

PRIME MINISTER

REGIONAL DIRECTORS IN THE NORTH AND THE EAST MIDLANDS

I think you might like to know of two changes that I am proposing to make in the Regional office arrangements for my Department.

Four of our eight Regional Offices are "twinned". Northern Region and Yorkshire and Humberside Region are separately based in Newcastle and Leeds, but share the same Regional Director. A similar arrangement operates between the West Midlands Region in Birmingham and the East Midlands Region in Nottingham. These arrangements were introduced in early 1981 as a modification of a Rayner scrutiny recommendation about which Michael Heseltine minuted you at the time.

It has become apparent over the last two years that twinning is not working satisfactorily. In the case of the Newcastle/Leeds post, the demands of the two regions have become too much for one man to deal with efficiently, and the signs of this have provoked considerable criticism from local government and commerce. With the abolition of the Metropolitan County Councils now under way, I see the position worsening. I am satisfied that there is a need for separate Regional Directors in both the Northern and Yorkshire and Humberside regions and I propose to re-establish a separate Regional Director post at Under-Secretary level in Newcastle. I am sure that this will be well received, especially in the North East.

In the case of the Birmingham/Nottingham post, the demands of the West Midlands have meant that the post-holder has been unable to devote much of his attention to the East Midlands. I therefore propose that the present Regional Director should concentrate wholly on the West Midlands and that a separate Regional Director should handle the East Midlands. This would not



entail an additional post, as we would merely up-grade one of the existing assistant secretary posts to Executive Director. This would aptly reflect the rather different weighting of the East Midlands region.

Since you were aware of the original "Twinning" proposals I thought you would like to know about the changes. There are considerable presentational as well as operational advantages in enhancing our presence in the Regions in this way, especially given the "ambassadorial" role that Regional Directors must perform for Government policy. Our proposals have been cleared at official level with the Treasury, and I hope to make an announcement very shortly.

Nicholas Ridley does of course have an equal interest in these proposals since the Regional Offices are shared between our two departments. I understand that he is content.

I am copying this minute to Nicholas Ridley, Nigel Lawson, Norman Tebbit, Tom King and Sir Robert Armstrong.

PJ

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21 October 1983



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 October 1983

Regional Directors in the North and the
East Midlands

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 21 October. She agrees, reluctantly, with the case put forward for providing separate Regional Directors for the four Regional Offices which are currently twinned.

I am copying this letter to Dinah Nichols (Department of Transport), John Kerr (HM Treasury), Callum McCarthy (Department of Trade and Industry), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Andrew Turnbull

John Ballard, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

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