



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

PRIME MINISTER

TOP MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

You agreed in April that the Top Management Programme should go ahead.

The attached report describes progress since then. Industry and commerce have responded enthusiastically: over 90 public companies and nationalised industries have expressed positive interest in the Programme and over 70 firm nominations were received for the 40-45 places available in 1985 at a cost of £4000 each. All the participants for the three Programmes in 1985 - from both public and private sectors - have now been selected; and many nominations are having to be held over for the 1986 Programmes. The first Programme begins on 4 February 1985.

In May, you considered that publicity for the Programme would be premature. In view of the progress we have made and the fact that so many people and organisations necessarily know about it, we now need to inform Parliament. I have already told the Chairman of the Treasury and Civil Service Committee about the Senior Management Development Programme aimed at mid-career development of those who will in time reach the top of the Civil Service. The Top Management Programme will seek to bring out in those who are already Under Secretaries and about to be promoted to that rank, qualities of leadership, initiative, decisiveness and enthusiasm which are so important in our strategy to improve the Civil Service's efficiency and management skills. I propose to send a copy of the attached report to the Chairman of the TCSC and that the Civil Service Unions should be given a copy. I also plan to use the forthcoming debate on the Civil Service in the House of Lords to announce this new development. Once it is public knowledge, I believe that the Programme should be presented positively as part of our strategy to improve management in the Civil Service.

Prime Minister (4)

had Gowrie is ready to announce the top management programme, which seems to have got off to a good start. But the proof of the pudding will be in the eating. Content?

Darb
4/12

GOWRIE

30 November 1984

DRAFT 23 NOVEMBER

REPORT TO THE TREASURY AND CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE

TOP MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Introduction

In response to a recommendation made by the Treasury and Civil Service Committee in its report "Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Civil Service"¹ that a senior staff course be established for those expected to rise to top posts, the Government announced² that a review of training needs would consider what additional training provision was needed for such officers. This review³, which evaluated the Service's training and career management procedures, recommended that a course lasting 3-4 weeks should be established with substantial participation from outside the Service.

Subsequently in January of this year, the Government appointed a Director of a new programme of training for civil servants at the point at which they are promoted to Grade 3 (Under Secretary) level. The Director consulted widely inside and outside the Civil Service, and has had the benefit of help and advice from many individuals in industry, commerce, the professions, universities, business schools and other institutions. His proposals, which have been endorsed by the Government, are for a six-week programme:

- comprising a four week mixed phase with half the participants coming from industry and

commerce, followed by two weeks for the civil servants only;

- mandatory for civil servants around the point of entry to Grade 3 and to be undertaken between jobs;
- repeated 4 times a year;
- within an estimated annual cost of £500-600,000.

Objectives

The programme will bring together top managers with the highest potential from all sectors of the economy to review major changes likely to affect them and how best to manage change and uncertainty; and to work together on current problems. The objectives of the programme are therefore to improve the ability of all the participants to:

- understand, as far as is possible, the nature, extent and significance of the fundamental changes taking place in the economic, international, industrial, technological, physical and social environments;
- formulate strategies to meet the challenge of these changes and cope with the uncertainties

surrounding them, given scarce resources;

- seek increased value for money and year-on-year improvement in productivity and efficiency of service to customers, by setting clear objectives and managing organisations and resources positively;
- lead and motivate people to carry out tasks efficiently, imaginatively and with commitment;
- understand one another's attitudes, priorities and approaches to major problems and issues.

For civil servants the additional two weeks of the programme will be spent considering in further depth the challenges facing the Civil Service, in particular the management of resources and of people; and, through a series of options aimed at improving important skills and deepening knowledge of particular subjects, improve their ability to perform as top civil servants at a time of radical change.

Method

The emphasis will be on active participation by the programme members and on their learning from one another. The programme will be rigorous and demanding but informal and varied. In order to achieve the greatest depth of learning and understanding participants will work together under the guidance of tutors who are experts in their own field. They will be complemented

by practitioners from the public and private sectors to add practical dimensions to the tutoring and to take part in seminars on subjects of major topical importance. A vital part of the programme will be syndicate work on current problems (rather than historic case studies) aimed at producing practical solutions for implementation by top management action. The main components of the first programme (to be held in February 1985) are outlined at Annex A.

The first year

There will be three programmes in the first year and four a year thereafter. Each programme will cater for about 24 participants. The mixed phase of the programme in February 1985 will take place at Elvetham Hall, near Fleet, Hampshire; the second in July at The Node, near Knebworth, Hertfordshire; and the third in October at Nuneham Park, near Oxford. The Civil Service phases will take place in the Civil Service College at Sunningdale. Participants for the 1985 programmes have been selected. The response from the private sector, nationalised industries and other parts of the public sector have been very encouraging: for example, a wide range of companies was approached; most expressed positive interest in the programme and over 70 nominations were received for the 40-45 places available in 1985. Participants have now been selected for each of the three programmes in 1985

to produce a balance between the different sections of industry and commerce and between departments and other public organisations.

Evaluation

The programme will be rigorously evaluated to assess:

- the extent to which it meets its stated objectives;
- the effect on individual participants and on the subsequent value added to their organisations.

Other Developments

The Top Management Programme is part of a broader programme to improve the management, efficiency and effectiveness of the Civil Service. In particular a complementary Senior Management Development Programme, of which the Committee has been recently informed⁴, is being set up to improve mid-career development and training of staff.

Conclusion

It is difficult for any organisation to release its very best people for four, or in the case of the Civil Service six, weeks. But if those destined for the highest posts

are to be successful in managing change positively and confidently, they need preparation. The programme will provide an immediate, economical and practical way of doing this at the highest feasible level. The opportunity for representatives of all sectors of the economy to learn together from one another and from practitioners and tutors of the highest quality will be invaluable.

- 1 Third report from the Treasury and Civil Service Committee - Session 1981-2. Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Civil Service. HC236-1.
- 2 Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Civil Service. Cmnd 8616 September 1982.
- 3 Civil Service Management Development in the 1980s - July 1983
- 4 Lord Gowrie's letter of 12 November 1984 to the Chairman of the Treasury and Civil Service Committee

TOP MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME
COMPONENTS OF THE TWO PHASES

1. The mixed phase will be divided into four parts:-

(a) The major changes in the environment: (25%)

to achieve the first objective, examination, necessarily selective, of the most important current and future changes in the economic, international, industrial, technological, social and physical environments within which organisations, including governments, have to operate; and of the uncertainties surrounding future changes. The criterion for deciding what to include in this category will be the extent to which major changes in the environment are occurring, are likely to occur or ought to occur but may not because of institutional impediments;

(b) The challenge of top management: (30-35%)

to achieve the second, third and fourth objectives, examination of the role of the top manager in strategy formulation and implementation and in the efficient management of finance and people, in times of radical change and scarcity of resources;

(c) Problem solving: (30%)

to consolidate the learning process and strengthen mutual understanding, major topical problems of direct concern to all the participants will be prepared and documented beforehand, solutions sought through analytical work in mixed syndicates and presented to experts at the highest level for criticism and discussion. There will be a strong emphasis on producing practical solutions designed for implementation by top management action;

(d) Seminar discussions: (12%)

to broaden and deepen understanding, major issues will be discussed by panels of distinguished experts, both academic and practising and often with radically different views, and debated afterwards by the participants and their guests.

Each part will be complementary to the others and overlap will be avoided. Together they will form a coherent whole.

2. The Civil Service phase will be divided into four parts:-

(a) Top Management in the Civil Service: (40%)

examination of the major changes facing the Civil Service over the next 5-10 years and of the management and leadership roles of the top civil servant. A significant proportion of the time will be spent in considering how to achieve more efficient use of resources in the public sector (particularly in participants' own operational areas) and on the strategic issues surrounding the introduction of information technology systems;

(b) Optional courses: (35%)

participants will be able to choose from a range of options - short intensive courses aimed at improving important skills (eg negotiating, presentation, time management and stress management) or deepening their knowledge of particular subjects of importance to their jobs (eg administrative law, the EC, options appraisal and policy analysis);

(c) Problem solving: (15%)

to consolidate the learning process and to deepen understanding of some of the lessons emerging from the mixed programme, major topical problems of concern to participants will be tackled in syndicate groups. The method will be similar to the mixed phase with an emphasis on producing practical solutions designed for implementation by top management action;

(d) Seminar discussions: (10%)

major issues of concern to the Civil Service will be discussed before dinner by a panel of distinguished experts, both academic and practising, and debated after dinner by the participants and their guests.

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