

Faxed to No 10
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CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

Content with X?

From: R T J Wilson
11 October 1988

RTJ
11/10

P 03241

MR BEARPARK

Yes mb

STAR CHAMBER

1. It is not yet clear whether the Star Chamber will be needed this year or, if it is, when it should meet. The Chief Secretary is still negotiating with the Secretaries of State concerned and the number of disagreed programmes is steadily reducing. In particular I understand that he has now reached agreements with the Secretary of State of Health and the Secretary of State for the Environment. The main areas of difficulty which remain are, I believe, Defence, Transport and Social Security, with a question mark over Wales.

2. The Chief Secretary will be having another meeting with the Secretary of State for Defence tomorrow morning and we should be clearer after that about whether we need to set up the Star Chamber. One possibility, depending on the outcome, is that we shall be asked by the Chief Secretary tomorrow to set up a couple of meetings of the Star Chamber towards the end of next week.

3. The purpose of this minute is to seek confirmation as a precautionary measure that the Prime Minister would be content for us to invite the following Ministers to sit on the Star Chamber, if it proves necessary to do so:

X

The Secretary of State for Energy
The Chief Secretary
The Lord President
The Secretary of State for Employment
The Minister of Agriculture
The Secretary of State for Health.

4. The Chief Secretary has asked us to put these names forward as a contingent measure in case we need to set up meetings quickly. These names were discussed at the Prime Minister's meeting on Monday, 3 October. although it was not clear at that stage that Mr Clarke would be available.

RTJ

R T J WILSON