



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

8 February 1985

Dear David,

nbpm
DWB
8/2

SCRUTINY OF BURDENS ON BUSINESS

Thank you for your letter of 23 January about the arrangements for following up the scrutiny of burdens on business, which we have noted.

In your letter you said that the Prime Minister would be grateful for an indication of the Home Secretary's reaction to the broad thrust of the proposals in the Home Office part of the scrutiny. The Home Secretary is keenly aware of the importance that the Prime Minister attaches to this exercise as a means of stimulating growth in this sector of the economy. While the scrutiny tends to confirm the earlier impression that the scope for the Home Office to make a contribution is fairly limited, especially when compared with some of the other central Departments, the Home Secretary welcomes the opportunity that it gives to consider ways in which any burdens imposed by Home Office legislation might be reduced, and he will be maintaining a close interest in the follow-up action.

As you know, the Home Office scrutiny concentrated on fire precautions, and the Home Secretary was pleased to note the conclusion that most fire prevention officers were cost conscious, and that fire precautions featured fairly low in the list of the most frequently mentioned Government requirements causing burdens on small businesses. He does not favour any radical deregulation in this area - an option which was floated but largely dismissed in the Report - and was pleased to see that Sir Robin Ibbes had reached the same conclusion. But some useful suggestions have been made for improving the way in which fire precautions controls are applied to small businesses and these will be carefully considered, both in the context of the existing system and in relation to proposals for new fire precautions legislation which the Home Secretary hopes to bring forward shortly.

As for the other Home Office subjects covered in the scrutiny, the Home Secretary does not feel that any of these call for special comment at this stage, but all the recommendations and options will be given careful consideration in the preparation of the action plan.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Leigh Lewis (Office of the Minister without Portfolio), other Private Secretaries to Ministers in charge of Departments, Ian Beesley (Efficiency Unit) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

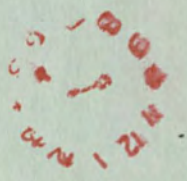
Yours ever,
Hugh Taylor

H H TAYLOR

David Barclay, Esq.

GOUT MACHINERY, Rayner Programme: Pt. 17.

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18 FEB 1985