

PRIME MINISTER

PUBLIC SEMINAR AND RECEPTION ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY

There is, I am sure, great potential in your suggestion to Robin Nicholson for a seminar which you would launch and chair. But it will need careful preparation if it is not to look hastily contrived. The discussion must also be genuine and constructive if it is not to appear as crude Government propaganda (which will be ignored by the media); at the same time, the proceedings must not be allowed to degenerate into an anti-Government rally.

A further danger is that unless we have agreed announcements of substance to make (eg on Alvey), both your colleagues and the participants are likely to try to use the seminar as a forum for extracting commitments for more Government money.

To give the debates real substance, we might do well to take the advice of (a) someone with experience of organising these big seminars, eg Walter Goldsmith; and (b) an industrialist in science-oriented industry, eg Arnold Weinstock.

It is important to identify and separate suitable themes for discussion rather than everyone sounding off in an unstructured way. Two obvious themes:

1. How do we improve the interaction between industry and the universities?
2. What can we learn about the application of science from Japan, the US and West Germany?

To get the right sort of coverage, it might be better to leave something of a gap between the seminar and Williamsburg - not least in order to give you enough time to prepare your major speeches for Washington.

But if we advance the seminar date to mid-May, we might be short of time to prepare it properly.

Is there a case for holding the seminar after Williamsburg, say, in mid-June? The theme could then be looking forward to the next 5 years and the 1990s.

Would you like to talk to Arnold Weinstock and Walter Goldsmith?

FERDINAND MOUNT

fm
 I think W Goldsmith - but I am not sure
 I think I can meet only about 150-200
 people



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Dr Nicholson

As well as Alvey you may
wish to mention Ferdie's
idea about Walter Goldsmith
for the Science, Technology
and Industry seminar.

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