

B.L.R.

Prime Minister.

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The Lord President's report of the outcome of 'H' is attached. The Policy Unit agree the approach. Content?

PRIME MINISTER

MEMO/3 8 March 1985

For the time being -
Yes. -mr

PLANNING INQUIRIES

You had hoped for root and branch reform of planning inquiry procedure to cut out delays and disruption, and instead, 'H' have agreed more modest proposals to make the existing procedure work better. Although 'H' rightly reduces the problem to the 2 1/2% of inquiries that take over a week, the minority include such cases as the Sizewell Inquiry which took more than two years.

A working party is to look at the rules for inquiries and will produce a package of proposals by Easter. On Nicholas Ridley's suggestion, another group is to look at whether potential objectors might be paid more compensation sooner, so reducing delays from this source.

We recommend this solution as sensible, and one which is unlikely to require legislation. You will, however, note that a major cause of delay persists even after much improvement, namely, delay at departmental level after the planning inquiry.

H. Booth

HARTLEY BOOTH