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HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT



Prime Minister 2
Proceeding notes
A round-up note
to keep you and others in the
picture.

9 December 1985

Dear Mark.

DAS
11/12.

POLICE MANPOWER

In view of her close interest the Home Secretary thought the Prime Minister would like a report on progress in meeting the future manpower needs of police forces in England and Wales.

Metropolitan Police

This is an urgent joint Metropolitan Police/Home Office study of the force's manpower needs. It will be finished by early February. It has three elements:-

- a. An examination of the specific areas where the force needs additional manpower, and an assessment of the results that extra manpower would achieve.
- b. An assessment of how far these gross manpower needs can be met from planned measures to release more of the existing manpower for operational duties, eg through reorganisation and civilianisation.
- c. A comparison of the level and use of manpower on selected Metropolitan Police and provincial divisions.

The Metropolitan police strength is now 26,733, its establishment is 27,165. The Commissioner has been asked to speed up recruitment so as to reach the present establishment by next summer rather than March 1987. Once the joint review has been completed, it will be clear how far the needs in the next 12 months can be met by redeployment and re-organisation, and how far further increases in the police establishment and in civilian manpower will be essential in 1986/87.

Provincial forces

The same criteria are being applied to the needs of provincial forces. We are considering applications for a further 400 police posts from provincial police authorities, but over half are not needed until late in 1986. HM Inspectors of Constabulary are looking closely at these applications to see if they can be met by further civilianisation and they also are building up a picture of likely net proven needs for provincial forces in the next two or three years.

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Mark Addison, Esq

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Interdepartmental study

The examination of the problem of how to ensure that the financial requirements of the police service are not impeded by the controls over local government expenditure has been endorsed by E(LA). A Study Group, under Home Office chairmanship, has been set up, with representatives of Treasury, DOE, SHHD and Cabinet Office. They will prepare options for Ministers to consider and report by the end of January.

There is a risk that some police authorities may be unwilling to fund necessary increases in manpower and equipment because of block grant penalties. One of the tasks of the interdepartmental study will be to try to find some means of ensuring that the joint police authorities in the metropolitan counties do not suffer from the effects of loss of block grant in 1986/87, if they spend at the levels which the Home Secretary authorises. For the shire counties, with responsibility for more services, the Government can continue up to a point to use the argument that the national provision for the police is adequate and it is for the local authority to decide the level of spending on the police force. We shall be keeping in touch with chief constables to check whether and if so, how far, proven needs are not being met for financial reasons. We may later have to consider special action if the police authorities in particular force areas neglect the proven needs of the force.

The position will vary from force to force. We shall also keep a close watch on the manpower figures to monitor whether the expenditure planning assumptions are being out-stripped, for example if police strengths build up quickly and, with civilians, are sustained at a high level. Provided finance and manpower increases had been agreed for 1987/88 onwards in the forthcoming PES round - and this would be crucial - it might be possible to meet proven needs for establishment increases towards the end of 1986/87, without additional financial provision in that year, since most of the expenditure would not start to be incurred until 1987/88.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and the Environment, the Chief Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Man.
S W Boys Smith

S W BOYS SMITH



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

12 December, 1985.

POLICE MANPOWER

The Prime Minister was grateful for the report on the discussions about police manpower and police resources in your letter to Mark Addison of 9 December.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Lord Pr̄sident, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and the Environment, the Chief Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

(David Norgrove)

S.W. Boys Smith, Esq.,
Home Office.

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