

CABINET : TUESDAY 8 MAY

POINTS TO MAKE

Cabinet Government

Cabinet Government can only work if there is complete confidence and trust between colleagues. We can only take sensible decisions here if we can speak in complete frankness and if we can be confident in the knowledge that the privacy of the discussions will be respected.

That means that there must be no leaks, and no gossip. In Cabinet we shall discuss what we intend to do and we shall reach decisions. Then those decisions will be announced. There must be no lobbying between decision and announcement and there must be no dissension from the principle of collective responsibility.

That in turn means that there must be no record kept at this table other than the official one. No-one should be keeping a diary or working on his memoirs.

The Administration

The tone of this Administration must be to reduce the area of Government, not to increase it. In every Department there will be activities which can be cut and should be cut. The electorate expects nothing less of us. Everyone in your Department must be clear that we are going to be rigorous in our examination of all Government activities.

Our aim must be to reduce substantially the cost of government and at the same time to achieve the best possible administration - run by fewer people, certainly, but by people who are well paid, whose morale is high and who give first class value for money to the public.

These things are not opposites. Economy and efficiency go together. All those with whom you are going to work in your Department must be clear that this is our basic approach.

/For example

For example, we should aim to cut the number of departmental circulars going out by two-thirds. I shall judge Ministers by their success in reducing expenditure and cutting waste.

Sir Derek Rayner

To this end I have appointed Sir Derek Rayner as a part-time adviser to assist Departments in promoting efficiency and eliminating waste. His approach will be to work with departmental Ministers in carrying out this task in their own Departments. He himself will probe into detail on some particular issues, but he is there to help rather than to interfere, and will act with our full support.

His approach will not be a negative one. His task will be to promote the best things in Government as well as to improve the worst; and you should follow the same path.

He will also be especially interested in Quangos. All of you should therefore immediately look at the Quangos for which you are responsible, and ask yourselves whether they are necessary at all, and if so, whether they have to be as big as they are now.

His appointment will be announced after this meeting.

Cabinet Committees

We ourselves can set an example in cutting down on unnecessary work by avoiding the proliferation of Cabinet committees. I intend to do this by setting up only a few key committees.

Once you have made this point, it will be much better not to whet appetites by going into greater detail, since Ministers will immediately want to know whether they themselves will be members of the most significant committees; you have noted elsewhere that you regard total secrecy about Cabinet committee membership and organisation as being unnecessary, but whatever the eventual public stance going into detail tomorrow would only lead to pressures.7

/I make

I make this point now so that there will be no misunderstanding. And let me say that if we can cut down on time spent in committees, it will give Ministers greater opportunity to spend their time constructively elsewhere.

#### The Queen's Speech

The State Opening of Parliament will be on Tuesday 15 May. A draft of The Queen's Speech is already being considered by a small group under the chairmanship of the Home Secretary. They met for the first time this morning. A revised draft will come before Cabinet on Thursday. We must ensure that the Speech reflects the tone of the Government which I have already described: actions not aspirations, efficiency of Government and freedom for the individual under the rule of law.

#### Questions of Procedure

You will be receiving detailed guidance from the Cabinet Office on many aspects of Ministerial procedures. It will be accompanied by a summary, which you should note carefully. You should refer to the detailed version as necessary and ensure that the rules are observed by your junior colleagues as well as yourself. Separate guidance is coming round about Ministerial travel and the appointment of Special Advisers.

#### Press Interviews

One aspect of the Rules of Procedure which is already relevant is the need for Ministerial television and radio appearances to be cleared with the Press Secretary at No. 10. Some members of the Cabinet have already been broadcasting, and very splendidly too. But it is important that from the outset the rules should be observed. [See the attached note from Mr. James.]

?Summing Up after Discussion

We must be absolutely clear about our philosophy and strategy. All the pressures will be aimed at diverting us from it. It will be essential for us to monitor progress continually. As a first step, I have asked my own political staff at No. 10, and the CPRS, to prepare reports after every three months comparing our strategy and our progress. Those of you who have Political Advisers should use them in this capacity as well. We must stick to our guns.

K.R.S.

7 May 1979

PRIME MINISTER

INFORMAL MEETING OF CABINET: TUESDAY 8 MAY AT 1420

In this folder are:-

1. A speaking note on the lines you requested.
2. A structured list of your Administration showing the full Ministerial teams for each Department.
3. The draft Queen's Speech in the form in which you last saw it (but of course it will have been revised since in the light of Mr. Whitelaw's meeting with his colleagues).
4. A copy of the letter I have issued to all Departments setting out your instructions on Special Advisers which I attach in case one of your colleagues thinks it appropriate to get on to this subject. I attach also a copy of the letter I sent about the appointment of Parliamentary Private Secretaries, for the same reason. I suggest that if these matters are raised you cut the discussion short by saying that you have already issued instructions which they will have in their Departments.
5. Sir K. Berrill's 'strategy' paper.
6. Summary and timetable of Urgent Economic Issues.
7. List of Committees.
8. Questions of Procedure attached - *diaries and broadcasts flagged*

K.R.S.

8 May 1979