

OPS



10 DOWNING STREET

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May 71. C.O.I.*

THE PRIME MINISTER

12 November 1980

M15/80

Dear Willie

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE

It is obvious that we need to make the fullest use of the Government Information Service and to ensure that we have the best people in it, in order to improve the presentation of Government policies and measures.

The Paymaster General, who is responsible for the co-ordination of the presentation of Government policy, has now put to me a number of proposals for improving our performance in this important aspect of the Government's work.

Over the longer term the calibre and training of information officers will be helped by the recent appointment of a Career Development Adviser for the Government Information Service to give support to the Head of Profession, the Director General of the Central Office of Information. I hope that Ministers and senior officials will be prepared to consult them and give favourable consideration to their recommendations.

In the meantime, all of us can help to strengthen the Government Information Service and the presentation of Government policy by:

/ - ensuring that

- ensuring that Departmental Heads of Information are adequately informed about the development of policy and are fully consulted in good time about the presentation of policy initiatives and the announcement of measures;
- including Information Officers in briefing and advisory meetings;
- seeing that Departments consult the Head of Profession about senior appointments. (Ministers can of course always consult the Paymaster General, who will do everything possible to advise and help them);
- facilitating exchanges of Information Officers between Departments when such moves are recommended by the Career Development Adviser to widen the experience of potential candidates for promotion, or in the interest of the individual.


In connection with the last point we have been giving Senior Information Officers the opportunity to broaden their experience through short training secondments in the No. 10 Press Office. These are proving popular and useful.

The effective presentation of Government policy, measures and achievements is an essential element in the Government's success, and

/I hope that

I hope that all Ministers will make the fullest use of all the resources of the Government Information Service and will assist in the measures now in hand to build up its morale, its quality, performance and breadth of experience.

I am sending copies of this letter to all other members of the Cabinet, Norman Fowler, Michael Jopling and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Louisa
Rawcliffe


The Right Honourable
William Whitelaw, CH MC DL MP.