



MD

Prime Minister

EFFICIENCY IN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT : THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 1981

In his letter of 1 December 1981 your Private Secretary asked for proposals for the 1981 Rayner scrutiny programme.

2. We have been considering for some time whether we should take a fundamental look at the way in which paper is transmitted within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and to other Government Departments and foreign missions in London. It seems incongruous that telegrams traverse the world in micro-seconds yet often take hours and sometimes days to reach Whitehall Departments. At the same time the distribution system, mainly by messengers, is labour intensive and should with the introduction of more modern methods provide scope for economies. I believe that if we were thoroughly to examine the distribution system concentrating on such aspects as the frequency of service and the use of boxes and vehicles we would be able to devise a system more in keeping with the times. The study would also enable us to assess whether the volume of paper being transmitted is greater than we need.

3. Estimated salary and overtime costs for Diplomatic Service messengers amount to £1.4 million per annum. Overheads add considerably to this figure.

4. Terms of reference for the study are contained in the attached note. We would hope to begin in February. An officer of Grade 4 rank has been provisionally identified who would be available for 3-4 months. While aspects of the messenger service are peculiar to the FCO, it has much in common with systems in other Government

/Departments

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FCO'S RAYNER SCRUTINY FOR 1981

TRANSMISSION OF PAPERS

To review methods for the transmission of paper within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and to other Government Departments and foreign missions in London so as to provide a service consistent with present needs and manpower and security constraints.

Departments and we should like to draw upon the advice of CSD experts who have studied these services elsewhere. As before, I have asked Mr Hurd to be the Minister to whom the examining officer should report.

5. I am sending a copy of this minute to Sir Derek Rayner.

1.49.

7 January 1981