



PRIME MINISTER

THE 1983 SCRUTINY PROGRAMME

This minute concerns the MPO's own contribution to the 1983 scrutiny programme.

The two main executive operations covered by the MPO are central recruitment run by the Civil Service Commission (annual cost £9.8m) and central training provided by the Civil Service College (annual cost £6.4m).

I propose a scrutiny in the Civil Service Commission which will seek ways of further improving cost-effectiveness and better meeting the needs of departments. Brief information is attached.

I am examining the possibility of a second scrutiny to be undertaken in the College. The main purpose of this would be to see to what extent it is practicable and efficient to arrange for some training at present done by the College to be undertaken either by 'outside' institutions or by individual departments for themselves. Any study of this must be linked to the current work on manpower needs to 1988 and I shall want to decide in April the best way of tackling it.

Mary Brown

(approved by the Lord Privy Seal  
and signed in her absence)

BARONESS YOUNG  
11 February 1983

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL OFFICE

PROPOSAL FOR SCRUTINY IN 1983

Subject Central recruitment activities provided by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Cost The estimated cost of the CSC in 1982-83 (including attributed costs of common service staff) is £9.8m and the number of staff 360 (1 February 1983).

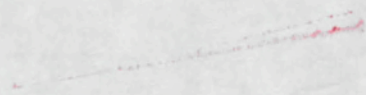
Reason The CSC runs the biggest executive operation in the MPO's field of responsibility and it is desirable to seek ways of further improving cost-effectiveness and better meeting the needs of departments.

Terms of Reference To be decided by end-June. A new First Civil Service Commissioner is due to be appointed and should have time to form a view of the precise scope of the scrutiny. The outcome of the co-ordinated Review of Personnel Work (central report due Easter) will also be very relevant.

Proposed starting and finishing dates July/August 1983 - end 1983.

Examining Officer Not yet known. He will report to the Lord Privy Seal

11 FEB 1963





10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

26 January 1983

D/F

Dear Private Secretary

Centrally Co-ordinated Efficiency Exercises 1983:  
The Scrutiny Programme

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The programme of Centrally Co-ordinated Efficiency Exercises proposed in the Lord Privy Seal's minute of 26 November has been agreed by Ministers. It envisages up to 30 further departmental scrutinies and 3 multi-department reviews.

I am writing to invite proposals for the scrutiny programme. Ministers are asked to send these to the Prime Minister by 11 February and to copy them to the Lord Privy Seal and Mr. Cassels.

The target size of the scrutiny programme has again been kept small, having regard to other work in hand or in prospect. So topics should be substantial and significant in terms of the activities or policies of the department. Wherever possible they should also promote the Government's longer-term aims for improving Civil Service management. The Prime Minister will have these factors in mind when considering their suitability for inclusion in the programme.

Specific areas likely to provide strong candidates for scrutinies are:

- (1) Whether the policy processes in use provide Ministers with the right material at the right time on which to take decisions and with adequate information and methods by which to assess the cost-effectiveness of the action taken.
- (2) Large executive questions which are relatively self-contained.
- (3) Areas of work involving specialist groups (e.g. lawyers and accountants).

(4) The arrangement by which advice, information and help are provided to the public and outside bodies (e.g. the preparation and publication of advice - leaflets, articles, films, advice and information provided by visits).

(5) Administrative tribunals (e.g. appeals boards).

(6) The efficiency and value for money of selected Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

Ministers are invited to put forward at least one scrutiny. Those in charge of larger departments are invited to propose more than one. Each proposal should, as in previous years, contain brief information on:

(1) Subject: the policy, function or activity to be examined.

(2) Cost of the policy, function or activity, and the number of staff involved.

(3) Reasons for selecting the subject.

(4) Terms of Reference.

(5) Proposed starting and finishing dates.

(6) Names of examining officers, if known, and Ministerial reporting arrangements. (In selecting staff to conduct scrutinies Ministers are asked to bear in mind the importance of putting examining officers in charge who have the questioning mind and good judgement fundamental to the scrutiny technique).

Work on scrutinies should not start before proposals have been agreed by the Prime Minister. The programme should begin as early as possible in the year but there is no need for all scrutinies to start on a common date. Notes of Guidance for examining officers will be re-issued shortly and briefing for examining officers will be arranged subsequently.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of all Ministers in charge of Departments and to Sir Robert Armstrong, Sir Douglas Wass, John Sparrow and John Cassels. Ian Beesley (273 5226) in the Rayner Unit can provide further advice if it is required.

Yours sincerely,

*Robin Butler*

Robin Butler