

STAFF IN CONFIDENCE

Thank you MB

PRIME MINISTER

CLIVE PRIESTLEY

You may like to know that Clive Priestley <sup>has</sup> talked both to Sir George Jefferson and to Clive Whitmore. Sir George Jefferson has made him an attractive offer, and Clive Priestley is inclined to accept it. Clive Whitmore could only offer him a transfer at Under Secretary without any firm promise about promotion to Deputy Secretary. But Clive Priestley said to me that he thought it reasonable that Clive Whitmore should not have gone further than he did in making promises.

Clive Priestley is thinking about the alternatives over the weekend and at present expects to accept Sir George Jefferson's offer on Monday or Tuesday. We had a further talk about the MPO. Clive Priestley said that, now that you have appointed Mr Le Cheminant as Second Permanent Secretary, his advice would be that you should not bring Mr Partridge in because, despite his high regard for Partridge, he thinks that a more important consideration is that the MPO should not get both a new Second Permanent Secretary and an extra Deputy Secretary. If he goes to British Telecom, his own view is that his deputy, Ian Beesley, should be promoted Under Secretary to head the Rayner Unit; but I think that Clive Priestley's view may be coloured by his loyalty to Beesley over this and that there may well be other and better candidates.

F.R.B.

11 March 1983



PERSONAL



Mr BUTLER

- 1 I attach your copy of a minute to Sir Robert Armstrong.
- 2 I have discussed with Lord Rayner, who was in earlier this afternoon, the points you made on the 'phone. He is of the clear and determined opinion that, in all the circumstances, the course you suggest on the Scrutiny Programme is right, namely that the Prime Minister should ask the Rayner unit to run the programme as a whole and look after her interest in her particular interest in some. He thinks that it would help greatly if this were clearly established on the record.
- 3 On the RU succession, Lord Rayner also has a firm view - that Mr Beesley has a proven track record; that it is not necessary to look further when someone of his quality is at hand; and that with Mr Allen, Mrs Thoms and me gone, the Prime Minister and he must have the continuity which Mr Beesley can provide.
- 4 Again, I agree, but I will think about other possible names as you asked. I hope that the Prime Minister will, even so, select Mr Beesley.
- 5 Lord Rayner's office will be in touch early next week with a view to an early meeting with the Prime Minister to bring her up to date with imminent developments in Baker Street and to offer her his thoughts about the future.

C Priestley  
11 March 1983

ENC; Copy minute to Sir R Armstrong



PERSONAL

Sir ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ccfi Mr Butler  
Lord Rayner

I am very grateful for your efforts to secure my movement to another department on promotion. When we met last week, you told me that your colleagues were reluctant to consider this, given their belief that I lacked sufficient experience ("But what has he done?"). And we both felt that if I went up an MPO ladder only, I would not be as well qualified for later advancement as others.

2. I have visited Mr Whitmore (MOD). He indicated that if I went to his department it would be on all fours with his many other USs, without any sort of undertaking as to the future: it would be up to me to show what I was made of. Fair enough.

3. As I believe you know, when I went to see the PM recently on the ROH/RSC scrutiny, she spoke instead about senior appointments in the MPO and very kindly offered me promotion to a new DS post, my own being abolished. I expressed my lively gratitude for this, but advised her that in my view there was not enough work to justify the creation of a DS post in addition to the 2/PS post, even given the abolition of my own, and that, given your colleagues' observations about me, she might be much criticised not only for creating the post but for putting me in it.

4. I also said that I believed that the Rayner Unit should, ideally, report to her.

5. Sir George Jefferson has now made me a firm and attractive offer which I am inclined to accept. I must let him have my decision on Monday or Tuesday.



PERSONAL

6. I have told Sir George that I am bound to finish the ROH/RSC scrutiny and that I would not be available until July. He accepts this. Whether I go or not, I suggest that I should devote most of my time to it until July.

7. If I am replaced, I very much hope that it would be by Mr Beesley, who is doing excellent work and promises very well for the future. Lord Rayner has seen this minute and agrees.

Sp

C PRIESTLEY

11 March 1983