



CABINET OFFICE

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL OFFICE
 Great George Street
 London SW1P 3AL
 Telephone 01-233 8610

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Prime Minister

To be aware.

The No. 10 trainee is held up
 with the rest.

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From the Minister of State

Lord Gowrie

8 February 1984

The Rt Hon Tom King MP
 Secretary of State for Employment
 Caxton House
 Tothill Street
 LONDON SW1

Dear Secretary of State,

YTS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

Thank you for your letter of 31 January about YTS in the Civil Service in reply to mine of 13 January.

First, our branch of the CPSA held a consultative meeting with its members on 30 January. The outcome was that the meeting decisively backed a stand against YTS. I understand that the GCHQ issue had a major influence on the atmosphere and hence the voting. Secondly, I understand that there has been further delay in the conclusion of the MSC's own agreement with the relevant Civil Service union branches. Although there has been progress with YTS in fringe areas (the Agricultural Research Council for example) we still appear to lack a decisive breakthrough in the core clerical areas of central government. Thirdly, we have of course the present difficult situation in our relations with trade unions generally. Your letter of 31 January warned of the need to weigh carefully the effects on the viability of the YTS scheme generally of an attempt to force through the Cabinet Office scheme against union opposition. I imagine that this need is now reinforced, but - looking now beyond the Civil Service - this is your territory rather than mine.

Having said all this the fact remains that the delays in introducing effective YTS schemes into large areas of central government are quite intolerable. We surely cannot countenance this threatened denial to up to 4000 youngsters of work experience and training which they need, and which we want to give. So I am glad of your clear affirmation that we are not debarred by YTS rules from going ahead without local union support. My officials have largely completed the preparation of the case we would put to the North

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London Board, and we can move quickly once the green light is given. The next questions now are of the tactics and timing surrounding our decision to go ahead, with or without that union support. If it would help, I would be ready to discuss these matters with you.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Armstrong and David Young.

Yours faithfully,

Alan

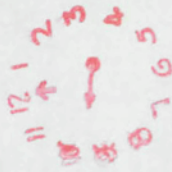
LORD GOWRIE

(approved by the Ministers of State and signed in his absence)

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The Rt Hon Earl of Gowrie
 Minister of State
 (Minister for the Arts)
 Privy Council Office
 Office of Arts and Libraries
 Room 62/2
 Great George Street
 Whitehall
 LONDON SW1

Mr Butler

To see.

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31 January 1984

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YTS SCHEMES IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

I was disappointed to learn from your letter of 13 January of the problems you have been encountering in trying to introduce a YTS scheme in the Cabinet Office. It is important that before too long we put some flesh on the bones of the framework agreement to get Youth Training Scheme places in the Civil Service.

In this particular instance I agree with you that we should now await the result of the consultation being undertaken by the Cabinet Office branch of the CPSA. If this turns out right, it will open the way to the introduction of the scheme.

If it does not, we will have to consider further action. By then we may have the benefit of a breakthrough with the MSC's own scheme. There seems to be a good prospect that, in part thanks to the efforts of Alistair Graham, the scheme for MSC headquarters may secure local union agreement at the end of the month (just before the consultative meeting in the Cabinet Office is due to take place) and go to the February meeting of the Sheffield Area Manpower Board on that basis. If we can get that scheme through, it is bound to help if we decide ultimately to press ahead with the Cabinet Office scheme notwithstanding local opposition from within the union - though we shall first need to weigh the effect of so proceeding on both the viability of the scheme itself and essential union support for YTS generally. Indeed, if local union agreement is secured for the MSC scheme it would seem sensible to take steps to disseminate the information in Cabinet Office.



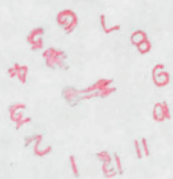
Of course, I understand and share your concern over the line that some elements in the CPSA are taking on the Cabinet Office scheme. But let me make quite clear, in case there is any misunderstanding, that we are not debarred by the YTS rules from going ahead without local union support. While the YTS rules and the guidance to Area Manpower Boards indicate that schemes would not normally be approved where appropriate officials of recognised trade unions had indicated that they did not support them, these rules do not give unions a right of veto. That was something which was requested but was of course refused. In the present case our hand is clearly strengthened by the fact that the framework agreement already indicates the support of the recognised unions at national level for schemes in the Civil Service. So, let us take stock together of the situation as it appears when we know the outcome of the branch consultations.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

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CABINET OFFICE

From the Minister of State

Lord Gowrie

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL OFFICE

Great George Street

London SW1P 3AL

Telephone 01-233 8610

13 January 1984

The Rt Hon Tom King MP
Secretary of State for Employment
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to consult you about how best we overcome the difficulties which have arisen, or threaten to arise, over the introduction of YTS into the Civil Service. Our objective is clear. To provide good training and work experience for several thousand youngsters. The obstacles are also clear and stem at least in part from the activities of politically motivated left-wing groups who wish to see YTS fail. This is a battle we must win. The question is how.

You will recall that my officials, with help from the MSC, succeeded in negotiating last November a national framework agreement with the Council of Civil Service Unions covering the introduction of YTS into the white-collar areas of government departments. They did so with considerable help from the leadership of the CCSU in a situation where the biggest Civil Service union - the CPSA - was bound by conference decisions hostile to YTS, and the second largest - the SCPS - was ambivalent in the face of considerable activist pressure. The national agreement opened the door. In accordance with YTS rules, however, individual schemes still need local union acceptance if they are readily to obtain the necessary approval from the MSC's area manpower boards. You will appreciate that this aspect of the YTS rules is potentially a major constraint upon progress.

CPSA activists were furious at being out manoeuvred and the current right wing executive and the general secretary, Alistair Graham, face a barrage of accusations of betrayal of conference

decisions. The executive - but not Alistair Graham - face re-election in the summer and Alistair Graham is in open public conflict with his extremists on a variety of issues.

Once the national agreement was concluded departments set about seeking local agreement to their particular schemes. It so happens that the Cabinet Office scheme (which coincidentally includes a youngster for No. 10) is the most advanced and has become the first potential battle ground. We are in this position because I wanted us to set an example and of course to gain the favourable publicity for the YTS scheme which would result from the visible presence of a trainee at No. 10. We sought and got provisional approval to our scheme from the area manpower board as long ago as last August though their support was necessarily subject to later union agreement. In the event the trade union side of our departmental Whitley Council accepted the scheme by a majority vote but the CPSA representatives have insisted that, under the YTS rules, their support or acquiescence is required and they have refused to give it.

In this situation my officials have sought to bring pressure to bear by three routes - through the CPSA headquarters, through the CCSU and through the MSC. The CPSA has said that it cannot bludgeon a branch into accepting a YTS scheme against its will. They have however urged the branch to consult its members in the hope that common sense and moderation will prevail. The branch has agreed to do this and are making the necessary arrangements.

The consultative process is unlikely to be completed before the end of January. We are of course taking all the steps we can to ensure that the consultative process gives the right answer but we cannot guarantee it.

The CCSU is obviously embarrassed by the situation which has arisen in the Cabinet Office and have reaffirmed their commitment to the national agreement. Their advice however is that turning the Cabinet Office case into a cause celebre could damage the chances of bringing YTS into effect across the Civil Service. Their hope and intention is that quick progress should be achieved in those parts of the Civil Service where branch executives are moderate. Successful schemes are, in their opinion, the best way of overcoming the opposition.

The MSC have also cautioned us against precipitate public action. They are particularly concerned about the adverse effect which politicising the Cabinet Office case might have on the wider functioning of the YTS as a whole. They have also been considering various fall-back positions which might be used to enable, at least the No.10 appointment, to go ahead soon. None of the fall-back positions however is without difficulty and it is clear that, from their wider standpoint, MSC would much prefer the Civil Service problems to be overcome in as discreet a manner as possible.

I have no doubt that we must first await the outcome of the consultative operation being mounted by the Cabinet Office branch of the CPSA. If that turns out right then we will have notched up a notable victory and have greatly strengthened the hands of the moderates in Civil Service trade union branches throughout the country in their approach to their own schemes.

If the consultative operation fails then I have no doubt that we must bring matters to a head by taking a disagreed proposal to the area manpower board and back it with all the arguments at our command. At this stage there would of course be questions of tactics and timing to settle. I have it particularly in mind that our hand would be considerably strengthened if some other Civil Service YTS scheme had got off the ground by the time of the hearing. As I understand it the MSC's own scheme is nearly at this stage though again the problem is to overcome local objections by the CPSA. I also understand that partly because the MSC's staff have a direct interest in, and understanding of, the importance of YTS that there is a good chance of a favourable outcome. It would obviously help a great deal if your people could pull this one off quickly.

As YTS as a whole is your province, and as events on YTS in the Civil Service can have wider repercussions for you, I would greatly welcome your views. I must in conclusion add that while I understand that the YTS scheme is a tripartite one, and that accordingly the rules and procedures had to be agreed with the TUC, it does nevertheless seem to me to be unsatisfactory that the present formulation of the rules can allow a situation where small, unrepresentative groups have something approaching a veto on the operation of the scheme. Such a veto runs contrary to the wider interests of the national union to which such groups belong, and is particularly damaging to the overriding interests of the young people concerned. It may be that we have a valuable lesson to learn here for future reference.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to David Young and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours faithfully,

R. G.

LORD GOWRIE

(approved by the Minister of State and signed in his absence)

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