

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH



From the Minister

PRIME MINISTER

*This is no time to
increase expenditure
in staff or activities.
I see no reason whatever
for this extension.
MARR must have a
lot of spare money
- Chit hunting
please note -*

*Prime Minister
This seems sensible, since
it is to be run on
a profit-making basis.
Agree, subject to
views of other colleagues?
CDP
19/4.*

POSSIBLE PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL FOR 1984/85 SESSION

I am writing with the agreement of the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales to seek policy clearance for a small measure which we would like offered to back bench MPs who succeed in the Ballot at the beginning of the 1984/85 Session.

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING BOARD : OVERSEAS ACTIVITIES

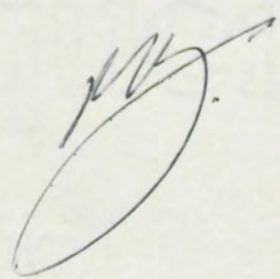
We should like to amend the Agricultural Training Board Act 1982 to enable the Board to conduct training activities outside Great Britain in collaboration with the private sector. The opportunity would also be taken to put the arrangements for access to the Board's books and records by Ministers and the Comptroller and Auditor General on to a statutory basis.

Since it was established in 1966 the Agricultural Training Board has built up considerable expertise in training techniques and in the production of material for use in its work in Great Britain. Following a stocktaking review of its activities in 1982, Agriculture Ministers agreed that this expertise could, with advantage, be made available overseas. This agreement was on the understanding that any such work should be carried out in collaboration with the private sector and that it should contribute to, rather than act as a drain on, the domestic training effort. The Board has made considerable headway in its discussions with private sector consultants about possible joint ventures overseas but it cannot bring these to a conclusion until it is given legislative authority to undertake such activities.

We should also like to take the opportunity to put on a statutory basis the right of access of Ministers and the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Board's books and records in accordance with general policy on non-departmental public bodies.

There are no EC implications. There may be an increase of 2 or 3 in the number of Board staff (who are not Civil Servants) depending on export opportunities. The intention is that the overseas activities should be run on a profit making basis. !!
Apart from some modest pump priming expenditure (which would be drawn from the annual grant in aid and repaid) there should be no call on public funds. Future receipts should make a useful net contribution to the Board's finances within a reasonable period.

I am copying this minute to other members of OD Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.



MICHAEL JOPLING
19 September 1984

CC DTI
LPS
MOD
LPO
HMT
FCO
LCO

CDL
EMP

file

MAFF/M



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

20 September 1984

Possible Private Member's Bill for 1984/85 Session

The Prime Minister has seen Mr. Jopling's minute of 19 September in which he proposes amendment of the Agricultural Training Board Act 1982 to enable the Board to conduct training activities outside Great Britain.

The Prime Minister has commented that she sees no reason whatsoever for the proposed extension of the Board's activities. She takes the view that this is no time to increase expenditure on staff or activities and is sceptical whether the intention to run the overseas activities on a profit making basis would in practice be realised. She is surprised to find that MAFF seems to have money to spare - a point which she thinks will be noted with interest by the Chief Secretary.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries of the members of OD and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Charles Powell

Ivor Llewelyn Esq
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

[Handwritten signature]



From the Minister

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
10 Downing Street
London SW1

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH

Prime Minister

Do you accept Mr Jopling's explanation, in particular X?

AT 8110

8 October 1984

Prime Minister why? where? not

I have seen your Private Secretary's letter of 20 September to mine recording your views on my suggestion that the Agricultural Training Board (ATB) should be empowered to conduct training activities outside Great Britain.

I fear that you must have misunderstood the sense of my proposals. My Department certainly has not got money to spare - indeed, you will be well aware from the current PES round that we are having considerable difficulties in meeting essential requirements from within the funds available. In no way can what I have now proposed be seen as a bid to spend more.

The proposal that the ATB should be empowered to undertake training overseas came in the first instance from a highly commercial Chairman of the Board. It fits well into our general encouragement to the ATB to maximise its revenue from non-Exchequer sources and to reduce its reliance on public funds. Far from being a charge on the Exchequer, we would expect it in due course to generate profits, albeit modest.

The sum involved in getting the overseas activities going would be very small - about £50,000 at the maximum. This would be drawn from within the grant-in-aid and would be paid back into the Board's accounts as soon as possible.

I believe that an extension of the Board activities in collaboration with the private sector would be of benefit to the private training consultants in generating additional business and improving the UK's export performance. It is the sort of collaborative approach which I understand works well in the case of public sector/private co-operation in other sectors in consultancy work overseas.

/However, in

However, in view of your comments I have instructed my officials to discuss the issue with the Treasury to ensure that if the proposals went ahead there would be benefit to, rather than charge on, the Exchequer. | X

I am copying this letter to the members of OD, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Travis Evans
Michael

MICHAEL JOPLING

MANPOWER: Employment Needs P 10

8 OCT 1984
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 October 1984

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING BOARD

bx | The Prime Minister has seen your Minister's minute of 8 October. She remains unconvinced about the proposal to empower ATB to conduct training activities outside Great Britain. I would be grateful if, when discussions with the Treasury have been completed, your Minister could set out for the Prime Minister the kind of projects which will be involved and the prospects for recouping the initial investment of public funds.

I am copying this letter to Richard Broadbent (Chief Secretary's Office), John Graham (Scottish Office), Colin Jones (Welsh Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

(ANDREW TURNBULL)

Ivor Llewelyn, Esq.,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.