



Good Monday file AN
u. CPRS

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

CHIEF SCIENTIST, CPRS

The Prime Minister discussed with you and Mr Ibbs this afternoon your minute A04675 of 9 April 1981 about the provision of scientific advice at the centre of Government.

You said that Dr Ashworth would be leaving the CPRS in the summer. He needed to be replaced in order to provide a capacity at the centre which furnished advice to the Prime Minister, yourself and the CPRS on the whole range of civil scientific matters of interest to the Government. Dr Ashworth also represented the British Government on a number of international scientific bodies operating under the auspices of organisations such as the European Commission, OECD and UNESCO. To get the sort of scientist we needed - one who would not only provide first-rate advice but whose presence in the CPRS would also convince the country's scientific establishment that Government was taking the requirement for such advice seriously - Dr Ashworth's post would probably have to be upgraded to Deputy Secretary.

Mr Ibbs added that Dr Ashworth's most important single function was servicing ACARD. This took up about half of his time. More generally, Dr Ashworth was involved in many of the problems the CPRS was working on. It was important to have a senior scientist in the CPRS as part of the inter-disciplinary team: the CPRS would be the weaker without one.

The Prime Minister said that she was not yet convinced that Dr Ashworth needed to be replaced. There was already ample capacity in Government departments and the Research Councils to provide all the scientific advice the Government could require. The CPRS could draw on this. Alternatively, she would not object if the CPRS recruited a new Chief Scientist provided there was an off setting reduction of a scientific post in the same grade elsewhere in government.

You said that you would explore these possibilities and report further to the Prime Minister.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Mr Ibbs.

JAW.

7 May 1981

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