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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Personal Minute

No. M40/92

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE

1. Mr R Melvor - for urgent advice re: you will need no doubt to consult with the Secretary.

- cc minute offices
- Mr K Adams
- Mr R J Fisher
- Mr C W Spinks
- Mr G A J A Berr
- Mr K Meldrum
- Mr M T Hedderley
- Mr O K S Diddis
- Mr C Cookbill
- Mr K J A Berr

As I said in my Party Conference speech I am absolutely determined to reduce the burden of regulation on business. The regulatory burden we are imposing on business frustrates enterprise, innovation and growth. Regulations result in lost jobs, reduced international competitiveness and higher public expenditure. We must change all this.

2. cc Minute force

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Michael Heseltine and Neil Hamilton, supported by the Deregulation Unit in the Department of Trade and Industry, are spear-heading the work on deregulation. Following discussion, I have decided to hold a seminar on deregulation with Cabinet colleagues in late January. In preparation for that seminar I would like you to let me have a brief note by 31 December outlining what your Department has achieved since the election in sweeping away regulations; what specific deregulatory measures your Department will take in 1993; and what resources you are devoting to making a success of this. I would also like you to appoint by 31 December a very senior official in your Department to take responsibility for making sure things happen on deregulation. It would be particularly welcome if your Permanent Secretary felt able to take on this task personally.

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Two particular points. Is there any good reason why we must end long-standing practices such as the serving or sale of

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farm eggs to bed and breakfast customers? We also need to look at the new rules on meat hygiene which have caused alarm to local business, including butchers and village shops selling meat. Do we go too far in bowing to EC pressure on such things?

I have decided to hold a seminar because Michael and I want to be sure that real progress is being made. Sir Nigel Mobbs, the Chairman of the Deregulation Advisory Panel and Lord Sainsbury, Michael's Adviser on deregulation, will be present to give a business viewpoint. Whilst I will be looking to all colleagues to contribute, I shall be selecting four Departments to speak at the seminar about their achievements and future programmes for deregulation in the most concrete terms possible. For these Departments their Permanent Secretaries and Deregulation Ministers will be expected to attend.

As well as reviewing progress, the seminar will enable us to compare our efforts to identify examples of good practice and to highlight areas where greater efforts must be made.

I shall also want to discuss the EC aspects of regulation. Just how much of the regulatory burden on British business stems from Brussels? And how far does Whitehall embellish these regulations and enforce them with excessive zeal? An inter-Departmental scrutiny is being set up to examine these problems in detail. I wish your Department to co-operate fully with the scrutiny team, for example in making papers available to it.

Following the seminar I shall consider the publication of a Green Paper on deregulation in the spring. This would be followed by a White Paper in the autumn, which will set out our achievements on deregulation, and our specific plans for

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further action. To give substance to the White Paper it is essential that all Departments put time and energy into developing their deregulation programmes now. I am determined that we should have made major progress by the next Party Conference.

I am copying this minute to Michael Heseltine and to Sir Robin Butler.



30 November 1992

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