



CABINET OFFICE
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W.0251

31 March 1983

Ms 31/3

Mr Oscar Roith
Chief Engineer and Scientist
Department of Industry
Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London.

Dr
31/3

Dear Oscar,

PRIME MINISTER'S SEMINAR ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY

As you know from Michael Scholar's letter to me of 9 March, the Prime Minister has asked me to arrange a public seminar on Science, Technology and Industry. The date of the seminar is now scheduled as 8 July.

2. Over the last three weeks I have had a number of discussions on the objectives, form and content of the seminar. These discussions have been with Departments, in the Cabinet Office and with Sir Henry Chilver and Sir David Phillips. The general view seems to be that the seminar should not understate the nation's achievements in Science and Technology but should face up to the need for improvements especially in the application of Science and Technology to wealth-producing industry. I think that Imogen Wilde in her letter to me of 24 March has captured what is in many people's minds when she says: "Clearly the occasion must be justified in its own right and by its own objectives. We see it as an opportunity for the science community to come together with technologists and industrialists to express views publicly on major current issues of national policy for science and technology and on the directions in which the UK should be seeking to develop its undoubted strengths. It should be not simply an occasion for celebrating success (although that will be an important part of the purpose); it should also positively help to define directions and priorities, and to allow serious issues to be raised even if this means frank and critical speaking."

3. In the light of this I have prepared the attached draft programme which I propose to submit (modified as appropriate) to the Prime Minister in the week beginning 11 April.

4. I would welcome any criticism, comments and suggestions on the themes, scope, content and speakers suggested for the seminar. I hope that your comments and comments from other recipients of this letter (listed below) can reach me by midday on 11 April.

cc: Mr Sparrow
Mr Gregson
→ Mr Scholar, 10 Downing St.
Mr Caines
Members of CRS
Mr Courtney
Dr Harrison
Dr Miles
Mr King
Mr Harris
Mrs Ransom
Mr Hancock
Mr Hatfield
Dr Challis, D/Energy
Dr Holdgate, DoE/D/TP
Dr Pope, MoD

PS/Mr Jenkin
PS/Mr Baker
PS/Sir Keith Joseph
PS/Mr Waldegrave
PS/Mr Shelton
PS/Chancellor of the Exchequer
PS/Chief Secretary, Treasury
Mr Ingham, 10 Downing St.
Mr Stubbs, MPO
Mr Gill, DoI
Mr Williams, DoI
Mr Bird, DES
Mr Tanner, DES
Mr Bailey, Treasury

Yours ever,

Robin

ROBIN B NICHOLSON
Chief Scientist

DRAFT PROGRAMME

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY

Seminar Theme: The United Kingdom has an excellent record of innovation in science and technology. We must maintain and enhance this in the future and also substantially improve our ability to use this achievement to generate a better industrial performance.

Seminar Chairman: The Prime Minister [Lord Caldecote in the afternoon if the Prime Minister is available only in the morning]

Morning Session

10.00 Introduction : The Prime Minister

Topic I Choices and Priorities: Few countries, companies or institutions can cover all the science and technology which is relevant to their interests. Therefore priorities must be established and choices made - how?

10.20 Priorities for industry: (i) Lord Weinstock (GEC)/Sir Austin Bide (Glaxo)
(ii) Sir David Orr (ex-Unilever)/John Harvey-Jones (ICI)

10.50 Discussion

11.20 Choices in Science: (i) Sir David Phillips (ABRC)
(ii) John Kingman (SERC)

11.55 Discussion

12.15 Value for Money for the Tax-Payer: S/S Industry/M/S Industry and IT

12.30 Discussion

12.55 Summary: The Prime Minister

13.00 Break

Afternoon Session

14.15 Introduction: Sir Henry Chilver (ACARD)

Topic II Creating wealth from Science and Technology: Successful, wealth-producing innovation depends on effective communication between the innovator and the market place, between the scientist and the designer, between the industrialist and the financier. How well do these links operate in the United Kingdom today?

14.30 Industry's links with Universities and Polytechnics: Sir Geoffrey Allen (Unilever)

14.45 Discussion

15.15 Break

15.35 Finance for Innovation: Lord Caldecote (ICFC)

15.40 The Successful Innovator: Jack Leonard (Eurotherm Ltd)

16.10 Discussion

16.45 Summary: S/S Education and Science/Ministers from DES/DoI

17.00 Close.

Literature: The following reports published or to be published in the first half of 1983 will be relevant to the seminar:-

- (1) House of Lords Select Committee report on Engineering R & D (March)
- (2) Government response to (1) (expected May/June)
- (3) Versailles Working Group report: Technology, Growth and Employment (March, Cmnd 8818)

- (4) ACARD report on University/Industry Links (expected May/June)
- (5) Report on Science and Technology by Chairmen of ACARD and ABRC
(Cmnd 8591, paragraph 10, expected May/June)
- (6) Report on Modern Materials (commissioned from the Fellowship of
Engineering by the Department of Industry, expected May/June)

Attendance: Approximately 250 comprising Industry 80, City 20,
Universities/Polytechnics 50, Government Departments/
Research Councils 40, Government advisory committees/
professional and learned societies etc 60.
Plus Press 20.

- (4) ACARD report on University/Industry Links (expected May/June)
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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

MUS 2573

Dr R B Nicholson
Central Policy Review Staff
70 Whitehall
London
SW1

24 March 1983

Dear Dr Nicholson,

PRIME MINISTER'S SEMINAR ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

My Secretary of State has seen a copy of Michael Scholar's letter to you of 9 March on this subject.

He has asked me to say that he warmly welcomes the proposal and would himself wish to attend. He hopes too that Mr Shelton and Mr Waldegrave will also be able to come.

Accordingly we will be very willing to help in every way possible in planning the agenda, in the selection of speakers and guests, and in the preparation of the Prime Minister's opening speech. My Secretary of State would wish due weight to be given to basic science and to the contribution of the universities and Research Councils. We understand that Sir David Phillips is willing to be involved and welcome this. We also welcome the idea of involving Professor Kingman and Sir Alex Merrison (whose "state of the nation" report jointly with Sir Henry Chilver (see paragraph 10 of Cmnd 8591) could, we hope, be available in advance).

Clearly the occasion must be justified in its own right and by its own objectives. We see it as an opportunity for the science community to come together with technologists and industrialists to express views publicly on major current issues of national policy for science and technology and on the directions in which the UK should be seeking to develop its undoubted strengths. It should be not simply an occasion for celebrating success (although that will be an important part of the purpose); it should also positively help to define directions and priorities, and to allow serious issues to be raised even if this means frank and critical speaking. We will be giving further thought to the issues we would hope to see addressed, and to possible speakers and guests. We hope you

will feel able to involve Richard Bird and Science Branch closely in the planning (although we assume that the logistics - which will be considerable - you will contract for outside Government).

I am sending a copy of this letter to Michael Scholar and to Jonathan Spencer.

Yours sincerely,

Margen Wilde.

MRS I WILDE
Private Secretary

Science & Tech,
March '83 Seminars
on Science/Tech/Ind

24 MAR 1983

