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Affairs

VB

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 December, 1979.

Dear David,

You wrote to me on 23 October about the recently published paper on the rights of entry of inspectors into business premises.

In my reply, I said that we would certainly follow this up once we had had a chance to look at the paper.

I thought that you would like to know that I am now asking my colleagues to look into the number of inspectors and powers of entry for which they are responsible. This will take a few months, but it will be a worthwhile exercise, and I am grateful to you for raising the matter with me.

Yours ever,

(SGD) MT

David Atkinson, Esq., M.P.

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10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

Now that you have
commissioned a
"rights of entry" review,
you might like to
write again to
Mr Atkinson

MAP
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filed 10

D. D. ATKINSON

10 DOWNING STREET

(Secretary)

23/10

From the Private Secretary

25 October 1979

I attach a self-explanatory exchange of correspondence between David Atkinson, MP, and the Prime Minister about the rights of entry of Inspectors into business premises.

The Prime Minister would be glad to have your Secretary of State's advice on how this matter might be followed up. It clearly involves a very large number of Departments, but at this stage I am not copying the correspondence more widely. A copy does go, however, to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

N. J. SANDERS

Peter Mason, Esq.,
Department of Industry.

5/78



file TW
cc Industry
CO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

25 October 1979

Dear David,

Thank you so much for your letter of 23 October. We shall look out for the report with great interest and I shall ensure that it is followed up in whatever way seems most sensible when we have seen it.

Yours
David

David Atkinson, Esq., M.P.

CP

PRIME MINISTER

This letter from David Atkinson is worth reading. The question it raises affects almost every Department in Whitehall. What we might do is invite Sir Keith Joseph, as Minister responsible for small firms, to look into it when the report and article are published. He is likely to pursue the case much more enthusiastically than the sponsoring Ministers.

Shall we ask him on your behalf to look into the whole question if it seems sensible to him in the light of the publication itself?

There might be advantage in your writing to David Atkinson straight away. You could write as in the attached draft.

MS

24 October 1979

24 October 1979

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 23 October about the forthcoming publication on the rights of entry of inspectors into business premises.

I will place your letter before the Prime Minister and you will be sent a reply as soon as possible.

NJS

David Atkinson, Esq., M.P.

From: David Atkinson, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Tel. 01-219 3598

KEI Gow

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher MP
No 10 Downing Street,
London SW1

23rd October 1979

Dear Prime Minister, R

The National Federation of Self Employed and Small Businesses and the Adam Smith Institute (publishers of Philip Holland's pamphlet "Quango, Quango, Quango") are publishing a major piece of research this weekend on the rights of entry of inspectors into business premises.

They have identified 252 different rights of entry enjoyed by 201 different types of inspector. Since their report went to the printers they have uncovered even more rights of entry and they confidently expect that the publicity they will get on publication will uncover even more.

These rights of entry are liberally sprinkled throughout many Acts of Parliament over the past 100 years or so. They are not at all consistent and are often difficult to find. The report's main recommendation is that there should be a codification of these rights and the establishment of a code of practice for inspectors in order to avoid the many unpleasant incidents which have occurred in recent years, particularly with the VAT inspectors.

The report will be widely distributed and I understand that NOW magazine will feature a 6-8 page article based on it this Friday. I hope to pursue the matter in the House with colleagues in various ways and I imagine that the Federation will be devoting a lot of energy to publicising and lobbying in the coming months.

My purpose in writing to you is to suggest that, in the light of this report, Ministers should instigate their own investigations into the number of inspectors and the powers of entry that exist in their departments in the same way as you authorised studies into manpower and "Quangos". Thus will it be seen that the Government is prepared to question the power of the State at every opportunity.

I do hope that you will give this suggestion your consideration.

Yours ever,
David.