

SIR NORMAN BROOK

A.C.(O) and A.C.(M)

At the last meeting of A.C.(O), the Committee:

"Instructed the Secretary to seek the guidance of the Cabinet Office as to how, in the absence of a parent Committee, the Committee's recommendations should be implemented."

2. The A.C.(O)'s terms of reference state:

"The Committee will report to the Colonial Information Policy Committee on the information aspects of their work. On other matters falling within their terms of reference they will report to the Ministerial Committee on Communism."

A.C.(M) has not met since July, 1951.

3. There seem to be three answers:

(i) to reconvene A.C.(M);

(ii) to tell A.C.(O) to carry on as at present, i.e. for each representative to put up in his Department the recommendations of the Committee, and report back to the Committee if they prove unacceptable;

(iii) to give A.C.(O) new terms of reference, telling it to report to some other body.

4. Course (i) would, from A.C.(O)'s point of view, be the most satisfactory. Course (ii) would be the simplest, and seems in any case the "interim" answer. Course (iii) raises the obvious difficulty of "to whom?"

5. The background is that there is a clear cleavage in the Committee between those who want to "get cracking" (led by Captain Willmott and favoured by General Redman) and those who prefer a more cautious approach (led by Mr. Ward in the Chair). The former are getting increasingly frustrated, and the latter increasingly irritated. The Chairman knows that his Secretary of State does not really like bodies of this kind poaching in his preserves. He consequently finds himself in the invidious position of acting as a brake rather than an accelerator on the Committee machine. This creates a certain amount of friction, which may ultimately produce heat; but he may well be right, and I am not criticising him. I do think however that, if A.C.(O) is to do any useful work - and it will only be useful if it is done pretty fast - it will need some kind of green light from higher authority. Similarly, if it is better for it not to go ahead, then it would be kind to the Chairman to give him a red light to which he could refer his impatient back-seat drivers.

/I suggest

E.R.

6. I suggest therefore that some Ministerial Committee be superimposed on A.C.(O). As to whether it would be simpler to revive A.C.(M) or to find some other body, such as the Defence Committee, I do not feel competent to advise.

7. A.C.(H) could either go beneath the same wing, or carry on happily enough as it is?

8. There is another possibility - to abolish A.C.(O). I doubt whether it would be much loss.

*G.P. Young*

(G.P. YOUNG)

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