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MA
for file - we will discuss
with MAH on his return
GRO-C
19/8

Mr M A Harris

Future management of the National Blood Transfusion Service

1. Thank you for your minute and paper of 7 August, which we briefly discussed.
2. I have at this stage only one comment on the merits of your proposals. That is that a study - presumably by outside consultants - should address itself to the pros and cons of all the options discussed in the paper, rather than (as I read paragraph 26) limit itself to Option E. To take the latter course would seem to prejudge the issue and to weaken the Department's defence against critics who support the status quo or one or other of the alternatives to Option E.
3. I am however worried about the workload implications of this proposed initiative. It does not feature in the current DMA. Both your post and Mr Williams' post are already fully loaded - if not overloaded - and we are seeking 'temporary' SEO help to tide us over some immediate and unavoidable pieces of work. Piloting the proposals to the point of launching a formal study - assuming Ministerial agreement were given to a study - would mean a fairly substantial extra workload, and the work arising from the completed study would be heavy and prolonged. (The extra workload may also be a problem for other professional colleagues).
4. So while I do not question the need to pursue the issues raised in your paper, I think that the taking on of new work of these dimensions should at least await the new DMA round, and be linked with a close assessment of the staffing consequences. I do not interpret your paper to mean that the problems in the NBTs are so pressing that they cannot be handled within the existing organisational arrangements for the time being.
5. If my view of the matter proves generally acceptable, it would mean that the paper would not go to the Management Board next month.

13 August 1985

c.c. Dr E L Harris
Mr Podger
Mr Illingworth
Dr A Smithies
Mrs M A Robinson
Mr Hackney
Mr D R Harris
Mr Angilley
Mr A J Williams —

J P Cashman
HS
Hannibal House Rm 1202 X GRO-C