

(1784)

Mr Dutton

DEVELOPMENT OF BPL

H/B23/RH25/3
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In view of Dr Lane's proposal to embark on a phased development study, you asked me what I recalled having been said at the meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee on 26 September.

My recollection is that Professor Mollison wanted, first of all, to put forward a paper to Ministers urging them to build a new laboratory on the lines proposed by Mr Smart. I persuaded him that this should come from non-departmental members since officials would need to prepare a quite separate submission to Ministers; but I said I would be prepared to put forward his paper with the Departmental submission.

Secondly he was anxious to begin work on detailing what would be needed in the new laboratory. I tried without success to discourage him, and agreed that if non-departmental members wanted to do this I could hardly prevent them, but I thought officials should not be involved. We are not at the stage where planning can sensibly be started, and I made it clear that officials should not now be taking on additional work, particularly when it might prove ~~negatory~~ *negatory*. I did not expect Dr Lane to opt out, and indeed I should be disappointed in a Director who was not thinking about his laboratory's possible needs; but I made it clear that whatever was done should not involve the expenditure of any money. As far as I know Dr Lane's budget does not include anything for the preparation of a development plan. What is more I do not think Professor Mollison's Committee ~~has~~ the right group to undertake it.

11 October 1979

GRO-C

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cc Mr Wormald
Dr Oliver
Dr Walford
Mr Connor
Dr Wills

John
You appear somewhat doubtful. Perhaps if
I transferred my other call from Dr Lane to
Ext 3518 you might gradually become reassured!!

GRO-C