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I am becoming increasingly perturbed by the dispute at the Labour Relations Agency. My concern is not only about the substance of the dispute but also the failure of the Agency to use its own resolution procedures which had previously been agreed with the relevant staff bodies.

You will be aware that the dispute will have been running for a full year by the end of this month. This makes it, potentially, the longest dispute of its kind in the United Kingdom at present. Such a dispute would be unfortunate in any agency but is unacceptable in an agency charged with resolving industrial relations disputes.

I would be most grateful if you would indicate how long you anticipate the dispute continuing to run before it will become necessary to convene a Court of Inquiry.

Silent Copy:

Stewart Dickson