The Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry

1		Friday, 25 November 2022	1		about your background. It's right, isn't it, that you
2	(10	.00 am)	2		retired from the Civil Service in 2010?
3		KENNEDY: Good morning, Chair.	3	Α.	That's correct.
4		R WYN WILLIAMS: Good morning.	4	Q.	Prior to that, you held a range of roles within the
5		KENNEDY: Our first witness today is Mr Vincent Gaskell.	5		Civil Service?
6		R WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you.	6	Α.	That's correct.
7		VINCENT GASKELL (sworn)	7	Q.	Those range from junior to senior management across
8		Questioned by MS KENNEDY	8		government; is that right?
9	MS	KENNEDY: Would you confirm your full name, please.	9	Α.	Yes.
10	Α.	Vincent Gaskell.	10	Q.	And you held a role in the Benefits Agency?
11	Q.	In front of you, Mr Gaskell, should be a copy of your	11	Α.	Yes. Specifically in relation to this particular
12		witness statement. Do you have that there?	12		Inquiry, yes.
13	Α.	Yes, I do.	13	Q.	Yes, and that involved programme management for the
14	Q.	Have you read through this statement recently?	14		Agency's Customer Accounting and Payment System whi
15	Α.	Yes.	15		referred to as CAPS?
16	Q.	If you turn to the last page, is that your signature	16	Α.	Yeah.
17		there?	17	Q.	After that, you went on to work for the Home Office
18	Α.	Yes, it is.	18		before retiring; is that correct?
19	Q.	Is it true to the best of your knowledge and belief?	19	Α.	Yeah.
20	Α.	Yes, it is.	20	Q.	Prior to 1997, you didn't have anything to do with the
21	Q.	Your statement is now in evidence. Everything that	21		Horizon project?
22		I ask you will be supplementary to that. Can I start by	22	Α.	No, I didn't, or CAPS.
23		thanking you for coming here and giving evidence to this	23		But in 1997 you were asked to be programme manager fo
24		Inquiry.	24		the Benefits Agency CAPS?
25		I'm going to start by asking you a few questions	25	Α.	Yes, that's right.
		1			2
1	~	Convey evaluate that rate involved?	4		terms of its impact on staff and an systematic and slap
1	Q.	Can you explain what that role involved?	1		terms of its impact on staff and on customers, and also
2	А.	Yes. I mean, briefly CAPS was a programme that was initiated to bring together or initiate a common set of	2		quite a bit of experience in managing multidisciplinary teams of technologists, external consultants and
3			3		internal operational people.
4		personal details across all the Department's benefit	4	^	
5 6		systems that had all been developed independently and separately, and those systems also had their own unique	5	Q.	In early 1999, I think you say February 1999, you went
_		payment, ways of paying benefits at the end of it, in	6		on to become programme director for the Benefits Agency and the BA/POCL programme. So was that a promotion?
7			7	•	
8		terms of order books and giro cheques, but they had	8	Α.	Well, no, it wasn't, except that I'd been gradually
9 10		their own modules for doing that. CAPS was about	9		brought the programme director, George McCorkell, ha
10 11		bringing that together, producing a common module at the back end, a common module at the front end and	10 11		been broadening my role in the run-up to the end of 1998 and I think it was a natural progression to just take on
12		implementing that across the benefit systems.	12	~	the programme director's role, which I did.
13		My role was quite specific to start with, in that my	13	Q.	, ,
14		job was to make sure all of that happened and to time,	14	Α.	· · · · ·
15		to complete the replanning process that had been	15		discussion with the Department and with ministers about
16		initiated between POCL, ICL Pathway and ourselves, and	16		future progress on the overarching programme, and my
17	~	to just make that end of things happen.	17		role then was to be involved in those discussions with
18	Q.	Prior to taking that role, did you have any technical	18		the Department with ministers to try and find a way
19		expertise with computer systems?	19		through to make the programme work and, at the same
20	Α.	No, I had no I was not a technical person. What	20		time, still keeping an oversight of the CAPS programme
21		I had was quite a bit of experience in technology	21		to keep that on schedule.
22		enabled change management, and I think it's for that	22		I also then took over George's responsibilities for
23		reason I was asked to take on this role, that involved	23		some of the commercial aspects of the overarching
24		understanding what the technical capabilities were that	24	~	programme.
25		IT could help with, what it meant for the business in 3	25	Q.	So it's fair to say that between 1997 and 1999 you were 4

1		about your background. It's right, isn't it, that you
2		retired from the Civil Service in 2010?
3	Α.	That's correct.
4	Q.	Prior to that, you held a range of roles within the
5		Civil Service?
6	Α.	That's correct.
7	Q.	Those range from junior to senior management across
8		government; is that right?
9	Α.	Yes.
10	Q.	And you held a role in the Benefits Agency?
11	Α.	Yes. Specifically in relation to this particular
12		Inquiry, yes.
13	Q.	Yes, and that involved programme management for the
14		Agency's Customer Accounting and Payment System which is
15		referred to as CAPS?
16	Α.	Yeah.
17	Q.	After that, you went on to work for the Home Office
18		before retiring; is that correct?
19	Α.	Yeah.
20	Q.	Prior to 1997, you didn't have anything to do with the
21		Horizon project?
22	Α.	No, I didn't, or CAPS.
23	Q.	But in 1997 you were asked to be programme manager for
24		the Benefits Agency CAPS?
25	Α.	Yes, that's right.
		2
1		terms of its impact on staff and on customers, and also
2		quite a bit of experience in managing multidisciplinary
3		teams of technologists, external consultants and
4		internal operational people.
5	Q.	In early 1999, I think you say February 1999, you went
6		on to become programme director for the Benefits Agency
7		and the BA/POCL programme. So was that a promotion?
8	Α.	Well, no, it wasn't, except that I'd been gradually
9		brought the programme director, George McCorkell, had
10		been broadening my role in the run-up to the end of 1998
11		and I think it was a natural progression to just take on
12		the programme director's role, which I did.
13	Q.	Can you explain what that role involved?
14	Α.	Yes, at that time, things had there was a lot of
15		discussion with the Department and with ministers about

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states:

details."

reports, that was the case too. 14 Q. Perhaps if we look at the next report, which is at

POL00028600, please, and this relates to the period

between 13 and 19 November, so the following week. If

We can see again this issue being picked up and it

"An item of deep concern is that ICL Pathway have

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we go to page 2 of that report, and scroll down again --

sorry, page 3, please, and scroll down. Thank you.

reported two incidences of duplicate payments being

made, however, this has not been evident from any reports received, and ABED are awaiting further

1		on a number of boards and committees involving the
2		Horizon project; would that be fair?
3	Α.	That's right, there was the CAPS programme board, which
4		I chaired, but then there was the CAPS and card
5		programme board, which George McCorkell chaired, that
6		involved ICL Pathway and also the Post Office, so that
7		took an overarching role view of the programme as
8		a whole.
9		The other board that I was on really was focusing on
10		CAPS itself.
11	Q.	I think you also mention in your statement something
12		called the release authorisation board?
13	Α.	Yeah.
14	Q.	Perhaps we can pull up an example minute of that, at
15		POL00028496.
16		Can you explain a bit about what the release
17		authorisation board involved?
18	Α.	Yes, I mean, typically, if there was to be a software
19		release or a major change, there'd be a something
20		called the release authorisation board, which was really
21		meant to judge the state of readiness of each of the
22		organisations or contributors to that particular stage
23		in the programme to gauge their readiness to for
24		implementation of anything that was under discussion.
25	Q.	Thank you, that can come down now.
		5
1	Α.	That's right.
2	Q.	These interim reports, were they produced on a weekly
3		basis?
4		
	Α.	From memory, certainly initially, I remember seeing some
5	Α.	From memory, certainly initially, I remember seeing some of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role.
5 6	Α.	
	Α.	of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role.
6	Α.	of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role. As the programme developed, I think I saw few of these
6 7	A. Q.	of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role. As the programme developed, I think I saw few of these and I can't remember whether these continued to be in
6 7 8		of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role. As the programme developed, I think I saw few of these and I can't remember whether these continued to be in operation during the whole of 1998.
6 7 8 9	Q.	of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role. As the programme developed, I think I saw few of these and I can't remember whether these continued to be in operation during the whole of 1998. But this particular if we look at this one
6 7 8 9 10	Q. A.	of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role. As the programme developed, I think I saw few of these and I can't remember whether these continued to be in operation during the whole of 1998. But this particular if we look at this one Yeah.
6 7 8 9 10 11	Q. A.	of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role. As the programme developed, I think I saw few of these and I can't remember whether these continued to be in operation during the whole of 1998. But this particular if we look at this one Yeah. between the 5th and 12th, this would have been
6 7 9 10 11 12	Q. A.	of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role. As the programme developed, I think I saw few of these and I can't remember whether these continued to be in operation during the whole of 1998. But this particular if we look at this one Yeah. between the 5th and 12th, this would have been shortly after you assumed your role as programme
6 7 9 10 11 12 13	Q. A. Q.	of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role. As the programme developed, I think I saw few of these and I can't remember whether these continued to be in operation during the whole of 1998. But this particular if we look at this one Yeah. between the 5th and 12th, this would have been shortly after you assumed your role as programme manager?
6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14	Q. A. Q. A.	of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role. As the programme developed, I think I saw few of these and I can't remember whether these continued to be in operation during the whole of 1998. But this particular if we look at this one Yeah. between the 5th and 12th, this would have been shortly after you assumed your role as programme manager? I think this is probably the first report I received.
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6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Q. A. Q. A. Q.	of these in the first few weeks of taking up the role. As the programme developed, I think I saw few of these and I can't remember whether these continued to be in operation during the whole of 1998. But this particular if we look at this one Yeah. between the 5th and 12th, this would have been shortly after you assumed your role as programme manager? I think this is probably the first report I received. Really? Okay. If we could turn to page 2, please, and scroll down, we can see there that there was a grading system; is that right? Yeah. If we look over the page or can we scroll further down that page, please.
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incidents at the ABED interface."

	inq	ury 25 November 2022
		-
1		Turning back to the time you became programme
2		manager, I think when you start you say that the
3		interfaces and data links between CAPS and ICL were in
4		place and working; was that right?
5	Α.	Yes, that's correct.
6	Q.	, , , ,
7		project, or your first impressions, when you first
8		started in that role?
9	Α.	Right. I mean, at that time there'd been, as I'd been
10		given to understand, quite a bruising experience between
11		the three parties and my job then really, as I saw it,
12		was to keep the CAPS team completely focused on what
13		they were doing, to build strong relationships with the
14		programme design personal relationships with the
15		programme design authority, with my opposite number in
16		the Post Office, and also establish good relationships
17		with ICL Pathway.
18	Q.	As part of your role, you had sight of the Horizon
19		business continuity reports; is that right?
20	Α.	That's correct.
21	Q.	If we could pull up one of those at POL00028601, please,
22		and this interim report related to the period between
23		5 and 12 November 1997.
24		I think you say in your statement that these were
25		reviewed by the Programme Delivery Authority? 6
1		Do you remember what that stood for?
2	Α.	No, I don't, I'm afraid.
3	Q.	But it goes on to say:
4		"This has been formally registered as a 'Problem'
5		and a solution is being sought from ICL Pathway. The
6		incidents have caused time delays and additional work in
7		the POCL Transaction Processing arena. This can be
8		contained in the current low volume environment but
9		gives cause for future concern."
10		So from the first report that you saw, issues were
11		being flagged?
12	Α.	That's correct, and, indeed, in each of the subsequent

		Was this compating that concerned you from the yory
1		Was this something that concerned you from the very
2		beginning?
3	Α.	I think, from my point of view, given my quite specific
4		role on CAPS, what I was looking for in reports like
5		this were the view to be taken by POCL themselves about
6		the seriousness of these issues, and also of the
7		programme design authority, where the Department and the
8		agency had some very strong technical expertise.
9		I would also look to my own team to say "Are these
10		issues that we should keep an eye on, are we going to
11		keep looking for a pattern, are these things that are
12		just in the normal course of live running", as it turns
13		out in this case.
14	Q.	For completeness, if we turn to the next interim report,
15		which is at POL00028599, this relates to the period
16		ending 26 November 1997. If we turn to page 4, please,
17		and scroll down, again we can see under one of the
18		bullet points, under 3.4.2, that there is an issue there
19		in terms of transaction processing and an error against
20		the cash account. Do you see that there?
20	Α.	Yes, I do.
22	_	I appreciate that you say that you would look to people
	Q.	
23		in your team but isn't it self-evident, on the basis of
24		this report, that that would be a problem going forward?
25	Α.	Yes, when you say a problem going forward, what we're 9
1		value of £254.75. The responsibility and liability for
1 2		value of £254.75. The responsibility and liability for these payments lies with ICL Pathway.
2		these payments lies with ICL Pathway. "ICL Pathway's preferred option for resolving this
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	A.	these payments lies with ICL Pathway. "ICL Pathway's preferred option for resolving this problem, is to enforce the commitment of transactions at the point of terminal timeout. The disadvantage of this approach is that there is a chance that a transaction is forcibly committed although the clerk intended to void the transaction. If this were to happen then a repudiation would inevitably be made by the beneficiary who would be initially denied payment because the system had falsely registered an encashment. Historical data suggests void transactions are minimal." So the same issue or similar issue is being picked up again. Can you explain, in the grand scheme of things you were dealing with, where did this land in the pecking order of things that were on your mind or concerning at the time? I think from the and speaking personally well, I'll do both for the Agency and for myself. When I saw issues like this, what was of immediate concern to me when I saw that there were duplicate payments, is the

1		looking for at this stage, we have a limited number of
2		cases that are live, we have a small number of post
3		offices that are live, and what we're looking for is
4		a number of things at this early stage in the programme,
5		is the seriousness of an issue like this and these
6		were serious the frequency of them and how quickly
7		they were being resolved, in this case by ICL Pathway,
8		and whose responsibility was it to make sure that that
9		happened. They're the sort of things we're looking for
10		at this stage.
11	Q.	Turning then to a Horizon service report, which is from
12		December 1997, so shortly after that, POL00028596, and
13		these reports, were they done on a monthly basis?
14	Α.	The service reports, initially when I took on this role,
15		I remember them being almost weekly. Then I think there
16		seemed to be an increasing gap between these reports
17		being produced, but I can't swear to that. And
18		I certainly don't recall seeing reports of this nature,
19		say, by the middle of 1998.
20	Q.	If we could turn to page 5 of that report, and if we
21		could look at the section "Lost Transactions".
22	Α.	Yeah.
23	Q.	It says:
24		"There has now been 46 lost transactions, 8 of which
25		resulted in duplicate payments being made with a total 10
		10
1		customer service and the impact on individuals.
2		There is an impact then on the integrity of the
3		system and in terms of what we're looking at. So, in
4		that case, what I'd be looking to is our finance
5		colleagues, both in the Agency and the Department, to
6		say "Is this something at this point in time we should
7		worry about, is this something that we're content that

<sup>vorry about, is this something at this point in time we should
worry about, is this something that we're content that
ICL Pathway are getting on top of to resolve, are we -again, are we seeing a pattern?"
In this case, in terms of duplicate payments there
was a period in which we saw some duplicate payments,</sup>

- evident, if -- I don't recall any after that.
 Q. You mention or we mentioned previously the Programme
 Delivery Authority and I believe you say that you
- 16 attended some meetings from the beginning as
- 17 George McCorkell's deputy.
- If we could turn one of those up at POL00028310, we
 can see your name there.
 Would you often attend these meetings as a deputy
- 21 for George McCorkell?
- 22 A. No. No, George usually took this role on himself.
- 23 Q. How did you find those meetings?
- 24 A. I think they were quite challenging, is the best way to
- 25 describe it. I think this is where the -- some of the

¹² but, if I recall from mid-1998 onwards, that was less

1		more serious issues on the programme, both in terms of
2		timetabling and any issues that were coming up through
3		programme delivery, would actually be challenged at this
4		senior level. So I would say these were I think the
5		best way I can describe it is challenging: professional
6		but challenging.
7	Q.	Various witnesses have said that they found this process
8		frustrating or difficult. Did you sense that when you
9		attended these meetings?
10	Α.	No, I didn't. I actually found this is where things got
11		a real focus, in terms of whether things were actually
12		being done to schedule and were there any significant
13		issues arising. When you're in a forum like that and
14		those issues are coming to the fore, where people are
15		actually feeling challenged, I can see how others would
16		find that uncomfortable.
17	Q.	Turning then to issues regarding testing, I think you
18		say that there were disagreements about testing
19		requirements between BA and POCL; is that right?
20	Α.	When we got to middle to late 1998, that was the case.
21		Not in the early stages but in middle to late 1998, we
22		had a different approach and a different thought
23		process, is the best way I can describe it, as to the
24		extent of testing needed and how testing should be
25		conducted.
		13
1		that view was not charad, it's fair to say, by both BOCI
		that view was not shared, it's fair to say, by both POCL
2		and by ICL Pathway.
3		So, therefore, trying to agree and I don't mean
4		that in any critical way of anybody, we just had
5		a different approach. And we felt that the testing
6		should be more comprehensive and thorough, in our terms,
7		than looked to be scheduled. So that's where we started
8	_	to begin to part company on testing.
9	Q.	In your view, were those differences fundamental?
10	Α.	I think they were, and I think that that came to
11		a head in early 1999. But yes, they were quite
12		fundamental.
13	Q.	If we could turn to page 6 of that same document,
14		
15		please, this is "Input into CAPS Programme Board Report
		for Meeting on 10 July 1998", and if we could look,
16		
		for Meeting on 10 July 1998", and if we could look,
16		for Meeting on 10 July 1998", and if we could look, please, at "Live Operations", we can see that it says: "The current Release continues to provide a Benefit Payment Service and Order Book Control System for Child
16 17		for Meeting on 10 July 1998", and if we could look, please, at "Live Operations", we can see that it says: "The current Release continues to provide a Benefit
16 17 18		for Meeting on 10 July 1998", and if we could look, please, at "Live Operations", we can see that it says: "The current Release continues to provide a Benefit Payment Service and Order Book Control System for Child
16 17 18 19		for Meeting on 10 July 1998", and if we could look, please, at "Live Operations", we can see that it says: "The current Release continues to provide a Benefit Payment Service and Order Book Control System for Child Benefit Payments in 204 outlets (119 in the South West &
16 17 18 19 20		for Meeting on 10 July 1998", and if we could look, please, at "Live Operations", we can see that it says: "The current Release continues to provide a Benefit Payment Service and Order Book Control System for Child Benefit Payments in 204 outlets (119 in the South West & South Wales Region and 85 in the North East Region).
16 17 18 19 20 21		for Meeting on 10 July 1998", and if we could look, please, at "Live Operations", we can see that it says: "The current Release continues to provide a Benefit Payment Service and Order Book Control System for Child Benefit Payments in 204 outlets (119 in the South West & South Wales Region and 85 in the North East Region). From an operational point of view, there are no major
16 17 18 19 20 21 22		for Meeting on 10 July 1998", and if we could look, please, at "Live Operations", we can see that it says: "The current Release continues to provide a Benefit Payment Service and Order Book Control System for Child Benefit Payments in 204 outlets (119 in the South West & South Wales Region and 85 in the North East Region). From an operational point of view, there are no major threats to business continuity.

value in excess of £2 [million].

on IT	Inq	uiry 25 November 2022
1	Q.	If we can pull up a board minute from that time,
2		POL00028395. So this is a "CAPS and Card Programme
3		Board Action Notes" minute
4	Α.	Yeah.
5	Q.	from 12 June.
6		If we turn to page 2, we can see under "Detailed
7		Testing Requirements":
8		"There are still a number of uninvolved differences
9		between BA and Pathway over the Detailed Testing
10		Requirements. Dave Miller explained that there was
11		a need for a senior level meeting to determine exactly
12		what the testing requirements are going to be. Peter
13		Crahan said that the issues should be tabled at the
14		Formal Management Review Meeting on 18/6/98. The Chair
15		sought and received assurance that if this was not the
16		case, escalation routes were in place and that there was
17		the facility to resolve this issue."
18		So is this around the time that these issues start
19		appearing and are starting to bite?
20	Α.	Yes, I think there was a quite I'm going to use the
21		term "philosophy" when it comes to approach to testing.
22		We were certainly, having been involved in considerable
23		number of system developments within the Department, we
24		had a particular thought process about what testing was
25		needed for a large scale development of this kind, and 14
1		"However there are concerns that current levels of
2		lost transactions (at 4 per 10,000 encashments),

		nowever there are concerns that current levels of
2		lost transactions (at 4 per 10,000 encashments),
3		although presently manageable, may not be acceptable to
4		POCL when large volumes of encashments are returned by
5		newly automating post offices. Reducing the level of
6		lost transactions therefore remains a prime focus for
7		POCL Service Management. The Priority Level 1 assigned
8		to these problems is focusing the Contractor towards
9		activity addressing POCL concerns and providing remedial
10		action."
11		So, at this stage, was this really POCL's concern
12		regarding lost transactions, rather than BA?
13	Α.	Yes, it was, and that was, as you in some of the
14		other papers that I was sent for this Inquiry, that was
15		increasingly the case during 1998, where POCL were
16		increasingly concerned about the number of lost
17		transactions, and that's that featured at most of the
18		reports that I saw.
19	Q.	If we turn to page 7 of that same document, please, and
20		we scroll down, we can see the "Testing" there under
21		"ICL Pathway Release 2". Under the second paragraph it
22		says there:
23		" some concerns and issues that need to be
24		resolved if End to End and Model Office testing are to
25		start on 3 and 10 August respectively"
		16

1		So both the testing issue and the lost transaction
2		issue are coming to a head at this stage?
3	Α.	Absolutely.
4	Q.	If we could look at the Horizon service report from,
5		again, a similar time, which is at POL00028589, and if
6		we turn to page 6, we can see, in relation to the
7		Benefit Payment System, that "Incomplete Transactions"
8		is given a whole page for discussion here, isn't it?
9	Α.	Yes, it is.
10	Q.	Is your memory again, at this stage, this is a POCL
11		issue rather than a BA issue?
12	Α.	I think there was a lack of certainty about what the
13		lost transactions were. As I recall, and my memory may
14		be faulty here, but if as I recall, during the course
15		of 1998 there was much discussion about what these lost
16		transactions were. I think ICL Pathway had a view that
17		some of these, if not a lot of them, were down to user
18		error. I think the Post Office contested that, and,
19		from our point of view, we just wanted resolution,
20		because we were worried about what would happen when we
21		began to scale up the system during 1999. So this
22		became quite an issue during 1998.
23	Q.	If we turn to page 8 of that document, and can we scroll
24		down and perhaps flip the graphs so we can read them.
25		This is the breakdown of the incomplete transactions
		17
1		"Lost transactions form 70 per cent of incidents
2		received this month. Concerns therefore remain and
3		service management is specifically tasked towards
4		resolving the underlying causes. An action group has
5		been specifically targeted at this for resolution."
6		At this stage, were you still of the belief that BA
7		would proceed with the project and be party to it?
8	Α.	Yes.
9	Q.	In spite of all of these issues, you thought that
10	Α.	Absolutely, and I can say that the CAPS team, in
11		particular, were entirely focused on making that happen.
12		That was clearly in our mind that that's what we were
13		going to do.
14	Q.	
15		pull up POL00028433, and if we could zoom in a bit,
16		please, and down. This is a letter that you wrote to
17		David Miller at POCL, and you tell him that there are
18		three issues that are outstanding. You can see the
19		first at the bottom of that page, which is about the
20		provision of test condition analysis for end-to-end
21		testing.
22		Then if we go over the page, the "analysis of PinICL
23		clearance and prioritisation" and, thirdly,
24		"formalization of the weakly progress meetings and

- 24 "formalisation of the weekly progress meetings and
- 25 pre-run checkpoint process for the start of testing",

1		that were reviewable at that time; is that right?
2	Α.	Yeah.
3	Q.	If we turn over the page to page 9, we can see again
4		under "Incomplete Transactions":
5		"The transaction Processing & ICL Pathway interface
6		remains on 'Amber' status, with incomplete transactions
7		having a large impact on this.
8		"Other factors which are of concern are:
9		"unmatched exceptions
10		"cash account errors.
11		"Last months report included a statement from TP
12		detailing the impact of incomplete transactions within
13		their domain, in addition, a report has been furnished
14		showing the projected effect in monetary terms to the TO
15		environment."
16	Α.	I think it's at this time that it prompted me to ask
17		ICL Pathway for a detailed breakdown of what they knew
18		about lost transactions at that point. I think it was
19		at this point, rather than later. And ICL Pathway
20		provided such a summary, which included what had been
21		done to resolve earlier issues and what outstanding
22		fixes and subsequent actions were needed to resolve any
23		remaining issues as they saw them at that time.
24	Q.	If we turn to page 23 of this same report, under
25		"Concerns", we can see:
		18
1		which you describe as "absolutely essential before we
2		enter the final runs of testing".
3		At this stage, what is the relationship like between

3		At this stage, what is the relationship like between
4		you on the one hand and David Miller on the other, or
5		POCL and BA?
6	Α.	I would have said we David I had a very good

0	-Ω-	r would have said we David r had a very good
7		working relationship with David Miller. It was
8		professional, again challenging, when we needed to be
9		challenging of each other, but thoroughly professional
10		and I thought it was a good relationship to the point
11		where we could phone each other up if there was an issue
12		that was brewing that we wanted to forewarn each other
13		about, might come up in a meeting. It would be that
14		type of relationship but testing, challenging.
15	Q.	In the last paragraph of this letter you say:
16		"I also understand that during current phases of
17		testing significant problems are being experienced with
18		the TIP interface and that investigations are underway
19		to determine their severity. Could you confirm that my
20		understanding is correct and if so what proposals are
21		being considered to address the problems and how will
22		they compact on the current phases of testing and on
23		overall progress towards the NR2 release. It would be
24		helpful to have a response to this particular set of
25		issues before 13 November."

1		Would you say that reflects what you've described,	1	
2		the difficulty with testing?	2	
3	Α.	Yeah, it was, and we were getting early indications that	3	Α.
4		things weren't going well. We'd had early indications	4	Q.
5		that there were timetabling issues, we'd had early	5	
6		indications that the testing was not going well, which	6	
7		is actually just fuelling our concerns about the state	7	
8		of progress at that point.	8	
9	Q.	If we could turn to page 3 of that document, thank you,	9	
10		and if we could scroll down, this is Mr Miller's	10	
11		response to you on 10 November 1998, and he takes each	11	
12		of these three issues in turn. If we look at, over the	12	
13		page if we look at the final bit in relation to TIP,	13	Α.
14		it says:	14	
15		"The problems you refer to with regard to the TIP	15	Q.
16		interface are of concern. Simon Rilot has made that	16	
17		issue his first priority, in order to resolve any	17	
18		problems that may prevent POCL and BA having confidence	18	
19		in the end to end accounting and reconciliation process.	19	Α.
20		He has organised workshops later this week in	20	Q.
21		Chesterfield and you should be aware that the output of	21	
22		those workshops may change the shape of the final phases	22	
23		of testing. You can be assured that Carol will be	23	
24		directly involved in these discussions."	24	
25		So, at this stage, there is still quite a lot of	25	
		21		
1		attendees of the HMT meeting tomorrow for that very	1	Α.
2		purpose."	2	Q.
3		It goes on to list a number of issues, and it's	3	Α.
4		a number of things that I think, if we scroll back up,	4	Q.
5		we can see that you did ask for these things. Can you	5	
6		explain a bit about your thinking at the time as to why	6	
7		you asked for these things?	7	
8	Α.	Yeah, I think the issue continued to rumble on about the	8	
9		nature of the testing, the scope of it, definitions for	9	
10		entry and exit criteria from testing to judge whether it	10	Α.
11		was a success, all of these building towards whether	11	Q.
12		things were acceptable or not, so what was the	12	
13		acceptance specifications that we'd be looking for. And	13	
14		the absence of those or the lack of clarity of those was	14	
15		quite a worrying thing because how would you know that	15	Α.
16		the testing had been successful, unless you'd actually	16	
17		agreed those upfront, knew what outputs or outcomes you	17	
18		were looking for. Those things still at this seemingly,	18	
19		to me, late stage were still outstanding, so that's why	19	
20		I think these were being raised in my name because these	20	_
21	-	were quite an issue for us.	21	Q.
22	Q.		22	
23		of inability to achieve satisfactory cash account	23	Α.
24		balancing. So, at this stage, would you say that comes	24	Q.

- 24 balancing. So, at this stage, would you say that comes
 - within the scope of those things you were saying --

2		right?
3	Α.	Yeah, that's correct.
4	Q.	If we could then turn up the Horizon programme's issues
5		register from December 1998, which is at POL00028377,
6		and if we could zoom in on 10003, it says:
7		"[The] Inability to achieve satisfactory cash
8		account balancing."
9		If we also look at 10024, we can also see that
10		there's a reference to the EPOS element. Thank you.
11		So this risk register, was this something that you
12		generally had sight of?
13	Α.	I can't specifically recall. I think I probably would
14		have, but I can't specifically recall.
15	Q.	If we look over at page 3, please, and if we could zoom
16		out a bit, thank you, the bottom email we can see
17		an email from Sue Muddiman(?), do you remember who that
18		is?
19	Α.	Yeah.
20	Q.	It says:
21		"Below is a list of the questions that Dave Miller
22		may be asked by Vince Gaskell at the CAPS and Cards
23		Programme Board
24		"We need to provide the answers for Dave so he can
25		be prepared so I suggest that this is passed to the 22
1	Α.	Oh, yeah.
2	Q.	at this late stage should have been resolved?
3	Α.	Yeah.
4	Q.	If I could ask you to look at the second Project Mentors
5		report I think actually it's the third one. It's at
6		POL00031114. If we could scroll over well, actually,
7		staying on that page, we can see that this was sent to
8		George McCorkell, who would have been your boss at the
9		time?
10	Α.	Yeah.

back and forth, trying to resolve these issues; is that

11	Q.	If we scroll over on to page 2, and down, did you
	~	n no coron or or or page 2, and domi, all you

- 12 receive a copy of this report at the time? I appreciate
- 3 we only sent this to you last night and gave it to you
- 14 this morning, but --
- **A.** No, I didn't, and indeed, on the front page, it does say
- 16 that it's not to be shared beyond the addressees. So
- 17 no, I didn't receive a copy of that. I think before
- 18 I took on the role of programme director from George,
- 19 George gave me a verbal briefing and mentioned this but20 I never saw the report.

Q. When he gave you that verbal briefing, did he tell youthe content or the gist of what the report had said?

- 23 A. The gist, yes.
- 24 Q. So you were aware of its critical findings?
- 25 A. Absolutely, which tended to reinforce my view about what 24

1		we needed to do on the testing front.
2	Q.	So you would have become aware of this report in
2	ч.	February, when you took over
4	Α.	Yes, that's correct.
5	Q.	Turning back, then, to January 1999, if we could pull up
6		POL00028410, and if we could turn to page 3, in the
7		middle of paragraph 8, there's discussion about
8		functionality, and then you're recorded as having said:
9		"Vince Gaskell said that before the CAPS Programme
10		agreed the entry criteria for End-to-End testing and
11		Single Benefit Model Office an assurance was required on
12		BES functionality, it was agreed that there was a need
13		for further discussion on this subject outside of the
14		meeting."
15		Then if we scroll further down onto page 6,
16		please sorry, staying on that page, paragraph 12, we
17		can also see that you've said:
18		"Vince Gaskell said that it was the CAPS Programme's
19		perception that Cycle 1 had not gone well because it had
20		generated 20 high/medium PinICLs which had not arisen in
21		the earlier stages of testing. Andrew Simpkins said
22		that some PinICLs had been expected and that they would
23		all be cleared before Cycle 2."
24		At this stage, are you starting to feel like things
25		are not going to improve or were you still hopeful that
		25
1		a reference here to what had happened the previous
2		month, and the numbers in the previous months. So these
3		were things we were just keeping a careful eye on.
4	Q.	If we turn over the page to page 2, then scroll down to
5		the bottom, we can see that testing is raised again as
6		an issue, and if we scroll on to the next page, can we
7		have two pages yes saying that this needs to be
8		resolved, essentially?
9	Α.	Yeah.
10	Q.	Moving then forward to March 1999, there was a meeting
11		between BA and POCL teams, and if we turn it up on
12		HMT00000018, and we can see that you were in attendance
13		there.
14		If we scroll on to the second page, it mentions that
15		you're feeling positive about a new approach. Could you
16		explain whether that reflected your attitude at the
17 19	^	time?
18 10	Α.	I think that rather overegged it. I think what I was
19 20		desperately keen to do is that there had been quite
20		a lot of discussion already taking place about the
21 22		future of the programme, and I'm more action orientated,
22		and this was an opportunity to say how could we at least try and get a grip on one aspect of this, which is what
23 24		they were referring to in this particular paragraph.
24 25		So this was an opportunity to do some work that
20		27

1		they would?
2	Α.	No, I was we wanted this thing to improve. What we
3		were concerned about is that there were signs that
4		things weren't going well and that each of these cycles
5		of testing where we were expecting less PinICLs to be
6		generated, then that's not what we were seeing. So we
7		never got to a stage where we saw what we would regard
8		as a clean run of testing.
9	Q.	Turning then forward to February 1999, so this is when
10		you've taken over as programme director, if we could
11		pull up POL00028408, please, this is a CAPS programme
12		board report and, if we scroll down, please, we see
13		here, again, the raising of the issue of incomplete
14		transactions:
15		"Historically Incomplete Transactions have been
16		reported a month in arrears due to the frequency of
17		ICL Pathway's reports. However, because of their
18		importance the current status of ITs will now be
19		reported based on the latest information produced by the
20		BSM Incomplete Transaction Workshop."
21		So again at this stage, this late stage of
22		February 1998, this is being reflected in the notes of
23 24	А.	the board meetings? And what we were looking for there, I mentioned we were
24 25	А.	looking throughout the process about trends, and there's
20		26
1		might help us progress to a point where we could make
2		a decision on a way forward. That's what I was keen to
3		do and I think that's what was reflected in my
4		enthusiasm to take up this approach.
5	Q.	In April 1999, it was decided that BA CAPS would not be
6		undergoing the live trial, and this decision was
7		confirmed, if we turn up POL00028405. Can you explain
8		a bit about why that decision was taken?
9	Α.	Okay. Just first of all, to explain Val Curran actually
10		took over the programme manager's role from me, working
11		to me as the programme director. So this was where we'd
12		had increasing concerns as reflected in the CAPS and
13		card programme board minutes, that you've already
14		alluded to, that George McCorkell chaired in January
15		where issues to do with what we had seen from the
16		evidence from testing was not good. We'd not got to
17		a stage where we'd seen a clean run of testing, and yet
18		we were being asked by POCL and by ICL Pathway to
19		progress to the next stage, which actually quite worried
20		us, because we were then worried about what did that
21		mean for timetable the timetable overall.
22		I'll start with that point first of all, because the
23		timetable had not been adhered to, even since the

24 re-plan in 1997. So we were concerned then about what

that would mean for the timetable for work on our major 25

1		benefit systems that would need to be involved for the	1		PinICLs were being resolved during the previous stage of
2		multi-benefit stage during 1999. That was the first	2		testing, that might have been the case but you get to
3		point.	3		the next stage, you worry whether the resolution of
4		The second stage, and perhaps most crucially, we	4		those PinICLs has actually undone something as you move
5		didn't have confidence that sufficient testing had been	5		to the next stage of testing.
6		done to make sure that we weren't going to experience	6		So that's why we wanted to get to a point where we
7		further problems and, therefore, further delays during	7		could see a cleaner run of testing, which we never got
8		the next stage of testing. It's a difficult one for us	8		to, and therefore we concluded it was more realistic to
9		to conceive of a situation in which you would progress	9		pause and that's why we'd decided not to progress.
10		to the next stage of a live trial and possibly towards	10		That decision was not taken by Val Curran, it was
11		acceptance because possibly towards acceptance and	11		taken in discussion with myself with the Agency chief
12		therefore exchanging large amounts of money, public	12		executive, with the Department's Permanent Secretary and
13		sector public money into ICL Pathway, if we weren't	13		also with the Secretary of State.
14		certain that it was the right decision to proceed and we	14	Q.	It's been suggested that one of the reasons why the BA
15		were far from certain that it was the right decision to	15		didn't undergo the live trial was because it knew that
16		proceed, regardless of all the other considerations that	16		the DSS was halfway out the door and didn't fully intend
17		were taking place way above us in terms of ministerial	17		to go through with the project. What would you say in
18		discussions.	18		response to that?
19		This was at a programme level: was it sensible to	19	Α.	' I would say I don't accept that, certainly not at the
20		progress with the timetable that was being put on the	20		level I was working at, and certainly not with my
21		table, given what we had seen from the earlier stages of	21		intention to try and make this programme work.
22		testing and the lack of resolution of some of the	22		The efforts that we'd gone to, to work with POCL to
23		outstanding matters.	23		try and resolve the outstanding matters in terms of
24		One specific is that, to move from one stage of	24		testing, the efforts we'd gone to with ICL Pathway to
25		testing to another, even though we were assured that the 29	25		adjust our dates to try and make things happen, none of 30
1 2		that is all those efforts none of that is consistent with that point of view, so I reject that	1 2		the test results, so and we were therefore about what impact that might have on the quality of the system that
3		point of view.	3		was being as we entered into live trial, and what
4	Q.	If we could turn up POL00028406, please. This is	4		impact that might have on timetable subsequently to put
5					things right.
6		a letter from David Miller to you on 8 April 1999	5		
7		dealing with issues that you've raised in respect of the	6	Q.	What was your relationship with Mr Miller like at this
7		dealing with issues that you've raised in respect of the project. But if we could turn over the page to page 2,		Q.	
7 8		dealing with issues that you've raised in respect of the	6	Q. A.	What was your relationship with Mr Miller like at this
8 9		dealing with issues that you've raised in respect of the project. But if we could turn over the page to page 2, the "Stability of the Solution", and looking at the first paragraph, he says:	6 7 8 9		What was your relationship with Mr Miller like at this specific time, April 1999? Still I would say quite professional. I think we both were able to express disappointment that we couldn't
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1		Benefit Card Payment, ensure continuity of benefit
2		payment and avoid adverse publicity full co-operation
3		would be required from ICL Pathway, POCL and DSS. In
4		order to be fully prepared, should a decision be taken
5		to remove customers from card payment, we would
6		recommend that early meetings are held with all three
7		parties to:
8		"understand the overall framework for the removal of
9		customers;
10		"develop and agree the detailed processes which need
11		to be undertaken;
12		"develop and agree a testing and implementation
13		plan, which would be used to remove customers from
14		card."
15		So at this stage what's happening? What discussions
16		are happening in relation to the Child Benefit customers
17		being removed?
18	Α.	I think I'm trying to recall where this sat with the
19		discussions between ministers and of both departments
20		and with the Treasury. But, clearly, if cards were not
21		going to continue, then we would need to work out what
22		we needed to do about existing customers on Child
23		Benefit. So, again, this was a preparatory piece of
24		work to understand what we would need to do.
25	Q.	If we turn back to page 1 of that document, and this
		33
1		this point, but they were pretty sore about the way
2		things were looking.
2 3	Q.	things were looking. If we could turn to page 3 of that document, and scroll
2 3 4	Q.	things were looking. If we could turn to page 3 of that document, and scroll down. Sorry, this is the letter that you wrote to
2 3 4 5	Q.	things were looking. If we could turn to page 3 of that document, and scroll down. Sorry, this is the letter that you wrote to Bruce McNiven, which states:
2 3 4 5 6	Q.	things were looking. If we could turn to page 3 of that document, and scroll down. Sorry, this is the letter that you wrote to Bruce McNiven, which states: "As I indicated to you during our [phone]
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	A.	things were looking. If we could turn to page 3 of that document, and scroll down. Sorry, this is the letter that you wrote to Bruce McNiven, which states: "As I indicated to you during our [phone] conversation yesterday, the reports I have received following the Data Centre Migration differ to the information you have now provided in your letter about the scale of the problems that have arisen." What was the scale of the problems at that time? A number of I can't remember the specific number, but it was a significant number of Child Benefit customers had been affected by the data centre migration. I think it was affecting the likelihood that they would not have continuity of payment through the Benefit Payment Card, so we needed to take remedial action to put that right. Around this time, KPMG prepared a report, if we turn up HMT0000008, thank you. If we look at page 5, and if we scroll into and down, please, we can see that you
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	A.	things were looking. If we could turn to page 3 of that document, and scroll down. Sorry, this is the letter that you wrote to Bruce McNiven, which states: "As I indicated to you during our [phone] conversation yesterday, the reports I have received following the Data Centre Migration differ to the information you have now provided in your letter about the scale of the problems that have arisen." What was the scale of the problems at that time? A number of I can't remember the specific number, but it was a significant number of Child Benefit customers had been affected by the data centre migration. I think it was affecting the likelihood that they would not have continuity of payment through the Benefit Payment Card, so we needed to take remedial action to put that right. Around this time, KPMG prepared a report, if we turn up HMT00000008, thank you. If we look at page 5, and if we scroll into and down, please, we can see that you contributed to this report. Can you explain what that
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1		records the Benefit Payment Card being cancelled, how
2		did you feel about that at the time?
3	Α.	It was mixed feelings, to be honest, because I was
4		relieved, the programme team were relieved, we'd got
5		a decision, and we could move on to, towards using what
6		we the work we'd already gone to prepare for ACT.
7		But disappointment that things had come to had a head
8		like this.
9	Q.	If we could turn up POL00028730, this is a letter that
10		you wrote to sorry to John Bennett, and if we read
11		the first paragraph, we see:
12		"We reject your allegations that we are in breach of
13		our obligations to Pathway under the Related Agreements.
14		We do not agree that all of the CCNs listed in the
15		schedule to your letter are waiting for a response from
16		us."
17		What is the relationship like at this stage?
18	Α.	With ICL Pathway?
19	Q.	Yes.
20	Α.	I think that it was quite difficult by now. I think
21		they were understandably feeling pretty sore about the
22		decision that had been taken to cancel the Benefit
23		Payment Card and pretty sore about the I can't
24		remember at what point we had reached in trying to get
25		a settlement of commercial matters with ICL Pathway at 34
1		Benefit Payment Card but what it would mean for
2		Benefit Payment Card but what it would mean for continuity of payment by order book in the short-term
2 3		Benefit Payment Card but what it would mean for continuity of payment by order book in the short-term and movement towards ACT. So my role, therefore, on
2 3 4		Benefit Payment Card but what it would mean for continuity of payment by order book in the short-term and movement towards ACT. So my role, therefore, on behalf of the Benefits Agency, was to co-ordinate input
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2 3 4 5 6 7		Benefit Payment Card but what it would mean for continuity of payment by order book in the short-term and movement towards ACT. So my role, therefore, on behalf of the Benefits Agency, was to co-ordinate input to that, some of which was more data specific in terms of flows of and projected flows of order book payments, and so on. So anything technical about CAPS
2 3 4 5 6 7 8		Benefit Payment Card but what it would mean for continuity of payment by order book in the short-term and movement towards ACT. So my role, therefore, on behalf of the Benefits Agency, was to co-ordinate input to that, some of which was more data specific in terms of flows of and projected flows of order book payments, and so on. So anything technical about CAPS and what we would need to do was input to that too but
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11		Benefit Payment Card but what it would mean for continuity of payment by order book in the short-term and movement towards ACT. So my role, therefore, on behalf of the Benefits Agency, was to co-ordinate input to that, some of which was more data specific in terms of flows of and projected flows of order book payments, and so on. So anything technical about CAPS and what we would need to do was input to that too but this was more about supporting the Department and the and Government ministers on trying to find a way forward, or to provide them with information that would
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	Q.	Benefit Payment Card but what it would mean for continuity of payment by order book in the short-term and movement towards ACT. So my role, therefore, on behalf of the Benefits Agency, was to co-ordinate input to that, some of which was more data specific in terms of flows of and projected flows of order book payments, and so on. So anything technical about CAPS and what we would need to do was input to that too but this was more about supporting the Department and the and Government ministers on trying to find a way forward, or to provide them with information that would help with the options that were under consideration. Subsequently, you received various letters from Mena Rego at the Post Office. If we could turn up NFSP00000041, please, and if we could scroll down. Sorry, if we could go to page 6 of that document,
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Q.	Benefit Payment Card but what it would mean for continuity of payment by order book in the short-term and movement towards ACT. So my role, therefore, on behalf of the Benefits Agency, was to co-ordinate input to that, some of which was more data specific in terms of flows of and projected flows of order book payments, and so on. So anything technical about CAPS and what we would need to do was input to that too but this was more about supporting the Department and the and Government ministers on trying to find a way forward, or to provide them with information that would help with the options that were under consideration. Subsequently, you received various letters from Mena Rego at the Post Office. If we could turn up NFSP00000041, please, and if we could scroll down. Sorry, if we could go to page 6 of that document, and scroll down, please. This is a letter that she wrote to you regarding acceptance, and it says: "Following our discussions on Acceptance on Wednesday 23 June when I believed we were on the same wavelength I was not a little surprised to hear from
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Q.	Benefit Payment Card but what it would mean for continuity of payment by order book in the short-term and movement towards ACT. So my role, therefore, on behalf of the Benefits Agency, was to co-ordinate input to that, some of which was more data specific in terms of flows of and projected flows of order book payments, and so on. So anything technical about CAPS and what we would need to do was input to that too but this was more about supporting the Department and the and Government ministers on trying to find a way forward, or to provide them with information that would help with the options that were under consideration. Subsequently, you received various letters from Mena Rego at the Post Office. If we could turn up NFSP00000041, please, and if we could scroll down. Sorry, if we could go to page 6 of that document, and scroll down, please. This is a letter that she wrote to you regarding acceptance, and it says: "Following our discussions on Acceptance on Wednesday 23 June when I believed we were on the same

25 impose a full blown Acceptance process on POCL for the

. 36

1	OBCS service which effectively replicates and enhances	1		of the so
2	the previous arrangements between POCL and ICL.	2	MS	KENNED
3	"Given the stage we are at on acceptance with ICL,	3		Cha
4	and bearing in mind your own Team's heavy involvement	4		Mr Gasl
5	(and Leadership) on the definition and development of	5	SIR	WYN WI
6	the solution as well as the early stages of the	6	MS	KENNED
7	Acceptance process, I believed we had agreed that the	7		participa
8	way forward was to carry on informing and consulting you	8		Yes
9	regarding the OBCS service whenever appropriate."	9	SIR	WYN WI
10	Can you explain what's going on here?	10		
11 A	Yes, I think Mena and my memory of what we'd discussed	11	MR	STEIN:
12	clearly diverged. We were still looking for acceptance,	12		Mr
13	understandable acceptance, for what was to happen with	13		a large i
14	the Order Book Control Service and how we were going to	14		manage
15	be satisfied that was going to be working okay in the	15		l wi
16	short term.	16		a docun
17 Q	What did you think about the Horizon project going	17		there, a
18	forward and whether or not it would be viable for POCL?	18		saying:
19	Was that something that you thought about at the time,	19		"Pre
20	after BA withdrew?	20		Frank F
21 A	I think things that I'd discussed with Dave Miller and	21		the date
22	others were that, on the back of the view that we took	22		Υοι
23	about the state of readiness to move into live trial, my	23		these m
24	concern for them was whether they were going to continue	24		an oppo
25	to face ongoing issues of timetabling and also quality	25	A.	I only sa
1 Q	In that case, I will take you slowly to the point I'm	1		which w
2	about to make.	2		correct?
3	Can we go to page 18 within the Relativity	3	Α.	Well, it's
4	pagination. Thank you. If we look at this document,	4		instance
5	which, you see at the top, it says "Eyes on The Future",	5	Q.	Yes. N
6	the bottom strapline says "Feet On The Ground". Under	6		we can
7	"Fraud Savings", it says this:	7		can see
8	"Positive authorisation of all payments	8		aware, o
9	"Counterfeit/lost/stolen cards	9		a consid
10	"Cardholder verification	10		millions
11	"Pick Up Notices	11	Α.	Absolut
12	"Extended Verification Procedure	12	Q.	Right. S
13	"Signature and card detail checks.	13		informat
14	"Fraud Risk Management Service	14		Office's
15	"Monitoring, trend analysis	15		more ge
16	"Investigation support."	16	Α.	I, perso
17	So we can see what's being discussed here, which is	17	Q.	Were yo
	the need for particular aspects of the system in	18		own cas
		19	A.	Only as
18 19	operation. Now, this appears to be in reference to the		Q.	Were yo
18 19	operation. Now, this appears to be in reference to the time period when we're looking at the involvement of BA.	20		
18 19 20	time period when we're looking at the involvement of BA,	20 21	α.	-
18 19 20 21	time period when we're looking at the involvement of BA, the Benefits Agency, yes?	21		investig
18 19 20 21 22 A	time period when we're looking at the involvement of BA, the Benefits Agency, yes? It does look that way, because we're talking about,	21 22	Α.	investig No.
18 19 20 21 22 A 23	time period when we're looking at the involvement of BA, the Benefits Agency, yes? It does look that way, because we're talking about, really, cards and replacing paper-based methods of	21 22 23		investig No Thinking
18 19 20 21	time period when we're looking at the involvement of BA, the Benefits Agency, yes? It does look that way, because we're talking about, really, cards and replacing paper-based methods of paper.	21 22	Α.	investig No.

1		of the software that they were going to be operating.
2	MS	KENNEDY: Thank you.
3		Chair, I don't have any further questions for
4		Mr Gaskell. Do you have any questions at this stage?
5	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: No, I don't, thank you.
6	MS	KENNEDY: Sir, I'm not sure whether any of the core
7		participants have questions.
8		Yes, Mr Stein does.
9	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Right. Over to you, Mr Stein.
10		Questioned by MR STEIN
11	MR	STEIN: Thank you, sir.
12		Mr Gaskell, my name is Sam Stein and I represent
13		a large number of ex-subpostmasters, mistresses and
14		managers.
15		I will take you, if I can, please, straight to
16		a document, which is FUJ00075730. We should be seeing
17		there, as you can see on this page, this is a document
18		saying:
19		"Presentation/Demonstration to [Right Honourable]
20		Frank Field MP, Minister for Welfare Reform [and then
21		the date] 16th July 1998."
22		You should have been provided with, I think, some of
23		these materials beforehand and hopefully you have had
24		an opportunity to read them?
25	Α.	I only saw them first thing this morning.
		38
		38
1		38 which was to move to ACT, the card system; is that
1 2		
	A.	which was to move to ACT, the card system; is that correct? Well, it's to move to the card system, in the first
2	A.	which was to move to ACT, the card system; is that correct?
2 3	A. Q.	which was to move to ACT, the card system; is that correct? Well, it's to move to the card system, in the first instance, and ACT eventually. Yes. Now, my question in this aspect of things is that
2 3 4	_	which was to move to ACT, the card system; is that correct? Well, it's to move to the card system, in the first instance, and ACT eventually. Yes. Now, my question in this aspect of things is that we can see that this relates to the Benefits Agency, we
2 3 4 5 6 7	_	which was to move to ACT, the card system; is that correct? Well, it's to move to the card system, in the first instance, and ACT eventually. Yes. Now, my question in this aspect of things is that we can see that this relates to the Benefits Agency, we can see what's being said about fraud savings, we're
2 3 4 5 6 7 8	_	which was to move to ACT, the card system; is that correct? Well, it's to move to the card system, in the first instance, and ACT eventually. Yes. Now, my question in this aspect of things is that we can see that this relates to the Benefits Agency, we can see what's being said about fraud savings, we're aware, or the Inquiry is aware, that there was
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15	Q. A. Q.	which was to move to ACT, the card system; is that correct? Well, it's to move to the card system, in the first instance, and ACT eventually. Yes. Now, my question in this aspect of things is that we can see that this relates to the Benefits Agency, we can see what's being said about fraud savings, we're aware, or the Inquiry is aware, that there was a considerable concern within the Benefits Agency about millions being lost through fraud, yes? Absolutely. Right. So let's look at the other side of things. What information did you have at that time about the Post Office's prosecution service or Post Office prosecutions more generally?
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Q. A. Q. A. Q. A.	 which was to move to ACT, the card system; is that correct? Well, it's to move to the card system, in the first instance, and ACT eventually. Yes. Now, my question in this aspect of things is that we can see that this relates to the Benefits Agency, we can see what's being said about fraud savings, we're aware, or the Inquiry is aware, that there was a considerable concern within the Benefits Agency about millions being lost through fraud, yes? Absolutely. Right. So let's look at the other side of things. What information did you have at that time about the Post Office's prosecution service or Post Office prosecutions more generally? I, personally? None. Were you even aware that the Post Office prosecuted its own cases? Only as a general member of the public. Were you aware that the Post Office had its own investigation team? No.

1		discussions were ongoing about the prosecutional needs
2		of the Post Office?
3		So this is the BA, the Benefits Agency; what was the
4		Post Office saying about their issues with
5		investigations and prosecutions?
6	Α.	I'm not aware there were any and, just from memory,
7		thinking back to the CAPS and card programme board,
8		which is where the overarching programme was reviewed by
9		the Agency, that was never an issue that came up, that
10		l can recall.
11	Q.	Now, the same question, just departing slightly from
12		prosecutions, which I've said so far. The Post Office
13		also deals with its own civil cases in relation to
14		monies that they decide that they should, at that time,
15		seek to recover through the civil courts. Again, what
16		discussions were there from the Post Office as to its
17		needs regarding the use of material from the Horizon
18		system for civil actions?
19	Α.	None that I'm aware of. And I can only just in order
20		to try and be helpful, when the issues cropped up about
21		incomplete or lost or duplicate transactions, issues
22	~	like that were never mentioned.
23	Q.	If we can cap this off, then, did you ask any questions
24		about it? They weren't mentioned but did you say "Well,
25		what's going on with your side of all of this?" 41
1		that helps orientate ourselves.
1 2		that helps orientate ourselves. Can we go to the top of page 8, please. Now, at
2		Can we go to the top of page 8, please. Now, at
2 3		Can we go to the top of page 8, please. Now, at page 8, therefore, under this document, described as
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2 3 4 5 6		Can we go to the top of page 8, please. Now, at page 8, therefore, under this document, described as being "Restricted policy and commercial" at the top there, if we can highlight, please, the third no, sorry, before we do that, let's just read the first
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13		Can we go to the top of page 8, please. Now, at page 8, therefore, under this document, described as being "Restricted policy and commercial" at the top there, if we can highlight, please, the third no, sorry, before we do that, let's just read the first couple of lines. It starts with: "the ability of the Post Office to manage changes to the network under each scenario." So they're talking about the various possible ways forward. Then the next bit is "Keys issues will be",
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19		Can we go to the top of page 8, please. Now, at page 8, therefore, under this document, described as being "Restricted policy and commercial" at the top there, if we can highlight, please, the third no, sorry, before we do that, let's just read the first couple of lines. It starts with: "the ability of the Post Office to manage changes to the network under each scenario." So they're talking about the various possible ways forward. Then the next bit is "Keys issues will be", okay? Now, the first one is: "how to maximise POCL's existing customer base as benefit payment switches to ACT" Fine. Then next one: "how to maintain relations with existing clients who are looking to automation to improve services" I'm going to concentrate on the third one. Third bullet point and if you could highlight that,
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1	Α.	Only insofar as what was the impact of the lost, missing
2		and incomplete transactions, where the suggestions were
3		being made that this could be down to user error by
4		subpostmasters. That was where the focus was.
5		Never was it suggested or even mentioned, for
6		instance, that there might be something inappropriate
7		taking place. This was more about whether the system
8		was performing or whether the staff who were operating
9		the system in sub post offices were doing it in the
10		right way.
11	Q.	All right. So if summarise this, then, essentially, you
12		don't recall there being any discussions from the Post
13		Office about the needs of their own systems for
14		investigations for civil actions or prosecutions?
15	Α.	No, at no stage.
16	Q.	I'll take you to a separate document, please, which is
17	ч.	POL00028530. Now, we will see this one at if we can
18		just go down to, I think it's the second page, yes,
19		there we go, right.
20		Does this come under the same heading of a document
21		you looked at this morning or had this morning?
22	Α.	You'll have to show me more, I think.
23	Q.	You can see what this is, "BA/POCL Automation Project,
24	ч.	Interdepartmental Working Group Report To Ministers",
25		okay? So the date of this is 13 November 1998, so if
20		42
1		closures and migrate business to other offices)."
2		Then next paragraph, please, paragraph 21, if we can
2		
		move just slightly down to that, so it's centred in the
4 5		move just slightly down to that, so it's centred in the page we're looking at thank you, and highlight
5		move just slightly down to that, so it's centred in the page we're looking at thank you, and highlight paragraph 21 this time, please. Thank you.
5 6		move just slightly down to that, so it's centred in the page we're looking at thank you, and highlight paragraph 21 this time, please. Thank you. Paragraph 21:
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5 6 7 8		move just slightly down to that, so it's centred in the page we're looking at thank you, and highlight paragraph 21 this time, please. Thank you. Paragraph 21: "Under all options the Post Office will be seeking to manage a reshaping of the network, against
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24 post offices. In practice however we recognise that any

25

network of the future will be constrained by the same

1		combination of history and politics that has shaped
2		today's network."
3		So we can see mentions here of the potential impact
4		of Horizon system, we can see that there is reference to
5		ACT matters, to which you're very familiar.
6		Now, can we start, therefore, with the third bullet
7		point:
8		"how to ensure that the subpostmasters perceive
9		that post office business can provide viable future"
10		Were you aware that the Post Office was seeking to
11		ensure that subpostmasters and mistresses and managers
12		could perceive that the Post Office business could
13		provide a viable future?
14	Α.	I think we were all of us that were associated at
15		a particular level in the programme were well aware that
16		one of the reasons we were doing the Benefit Payment
17		Card was about the future viability of the Post Office
18		network, we knew that. I mean, that was just common
19		knowledge. And even when we came to the decisions about
20		cancelling the Benefit Payment Card, from the work I was
21		doing with ministers and with the Treasury, was looking
22		about how we could smooth the transition to ACT, to help
23		the Post Office network.
24		So we knew there was an impact on the network, there
25		would be an impact on subpostmasters, we knew that, so 45
1		restricted document, this appears to be saying to
2		everyone that "What we're about to do with the Horizon
3		system is move towards the cutting, by a huge number, of
4		Post Office branches and let's make sure that the
5		subpostmasters and mistresses don't realise that that's
6		about to happen when we're going to implement Horizon".
7		That's what it appears to say, doesn't it? Otherwise
8		That's what it appears to say, doesn't it? Otherwise the word "perceive":
8 9		That's what it appears to say, doesn't it? Otherwise the word "perceive": "how to ensure that the subpostmasters perceive
8 9 10		That's what it appears to say, doesn't it? Otherwise the word "perceive": "how to ensure that the subpostmasters perceive that post office business can provide a viable future
8 9 10 11		That's what it appears to say, doesn't it? Otherwise the word "perceive": "how to ensure that the subpostmasters perceive that post office business can provide a viable future and do not voluntarily exit the market"
8 9 10 11 12	А.	That's what it appears to say, doesn't it? Otherwise the word "perceive": "how to ensure that the subpostmasters perceive that post office business can provide a viable future and do not voluntarily exit the market" You're asking me to offer a personal opinion on this
8 9 10 11 12 13	А.	That's what it appears to say, doesn't it? Otherwise the word "perceive": "how to ensure that the subpostmasters perceive that post office business can provide a viable future and do not voluntarily exit the market" You're asking me to offer a personal opinion on this document that I saw this morning, and reading into that
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8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Q.	That's what it appears to say, doesn't it? Otherwise the word "perceive": "how to ensure that the subpostmasters perceive that post office business can provide a viable future and do not voluntarily exit the market" You're asking me to offer a personal opinion on this document that I saw this morning, and reading into that literally, it does it does look that way. Yeah. But from again, I think trying to keep this in perspective about what the programme was trying to achieve overall, there were two conflicting not two conflicting; there were two sets of requirements here. There was the Department of Social Security's requirements and needs, in terms of payment modernisation, and also the needs of the Post Office
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8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	Q.	That's what it appears to say, doesn't it? Otherwise the word "perceive": "how to ensure that the subpostmasters perceive that post office business can provide a viable future and do not voluntarily exit the market" You're asking me to offer a personal opinion on this document that I saw this morning, and reading into that literally, it does it does look that way. Yeah. But from again, I think trying to keep this in perspective about what the programme was trying to achieve overall, there were two conflicting not two conflicting; there were two sets of requirements here. There was the Department of Social Security's requirements and needs, in terms of payment modernisation, and also the needs of the Post Office network, and I think most people recognised that there was always going to be a tension between those two
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	Q.	That's what it appears to say, doesn't it? Otherwise the word "perceive": "how to ensure that the subpostmasters perceive that post office business can provide a viable future and do not voluntarily exit the market" You're asking me to offer a personal opinion on this document that I saw this morning, and reading into that literally, it does it does look that way. Yeah. But from again, I think trying to keep this in perspective about what the programme was trying to achieve overall, there were two conflicting not two conflicting; there were two sets of requirements here. There was the Department of Social Security's requirements and needs, in terms of payment modernisation, and also the needs of the Post Office network, and I think most people recognised that there

1		this was about by the way, I never, I was not
2		involved in producing this document and I didn't receive
3		it at the time but they were the sort of things that
4		were on our minds. We were aware about the impact on
5		the Post Office network about decisions that were being
6		taken.
7	Q.	As it says here, that "subpostmasters (private agents
8		who run the majority of the post office network)", you
9		realise, of course, that subpostmasters are running
10		a small business that they've invested their own time,
11		energy and funds into, yes?
12	Α.	Yes.
13	Q.	You're aware that these are individuals that, no doubt
14		in order to have purchased the physical premises, will
15		have taken out loans and mortgages and the like, yes?
16	Α.	Yes.
17	Q.	You're aware that these are small businesses that depend
18		upon the Post Office income in part and also, of course,
19		on any footfall coming through their post offices as to
20		any other aspects of things that they sell; you're aware
21		of all of that?
22	Α.	I know of talking to them. I also consulted(?)
23	0	subpostmasters about matters, yes.
24 25	Q.	Because this appears to be saying to those receiving this "Private and Confidential", commercially marked,
25		46
1		I think to some extent, was reflecting the reality of
2		the coming together of those two requirements.
3	Q.	Because this seems to be setting out that to achieve
4		a reduction from 19,000 post offices to something like
5		11 to 13,000 offices I mean, if we look at that at
6		a rate of some 200 a year, then that's going to take
7		35 years. That can't be right, so this is looking at
8		a reduction to get it within these sort of timescales,
9		being a very fast reduction of I can't work it out,
10		but it's well over a third of the post offices that
11		exist.
12		What were you aware of, in terms of making sure that
13		subpostmasters, you know, knew about this intention?
14	Α.	It was not my role to make sure that subpostmasters
15	Q.	That wasn't my question. What were you aware of?
16	Α.	I wasn't aware of what steps the Post Office were taking
17		in discussion with subpostmasters.
18	Q.	You see, this appears to show that, by the
19		subpostmasters committing themselves to work with the
20		Post Office on the rollout of Horizon, in a timely
21		fashion, that these were essentially turkeys working
22		their way towards their own Christmas. What do you say
23		about that?
24	Α.	I think, again, you're asking me to offer a personal
25		view in hindsight, and all I can say is at the time

25 view in hindsight, and all I can say is at the time

1		these were the impact that was going to happen to the
2		Post Office network was entirely a matter for the Post
3		Office network and for their respective ministers, and
4		not the Benefits Agency.
5		We were aware of it and, therefore, there were
6		factors that we took into account in trying to manage
7		the migration to ACT but that was it.
8	Q.	Mr Gaskell, this is a briefing to ministers, so this
9		appears to be the Post Office setting out its intention
10		and setting out what it wants to do, "Let's keep it away
11		from subpostmasters"?
12	Α.	I don't know what was in the minds of the people who
13		were preparing that submission to ministers.
14	MR	STEIN: Excuse me one moment.
15		(Pause)
16		Thank you, Mr Gaskell.
17	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Are there any other questions?
18	MS	KENNEDY: Sir, I'm looking around, and I can't see that
19		anyone else is about to stand up.
20		Do you have any questions?
21	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Fine.
22		Thank you, Mr Gaskell, for, firstly, making your
23		witness statement and, secondly, coming to answer
24		Ms Kennedy's and Mr Stein's questions. I'm very
25		grateful to you.
		49
1		you know, I ask questions on behalf of the Inquiry.
2		Do you have in front of you a witness statement?
3	Α.	l do.
4	Q.	Is that dated 16 September of this year?
5	Α.	Yes, it is.
6	Q.	Could I ask you to turn to the final page or page 12.
7		Is that your signature on that page?
8	Α.	Yes, it is.
9	Q.	Is that statement true to the best of your knowledge and
10		belief?
11	Α.	It is, but I have to make two comments on the statement.
12		Firstly, there's a small factual error in paragraph 10.
13	Q.	Shall we bring it up, it's WITN04000100. Thank you.
14		Which paragraph would you like to begin with?
15	Α.	Paragraph 10.
16	Q.	Thank you.
17	Α.	Roughly halfway through that paragraph, you will see
18		I describe the composition of the panel, including Bill
19		Robins and Alec Wylie, and then I say that,
20		respectively, they were the former head of the Northern
21		Ireland Social Security Agency and the former Director
22		General of Communications and Information Services at
23		the MoD. I'm afraid I transposed their affiliations.
24		So Bill Robins, I think, was the former Director
25		General of Communications and Information Services at
		51

1	Α.	Thank you.
2	MS	KENNEDY: Chair, could I propose that we take a 20-minute
3		break now before the next witness
4	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Certainly, yes.
5	MS	KENNEDY: coming back at, shall we say 11.35?
6	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: That's fine by me, thank you very much.
7	MS	KENNEDY: Thank you.
8		.12 am)
9	((A short break)
10	(11	.37 am)
11	•	BLAKE: Sir, can you see and hear us?
12		WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I can.
12		BLAKE: The next witness is Sir Adrian Montague. I
	IVIT	C C
14		should say, we may well be finished before lunch. If
15		we're not, we may go through lunch with your permission,
16		sir.
17	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: I am more than happy to complete
18		Sir Adrian's evidence, provided that can be done
19		reasonably, and then we break for the day. All right?
20	MR	BLAKE: Thank you very much.
21		SIR ADRIAN MONTAGUE (sworn)
22		Questioned by MR BLAKE
23	MR	BLAKE: Can you give your full name, please.
24	Α.	Adrian Alastair Montague.
25	Q.	Sir Adrian, thank you very much for coming today. As
		50
4		the MeD and Alex Willia was the former hand of the
1		the MoD and Alec Wylie was the former head of the
2		Northern Ireland Social Security Agency. I apologise
3		for the mistake.
4	Q.	No apology required. Thank you very much. There is one
5		other change that you have. Do you want to deal with
6		that now or do you want to deal with that at
7		an appropriate time?
8	Α.	It concerns paragraph 11 but, as we discussed before,
9		before starting, I think it makes more sense more
10		sense in the context of the flow of my evidence to
11		take it when we come to paragraph 11.
12	Q.	Thank you very much. That witness statement and the
13		exhibits will go into evidence and the matters that I'll
14		deal with today are supplementary to that. But I'm
15		going to start with your background. You trained as
16		a lawyer and became a partner at Linklaters; is that
17		right?
18	A.	l did. l did.
19	Q.	Your expertise was advising on big projects like the
20	_ .	Channel Tunnel?
20	Α.	Yes.
22	Q.	You then moved to Kleinwort Benson as head of project
	·	finance and later global head of project finance; is
23 24		
23 24 25	А.	that correct?

subpostmasters and subpostmistresses, I have dipped into

1	Q.	Then you joined the Private Finance Initiative Taskforce	1	
2		in the Treasury in 1997 until 2000?	2	
3	Α.	That's correct.	3	
4	Q.	After that you have returned to the private sector, you	4	
5		have been chairman of Friends Provident and then	5	
6		chairman of Aviva; is that correct?	6	
7	Α.	Among other jobs, yes.	7	
8	Q.	I'm going to start today with some very broad questions	8	
9		and they relate to you as somebody with significant	9	
10		commercial experience. Can I ask you: what was your	10	
11		view of how the Post Office was run during your	11	
12		involvement in this matter?	12	
13	Α.	I'll start with three general comments.	13	
14	Q.	Absolutely.	14	
15	Α.	Firstly, like many other witnesses, I'm very aware that	15	
16		the events we're discussing took place 25 years ago.	16	
17		Before I received the papers from the Inquiry's legal	17	
18		team, frankly I had very little residual knowledge of	18	
19		the events of 1998. Those papers have prompted a lot of	19	Q
20		recollections and I'm using those recollections as the	20	
21		basis of my evidence today, but I'm also conscious that	21	
22		there are still a lot of gaps in my memory.	22	
23		Secondly, in circumstances like this, there's a very	23	A
24		strong temptation to comment in hindsight, partly	24	
25		because of the terrible distress suffered by the	25	
		53		
1		performance through the documents that we had at the	1	
2		time and, I mean, they appeared to me to be reasonably	2	
3		well organised, struggling, I think, with this	3	
4		procurement. I think both the Post Office and the	4	
5		Benefits Agency in different ways struggled with the	5	Q
6		procurement.	6	
7		I think it was clear that, even if they had been in	7	A
8		accord at the outset, by the time I became involved, the	8	
9		Benefits Agency and the Post Office were in different	9	
10		places, and that made life inconvenient for everyone.	10	Q
11	Q.	When you say they struggled, was that a matter of	11	
12		expertise or an issue to do with technical knowledge or	12	A
13		something else?	13	
14	Α.	I think I think it was partly their grip over the	14	
15		procurement and the way in which they were supposed to	15	
16		be overseeing the performance of ICL. I think they	16	
17		had they had failed to develop a comprehensive and	17	Q
18		effective approach towards managing the project. But	18	A
19		beyond that, it was quite difficult for me to comment on	19	
20		the rest of the Post Office.	20	
21	Q.	What were your views of the level of government	21	
22		involvement in the Post Office at that time?	22	
23	Α.	It was not apparent to me. I mean, what we saw were	23	
24		a limited number of people from the Post Office and from	24	
25		Post Office Counters. On the different working groups	25	
		55		

2		the testimonies from the first phase of the Inquiry and,
3		to be frank, I find them very distressing. So, speaking
4		to counsel for subpostmasters and subpostmistresses,
5		they have my sympathy.
6		That's the reason why you have to struggle against
7		hindsight, and there is also one comment that we'll come
8		to where I think I was speaking in hindsight. That
9		apart, I have tried to speak from my memory of the facts
0		as they stood at the time.
1		Then, thirdly, in preparing for this evidence today,
2		I have read the evidence of Mr Copping, who you who
3		the Inquiry interviewed earlier in Phase 2, and I found
4		some of his evidence unexpected. It's also a little
5		awkward because, in some of my recollections, I do
_		-
6		differ from Mr Copping and, therefore, I will try put
7		especially the role of the panel in context as we go
8	~	through this morning.
9	Q.	Thank you very much.
20		Trying as best you can, without the benefit of
21		hindsight, what was your opinion at the time of how the
22		Post Office was run?
23	Α.	Well, I had, I think, limited engagement with the Post
24		Office, because the panel heard from the Post Office on
25		a number of occasions, I obviously saw the Post Office's 54
		54
1		there were obviously representatives from the DTI, the
2		Post Office's supervisory Department. I had no
3		ministerial contact with anyone except, I think,
4		briefly, Stephen Byers.
5	Q.	Was your view of the Post Office one that was
6		independent of government or not?
7	Α.	I saw I saw no evidence that the Post Office was
8		being constrained by government in its handling of the
9		procurement.
0	Q.	How about ICL, what was your level of involvement with
1		ICL and your view as to how that was run as a company?
2	Α.	Well, again, I spent a lot of time with ICL over the
3		period that the panel was involved. If I can just take
4		a step back and think about the chronology here. For
5		the period from sort of March until the summer break.
6		I was quite intensively involved
7	Q.	This is 1998?
8	Α.	It's 1998. I was intensively involved through the panel
9		proceedings and preparation and, as it were, mopping up
20		afterwards. In the autumn between September and just
21		before Christmas, there was intensive engagement between
22		the public sector and the Post Office, and the Benefits
		,
23		Agency and ICL, and I came to know ICL. I think
23 24		Agency and ICL, and I came to know ICL, I think, probably better then than I had during the period of the
23 24 25		Agency and ICL, and I came to know ICL, I think, probably better then than I had during the period of the panel's engagement. Then after Christmas, the baton

1		really passed to Steve Robson, who was the man in charge
2		of the final negotiations with ICL.
3		Here it's difficult to avoid hindsight. I mean, the
4		impression I had at the time was of an organisation,
5		frankly, struggling, I think, to see its way through
6		technical solutions, commercially an adept organisation,
7		presentations they made to Government were quite slick.
8		But, overall, you know, they were competent people but
9		I think they were being let down by, again, their
10		organisation on the project.
11	Q.	Are you talking about a managerial level, below the
12		managerial level, any particular
13	Α.	It's really only the managerial level I had contact
14		with, and board members of ICL.
15	Q.	I'm going to begin with procurement, something that you
16		weren't involved in. The tendering process took place
17		in April and May 1996 under the Conservative Government.
18		Am I right to say you had no involvement at that time?
19	Α.	You are correct.
20	Q.	Did you become aware at some stage that there had been
21		three shortlisted suppliers, Cardlink, IBM and Pathway?
22	Α.	No, not really. I've obviously become aware of it since
23		in looking at some of the testimony.
24	Q.	When you say "since", is that because of the Inquiry
25		rather than knowledge at the time?
		57
1		I believe I'm right that Alec Wylie had had a previous
2		contact with it, I've seen him referred to in the papers
3		somewhere, I think as part of the programme delivery
4		board, or some such. And it's evidently an extremely
5		complicated procurement.
6		I think it had been badly negotiated, if I'm honest.
7		We had seen, in the taskforce, a number of IT
8		procurements. They are among the most difficult of the
9		PFI projects, because they require a very crisp and
10		complete definition of the sponsor's requirements. PFI,
11		after all, is supposed to concentrate on outputs and
12		outcomes rather than anything very specific in terms of
13		technical specification. But the contractor in this
14		project has to understand precisely what the software
15		is, the hardware and the software is that it's trying to
16		connect to, so ICL would have needed a very precise
17		understanding both of the Benefits Agency's systems and
18		of POCL's systems.
19		And because, you know, the balance of commercial

And because, you know, the balance of commercial
 advantage switches from the procurer to the contractor,
 once the contract is signed, it behoves the procuring
 authorities to be absolutely specific and categoric in
 what they're seeking from the contractor, and we know
 that there were big gaps in some of the contractual
 documentation. So acceptance testing, model testing,

1	Α.	Yes. I mean, what the panel the panel took the view
2		that we were there to try to help the parties in
3		expressing a view on technical viability, then trying to
4		sketch out a way forward, and I think we'd consciously
5		steered away both from any pre-contractual negotiations,
6		which frankly didn't feature at all, and also from
7		trying to attribute blame. This was a panel focused on
8		trying to find constructive solutions to the
9		difficulties that the parties found themselves in.
10	Q.	Were you aware to any extent that, as a technical
11		solution, Pathway was the least preferred bidder at that
12		stage?
13	Α.	No.
14	Q.	Were you aware and for the record, they may have been
15		documents that you've seen brought on screen for other
16		witnesses, just for the record, it's POL00031237 and
17		POL00028451 that the risks that were identified at
18		that procurement stage relating to Pathway were that it
19		could prove unreliable and had a fragile software
20		system?
21	Α.	We weren't. Perhaps I need to explain how the panel
22		functioned, because I think that would be helpful. So
23		the panel was created in March and April 1998.
24		Bill Robins and I, I think, were strangers to Horizon at
25		that stage. We'd had no previous contact with it.
		58
1		none of these things were specified in detail, and so,
2		I mean, almost the two procuring authorities went into
3		this contract with their hands tied behind their backs.
4		There were big gaps which made it very difficult to
5		control ICL and to push the contract to an easy
6		completion.
7		I'm not sure it would ever have an easy completion,
8		but it was a very difficult commercial situation.
9	Q.	You say "badly negotiated"; who by?
10	Α.	Well, by the procuring authorities. You know, they
11		initiated the procurement, it was their requirements
12		that the contractor was responding to. When you go into
13		a procurement like this, as I say, your requirements
14		need to be very, very specific, because that way the
15		contractor knows what he's going to have to deliver, and
16		you've got a decent chance of holding him to account.
17		If a lot is left undefined, it's much, much more
18		difficult.
10	~	One consist of the uncouncil available that is bighty

19 Q. One aspect of the procurement exercise that is highly

20 relevant to PFI is that Pathway was close to the risk

transfer sort and would secure PFI clearance but theother bidders wouldn't.

23 Can you explain for us why this risk transfer is

24 relevant and important in PFI?

25 A. I mean, PFI was, at that stage, still a novel way of 60

1		procuring goods and services for the public sector. Its
2		philosophy was that the public sector needed to define
3		its requirements specifically, then the risk of meeting
4		those requirements was transferred to the contractor.
5		As a result of that risk transfer, the contractor would
6		usually have a great deal of authority to define his own
7		methods of working, against a specification dictated
8		from the public sector side, and payment would only
9		usually start once the goods or services had been
10		successfully delivered.
11		So that I mean, at one stage in his evidence
12		Mr Copping contrasts PFI with a build and supply
13		arrangement, in which you would expect the procuring
14		authorities to have a much greater interaction with the
15		contractor, more control over the detailed stages of the
16		procurement. But, in this case, in the PFI case, much
17		of that will be left to the contractor, which simply
18		underlines the importance of a precise definition of the
19		procuring authority's requirements at the outset. And
20		from the contractor's perspective, his incentive is to
21		get to the end of the construction period as quickly as
22		possible, because that's the point at which he starts to
23		receive payment.
24		So there is a great difference in risk profile
25		between a PFI procurement and a more traditional build
		. 61
1	Α.	I think perhaps you ought to ask Steve Robson that
2		question, because he was the man who he or Harry
3		Bush, perhaps Harry Bush, asked me to attend this
4		meeting. I think it was because the taskforce, my
5		taskforce, had a mandate primarily to focus on new
6		projects, projects pre-financial close, but also they
7		were asked to interest themselves in projects in
8		difficulty, and this was clearly a project in
9		difficulty. And I think it was probably Harry Bush who
10		asked me to attend.
11	Q.	Who was Harry Bush?
12	Α.	He's an official in the Treasury who worked to Steve
13		Robson and was responsible, I think, for this project in
14		the first instance.
15	Q.	Thank you very much. Can we scroll down to the section
16		under "The Review Programme", please. This describes
17		two separate stages that the review group would pursue.
18		The first is a "Project Assessment", and it says there:
19		"The first stage would be to determine the viability
20		and potential costs of continuing with the Horizon
21		project. The assessment would need to determine whether
22		Horizon could be delivered, when it could be delivered,
23		what the total costs of delivery would be and the level
24		of risk associated with these assessments. The Benefits
25		Agency, POCL and ICL would need to be involved in this
		63

1		and supply arrangement.
2	Q.	Looking at this particular exercise we'll look at PFI
3		in slightly more detail shortly but is there a risk
4		that the party that takes on the highest level of risk
5		will be the one that's selected rather than perhaps the
6		best party for the job?
7	Α.	It should not work that way, because the procuring
8		authority's appraisal of the competing bids should focus
9		on the level of risk transfer, and you'd expect the
10		procuring authorities or their advisers to comment
11		adversely if one of the contractors was too, if you
12		like, too gung-ho regarding this transfer. I don't know
13		whether it was the case in this situation.
14	Q.	Did you have any views at the time about whether Pathway
15		might have been chosen because it was
16	Α.	I had no views.
17	Q.	No.
18		I'm going to move on to the Horizon Project Review
19		Group, and can we look at BEIS0000104, please. This was
20		the first meeting of the Horizon Project Review Group.
21		Can you tell us, looking at those who were present, we
22		see names from HMT, DTI, DSS, were those the three
23		Government Departments that formed that group?
24	Α.	l believe so, yes.
25	Q.	How is it that you were selected for that group?
		62
1		stage."
2		The second stage: "Contingency planning for
3		cancellation".
4		Can we go over the page, please, and look at
5		paragraphs 6 and 7. I'm going to read those for the

purposes of the record. At paragraph 6, it says:
"One approach to this work would have been to
commission a firm of external consultants to perform the
complete review. But because a decision was needed
quickly it seemed probable that PA, who had produced the
last report on Horizon, would be the only consultants
able to undertake the work. However, there was
a significant risk that because of the subsequent work
that they had done for other parties involved in the
Horizon project, PA would not be in a position to make
the judgement required.

17 "After discussion it was agreed that the best 18 solution would be to appoint an assessment board, under 19 an independent chair, to conduct the project review. 20 The board would interview all the interested parties, 21 commission any further work it thought necessary, and 22 then report back (with recommendations). If necessary 23 the panel could use external consultants to do more 24 detailed research under their direction. It was likely 25 that PA might be in a position to do this sort of work 64

1		without compromising their position."	1
2		So, starting with paragraph 6, it seems as though	2
3		this task needed to be done quickly. Is it your view	3
4		that there was limited time in which to undertake this	4
5		project? Was it sufficient time?	5
6	Α.		6
7		panel's approach to the mandate it was given, but	7
8		within within that constraint and with the support of	8
9		PA, I hope we did a satisfactory job.	9
10	Q.	Did you view it as a quick snapshot, a deep dive or	10
11		something else?	11
12	Α.	No. I think it's well, we were given the mandate to	12
13		consider the technical viability of the project. As	13
14		I think I said earlier on, two of us on the panel were	14
15		strangers to Horizon. Doing full justice to that, with	15
16		the members of the panel directly engaged in inquiry,	16
17		would have taken a very great deal of time. I don't	17
18		think any of the members of the panel were free enough	18
19		from other obligations to devote that much time to the	19
20		inquiry.	20
21		So what the panel decided was that it needed to use	21
22		PA, really, as its devil, to go and make enquiries on	22
23		the panel's behalf, and I think it's worth just	23
24		recalling why it was that PA were the obvious people to	24
25		do this work. 65	25
1	Q	Perhaps we could go over the page to paragraph 16,	1
2	.	page 3. It says there:	2
3		"DSS ministers had envisaged the project review	- 3
4		being turned around in a period of two to three weeks.	4
5		The group agreed that this timetable seemed	5
6		unrealistic finding and appointing an external	6
7		assessors might take two or three weeks."	7
8		It says over the page:	8
9		"The timetable would become clearer once the review	9
10		board had been appointed."	10
11		From that, it sounds as though there was significant	11
12		time pressure to complete the job?	12
13	Α.	Although that's true, I don't want you to get out of	13
14		proportion this question of pressure, because, you know,	14
15		with great respect, ministers often have ideal notions	15
16		of how long tasks are going to take, and part of the job	16
17		of the panel was to say, you know, "We need the time we	17
18		need", and therefore it was two or three months,	18
19		I think, rather than two or three weeks.	19
20	Q.	At that stage, you considered that PA Consulting was the	20
21		best for that role?	21
22	Α.	As that note envisages, certainly the best, probably the	22
23		only.	23
24	Q.		24
25		please. So that's the first page. It was produced in	25

25 please. So that's the first page. It was produced in 67

1	In his testimony, Mr Copping describes their
2	qualifications for doing the previous Horizon review,
3	which concluded at the end of 1997. I don't think it's
4	necessary, unless you wish to, to bring up the evidence.
5	It's on pages 108 to 110 of Mr Copping's testimony.
6	But when you look at his evidence, it's clear that
7	in that first assignment, in Mr Copping they had
8	a vastly experienced team leader. He said that he'd
9	conducted himself over 30 interviews with the I think
10	the ICL staff, perhaps others as well, and there were
11	although, for all his experience and expertise in
12	telecommunications and IT, nonetheless there were areas
13	where he needed a team of specialists.
14	So, from the panel's perspective, PA had three
15	powerful recommendations in their favour, you know.
16	They had the expertise, they had the knowledge in depth
17	of the Horizon procurement, and they had resources they
18	could deploy to cover the ground effectively.
19	Now, that's in the context of their review that
20	concluded at the end of 1997, but you can see that from
21	the panel's perspective, the expertise, the resources
22	and the knowledge that PA had, were huge advantages. In
23	fact, I think only through PA could the panel have
24	concluded in the way that they did. PA was the
25	essential tool to allow the panel to do its job.
	66

1		July 1998, and you've mentioned those two others who
2		assisted you. Are you aware of any IT experience of the
3		other panel members or indeed yourself?
4	Α.	Well, starting with myself, I have no training in IT or
5		in engineering. I've never managed an IT project.
6		I mean, I have acquired some experience over the years.
7		I think probably exposure to IT projects rather than
8		experience would be a better way of describing it.
9		Because in the various boards I sat on and as
10		an adviser, we've had to oversee IT projects, for better
11		or for worse, and often for worse. But I have had no
12		direct I have no direct qualifications or expertise.
13		Now, Mr Robins and Mr Wylie were appointed to the
14		panel by the Treasury, and all I can say is I developed
15		a high regard for their technical capabilities. I think
16		it's true that Mr Wylie had had a previous connection
17		with the Horizon project, Mr Robins had had none, but
18		their day jobs, I think, involved significant
19		responsibility for the functioning of an IT system and,
20		therefore, I think they were in a good position to
21		complement any expertise that I was able to bring, which
22		lay more in the PFI area than it did in IT.
23	Q.	You have suggested that all three of you were also busy
24		doing other things at the time?

25 A. Indeed.

specification.

from the other.

investment."

bullet points. So it says there:

risks are being well managed by Pathway.

smartcard technology should be relatively

is very robust" or "robust for the future"?

enable the investigation to be completed."

useful to the investigation."

a separate report from PA?

Then:

Yes.

straightforward and economic. If online applications are required, they may take longer and require more

invite further submissions from the Parties and will instruct the Consultants to investigate the matters in dispute. The Consultants will ask the Parties to provide any information the Consultants think could be

What did you mean there by "The basic infrastructure

70

"The Parties shall at all times give such assistance as may be reasonably be requested by the Consultants to

So there you have, I think, in a nutshell, how the panel intended to work. So, we asked the parties to make presentations to us regarding the issues, we were going to ask PA to go and investigate those issues. Now, I think we will perhaps need to go into this next point in some detail. PA gave us a report, and that report formed the basis of the panel's own report. So many of the judgements in this report were adopted by the panel, but originated in PA's own investigations. Can I just pause you there for one moment?

I think Peter Copping's evidence was that there was no separate report and that this report was effectively taking on board the points they made. Am I right in saying that there was a different -- there was, in fact,

different?

Is it similar to feasible, perhaps, or is that something

I'm not sure that I can very precisely distinguish one

Yes. Let's look at the "Findings". If we could scroll down slightly, I'm going to look at the second two

"Our view is that the programme is technically viable. There must be some risk around scalability and robustness because the system has had to be tested at the level of component parts, but we are satisfied these

"There is good evidence of future proofing at all levels. The basic infrastructure is very robust for the future and, in the main, industry standard products have been used. The system should allow POCL to compete for new business in a variety of markets, including banking and financial services. New applications based on

1	Q.	So although they had experience, were they getting into	1	
2	ч.	the weeds or was that somebody else?	2	Q.
3	Α.	No, I don't think it was our function to get into the	3	ч.
4		weeds. I mean, because of the constraints of time, the	4	Α.
5		panel effectively functioned as a review panel, so we	5	
6		looked to the parties to make submissions to us	6	Q.
7		regarding issues that they wanted to examine and	7	-
8		perhaps we can come on to this in a minute and then	8	
9		PA were mandated by the panel to make the investigations	9	
10		and report back to the panel on their findings.	10	
11	Q.	Can we look at the "Executive Summary", that's page 3.	11	
12	-	I'll start with the third bullet point. It says:	12	
13		"In light concerns over progress, this Panel,	13	
14		chaired by the head of the Treasury Task Force on	14	
15		Private Finance, was set up to make an independent	15	
16		assessment of whether the programme was technically	16	
17		viable, if so how quickly it could be completed and at	17	
18		what cost."	18	
19		Pausing there, technically viable is a term that	19	
20		we've focused on over the past few days; what did you	20	
21		understand "technically viable" to mean?	21	
22	Α.	Capable in practice of delivering the contracted	22	
23		outputs, but I think the emphasis is on "capable", so we	23	
24		were making a judgement on the ability of the project	24	
25		over time to be developed in a way that would answer the	25	
		69		
1	Δ	Well, again, let me go back and explain how the panel	1	
2		and this report were put together.	2	
3		As I said, the I think perhaps it might be	3	
4		instructive to go to let me see I think	4	
5		section 2.4 of annex A to the report. 2.3 and 2.4 is	5	
6	Q.	Do you have the report in front of you?	6	
7	Α.	l do.	7	
8	Q.	If you were able to give us a page number, that would be	8	
9		very helpful.	9	
4.0			9	
10	Α.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may,	9 10	
10 11	Α.			
	A. Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may,	10	
11		This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out.	10 11	
11 12	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely.	10 11 12	
11 12 13	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely. "The first full meeting of the Panel will be attended by	10 11 12 13	
11 12 13 14	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely. "The first full meeting of the Panel will be attended by all the Parties and the Consultants. The Parties will	10 11 12 13 14	
11 12 13 14 15	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely. "The first full meeting of the Panel will be attended by all the Parties and the Consultants. The Parties will not be legally represented (either by external or	10 11 12 13 14 15	
11 12 13 14 15 16	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely. "The first full meeting of the Panel will be attended by all the Parties and the Consultants. The Parties will not be legally represented (either by external or employed lawyers) at this meeting or at any subsequent	10 11 12 13 14 15 16	
11 12 13 14 15 16 17	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely. "The first full meeting of the Panel will be attended by all the Parties and the Consultants. The Parties will not be legally represented (either by external or employed lawyers) at this meeting or at any subsequent meetings. At the first meeting the Panel will invite	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17	Q.
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely. "The first full meeting of the Panel will be attended by all the Parties and the Consultants. The Parties will not be legally represented (either by external or employed lawyers) at this meeting or at any subsequent meetings. At the first meeting the Panel will invite the Parties to make short presentations to the Panel	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Q. A.
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely. "The first full meeting of the Panel will be attended by all the Parties and the Consultants. The Parties will not be legally represented (either by external or employed lawyers) at this meeting or at any subsequent meetings. At the first meeting the Panel will invite the Parties to make short presentations to the Panel about the outstanding issues and how those issues can be resolved. The Panel will, in its absolute discretion, determine the order in which the presentations are to be	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely. "The first full meeting of the Panel will be attended by all the Parties and the Consultants. The Parties will not be legally represented (either by external or employed lawyers) at this meeting or at any subsequent meetings. At the first meeting the Panel will invite the Parties to make short presentations to the Panel about the outstanding issues and how those issues can be resolved. The Panel will, in its absolute discretion,	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	Α.
 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely. "The first full meeting of the Panel will be attended by all the Parties and the Consultants. The Parties will not be legally represented (either by external or employed lawyers) at this meeting or at any subsequent meetings. At the first meeting the Panel will invite the Parties to make short presentations to the Panel about the outstanding issues and how those issues can be resolved. The Panel will, in its absolute discretion, determine the order in which the presentations are to be given, the number of presentations and the time limits for the presentations.	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	Α.
 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely. "The first full meeting of the Panel will be attended by all the Parties and the Consultants. The Parties will not be legally represented (either by external or employed lawyers) at this meeting or at any subsequent meetings. At the first meeting the Panel will invite the Parties to make short presentations to the Panel about the outstanding issues and how those issues can be resolved. The Panel will, in its absolute discretion, determine the order in which the presentations are to be given, the number of presentations and the time limits for the presentations. "Following the first meeting the Panel will	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	Α.
 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 	Q.	This is 28.04, I think it must be page 30. If I may, I'll perhaps read it out. Absolutely. "The first full meeting of the Panel will be attended by all the Parties and the Consultants. The Parties will not be legally represented (either by external or employed lawyers) at this meeting or at any subsequent meetings. At the first meeting the Panel will invite the Parties to make short presentations to the Panel about the outstanding issues and how those issues can be resolved. The Panel will, in its absolute discretion, determine the order in which the presentations are to be given, the number of presentations and the time limits for the presentations.	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	Α.

1	Α.	Well, I think this is obviously an important matter.	1		
2		Now, I think in his witness statement Peter Copping	2		
3		acknowledges that it was likely he submitted to the	3		
4		taskforce some working papers, but he couldn't recall	4	Q.	
5		what they were. I don't think he was ever asked whether	5	-	
6		he had made a report as such and I think that's	6		
7		understandable, because no document has survived, and	г 7	Α.	
8		the panel's report has come to take a very high profile	8	Λ.	
9		in these proceedings.	9		
10		Now, on this point, I do want to be clear that there	10		
11		was a document from PA, whether it was working papers or	10	Q.	
12		a report perhaps there's a slight nuance in this	12	પ્ય.	
13		case but there was a document from PA which laid out	12		
14		in terms the bulk of what appeared in the panel's own	13		
14		report.	14		
16		The panel obviously met to discuss the PA report,	16	А.	
17		and when the panel report came to be prepared, it	10		
18		incorporated the vast bulk of PA's technical advice.	18		
19		Now, I can be quite precise on that because	10		
20		I produced the first draft of the panel report, and	20		
20		I recall taking the document we had received from PA and	20 21	0	
21		0	21	Q. A.	
22		making minor editorial changes to it. I mean, there	22	А.	
		were definitions that needed to be changed, nomenclature			
24		of the parties needed to be harmonised and I made some	24		
25		changes to the order to bring out the sense, the 73	25		
1		and so these detailed points would have required a very	1		
2		precise understanding of the panel of the project.	2		
3		You know, it's not something these are not judgements	3		
4		you can make without very close interaction with the	4		
5		different contracting parties in a way that the panel	5		
6		could not itself have achieved because of the time	6		
7		constraints.	7		
8		So that these are judgements that came from PA, we	8		
9		discussed them with PA, we saw no reason to depart from	9		
10		those judgements and because there was a concern to have	10		
11		a panel report rather than another report from PA, as	11		
12		you've already highlighted, we adopted those conclusions	12	Α.	
13		for the purposes of our panel report.	13	Q.	
14		Now so if you look at most of the text of the	14	Α.	
15		report, from memory now, I think from paragraphs 14 to	15		
16		99, these were drawn from PA's findings. As I said,	16		
17		I prepared the front few pages, the introduction, and	17		
18		the summary of findings, and annex A, which deals with	18		
19		the way forward. I had also I did prepare that,	19		
20		again including some findings from PA. But the text of	20		
21		the report broadly comes from PA.	21		
22	Q.		22	Q.	
23		paragraph 25, that says:	23		
		"The main prohitectural issues are coalchility and	04		
24		"The main architectural issues are scalability and	24		
24 25		robustness." 75	24 25	Α.	

1		powerfulness of PA's conclusions.
2		But the backbone of this report was PA's own advice
3		to the panel.
4	Q.	If we go back to page 3, the findings there, that it's
5		technically viable, is that your language or is that
6		PA's language?
7	Α.	Well, I think that is probably my language, because
8		I think I wrote the conclusions, but it was on the basis
9		of the later paragraphs in the panel's report which were
10		adopted from PA's own findings given to us.
11	Q.	The finding that the programme is "technically viable",
12		and then in the next bullet point that "the basic
13		infrastructure is very robust for the future", is there
14		an intentionally different form of words used in those
15		two bullet points?
16	Α.	I think if you go further into the report I mean,
17		this is essentially a summary of the findings of the
18		report. If you go further into the report, you'll see
19		on pages 11 and 12 you may want to go there, but it's
20		helpful to look at it now.
21	Q.	Yes, perhaps paragraph 22 might be the starting point.
22	Α.	Very good. It's to go back to the provenance of this
23		report, as I said, the members of the panel were
24		slightly distant from the detailed investigations,
25		because it was PA that carried out those investigations, 74

1		Or the paragraph below, the final sentence:
2		"We therefore assess the risk of the entire solution
3		failing to operate as expected to be as low as could be
4		achieved in the circumstances."
5		And the following paragraph, which says,
6		for example, that:
7		" there is a concern that the system is
8		(necessarily) heavily dependent on the third party
9		middleware product 'Riposte'."
10		Are those kinds of findings ones that were made by
11		PA rather than yourself?
12	Α.	Yes.
13	Q.	Would you have scrutinised PA's report in that respect?
14	Α.	Yes, obviously. So we had this report from PA, there
15		would have been a dialogue between me, in the first
16		instance, and then the panel around the observations and
17		the conclusions, and then, as I said, I would have
18		prepared I did prepare the first draft of the
19		panel report, and that would have been circulated to the
20		other members of the panel for their comments, and then
21		sent to the sponsors, the inter-ministerial committee.
22	Q.	Those kinds of issues that are highlighted on this page
23		that we see now, were they a cause for concern at all at
24		the time?
25	Α.	Erm no, I think we'll come to this. I think that 76

1		the prevailing mood, I think, in the sponsors and in PA
2		and in the panel, was of concern at the way the
3		procurement was progressing, but I think none of the
4		very severe dysfunctionality that came to dog Horizon in
5		its later years, that was not apparent, I think, to any
6		of us.
7		If you remember, I said that the methodology of the
8		panel was that we relied on the sponsors to make
9		presentations to us. We would have created this list of
10		issues and then we remitted those lists of issues to PA
11		for detailed investigation. And so, I think, there was
12		concern as to the way that the procurement was
13		progressing, but none of the technical issues that came
14		to dog the project were apparent to us or brought to our
15		attention, I mean, either by the parties or by PA.
16	Q.	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
17		a thorough enough investigation?
18	Α.	
19		by the fact that PA had conducted a very intensive
20		investigation into the project a few months previously,
21		and, I mean, I think my expectation was that Mr Copping
22		would have refreshed those conclusions in dialogue with
23		the sponsors. I mean, I think in his evidence quite
24		a lot was made of the fact that he was not specifically
25		asked to make any enquiries. To be honest, I think 77
		11
1		affecting regarding technical viability; personally
2		I'd have thought it was likely he had a dialogue with
3		the in fact, I think at one stage he does say he had
4		a number of meetings with the project participants.
5		I think there must have been a flow of questions to and
6		
		fro.
7	Q.	I'm going to ask you about the use of your report. Can
8	Q.	I'm going to ask you about the use of your report. Can we look at BEIS0000418, please. I don't know if you saw
8 9		I'm going to ask you about the use of your report. Can we look at BEIS0000418, please. I don't know if you saw Mr Sibbick's evidence at all, from earlier
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1		I find it difficult to believe he did not make any
2		enquiries, because he knew the project so well. He was
3		going to give the panel a report on technical viability,
4		and, therefore, I think he would have at least needed to
5		have refreshed his discussions with the sponsors and
6		with ICL.
7	Q.	What is your view of the evidence that he has given to
8		the Inquiry in respect of the production of this report?
9	Α.	Well, I don't think he was specifically asked whether he
10		had produced this report or the report on which the
11		panel's findings were based. You know, it's 25 years
12		ago. I think it's perhaps a case that recollections may
13		differ. I mean, he's a very experienced consultant.
14		It's many years since I've spoken to him but he was very
15		professional, and I think he did do a good job for the
16		panel.
17	Q.	You say recollections differ; how so, in relation to
18		this particular event?
19	Α.	If you recall his evidence, I mean, he was asked
20		specifically a number of questions regarding his
21		interaction with ICL and BA and POCL during the process
22		of his investigations, and he said, I think in answer to
23		all of them, that he made he had not asked any
24		questions. He's a very experienced consultant, he has
		questions. The stat very experienced consultant, he has
25		a mandate from the panel to produce a report,
		a mandate from the panel to produce a report, 78
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25		a mandate from the panel to produce a report, 78
25 1		a mandate from the panel to produce a report, 78 a description of your report, do you think that that is
25 1 2 3 4		a mandate from the panel to produce a report, 78 a description of your report, do you think that that is an accurate summary of the findings that you made: "viable, robust and of a design which should accommodate future technological developments"?
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25 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Q. A.	a mandate from the panel to produce a report, 78 a description of your report, do you think that that is an accurate summary of the findings that you made: "viable, robust and of a design which should accommodate future technological developments"? I think what the report the panel report said was that we thought that the project was "technically viable", I don't think we specifically comment on its general robustness. And we said it had been future proofed. Now, that may be consonant with a description that the design should accommodate future technological developments, but I think this is a minister writing to a colleague, and I think some licence with the conclusions is only to be expected. As an Inquiry, we're interested in how this phrase "robust" keeps on cropping up over the years. Is it your evidence that your report did not pronounce it as "robust"? Yes.

- 22 you can point me to something that says the opposite,
- 23 I'll consider it, but I don't think so.
- 24 Q. In relation to the reference to independent experts, are
- you aware of any other independent experts having 25 80

1	propulsed anything in that kind of a pariod, as summar	1
2	pronounced anything in that kind of a period, so summer to December 1998, or is it likely that that is	1
2	a reference to your report?	3
4	A. I think the chronology suggests it is a reference to my	4
5	report. There was subsequently a review by, I think,	5
6	KPMG at Mr Corbett's behest, which came to conclusions	6
7	on all fours with the conclusions that the panel came	7
8	to.	8
9	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Sir Adrian, Mr Blake has told you we're	9
10	trying to find the origin of the word "robust" in the	10
11	context of Horizon. This may be an impossible question,	11
12	and please tell me if it is, but do you think that the	12
13	word "robust" in your report is a word you would have	13
14	chosen or a word you would have adopted?	14
15	A. I think it's probably a word that I would have adopted,	15
16	sir, but, you know, if we take a step back for a minute,	16
17	what I think we saw was a procurement in if I'm	17
18	honest, in disarray and difficulty. I've read some of	18
19	the technical evidence submitted to the panel, and	19
20	I find the lack of professionalism in ICL quite	20
21	disturbing. I think it was not obvious to us that that	21
22	was the case. I think ICL had a tendency to play its	22
23	cards quite close to its chest and I think it was	23
24	feeling slightly defensive about its ability to see this	24
25	through to the end.	25
	81	
1	A. No, I have not seen this.	1
2	Q. No. I'll take you to it very briefly and, please, if	2
3	you want to spend more time on it, I'm happy to, but	3
4	I don't think I need to for the purposes of the	4
5	question.	5
6	It says about halfway down that second paragraph:	6
7	"During the course of the Task Force it became clear	7
8	that there are significant deficiencies in the EPOSS	8
9	product, its code and design, and these are also	9
10	presented in this report."	10
11	If we go down to the "Management Summary" these	11
12	are just examples to give you a flavour of this	12
13	report it says:	13
14	"Before the EPOSS Task Force was initiated [so	14
15	that's pre-August 1998] the Counter Development Team	15
16	were immersed in a seemingly impossible task of dealing	16
17	with PinICLs [so incident reports] that were being	17
18	raised faster than they could be cleared."	18
19	Then perhaps we can go to page 7. There is	19
20	a section on the "EPOSS Code" that we've looked at in	20
21	quite a lot of detail in this Inquiry:	21
22	"It is clear that senior members of the Task Force	22
23	are extremely concerned about the quality of code in the	23
24	EPOSS product" et cetera et cetera	24

- 24 EPOSS product", et cetera, et cetera.25 Were these kinds of concerns brough
 - Were these kinds of concerns brought to your 83

1	But, again, I'd say that the defects that became
2	apparent later in the process were not obvious to people
3	at the time we made the report, certainly were not
4	obvious to the panel, and I think, if they had been
5	obvious to the parties, in the list of issues they were
6	going to prepare for the panel, I can't see any reason
7	why they would not have mentioned it.
8	And I believe that PA itself had no inkling of these
9	issues, so that they may have been they may have been
10	brewing in the undergrowth, but none of them were
11	apparent at this stage in the process.
12	MR BLAKE: While we're on that, perhaps I can take you to
13	FUJ00080690. This isn't a document that was in your
14	pack before the hearing today. It's not a document you
15	would have seen at all at the time, and it may be
16	something that you've seen following this Inquiry, and
17	it's a report of something called the EPOSS PinICL
18	Taskforce at ICL. It was a taskforce that, as it says
19	there, took place between 19 August and 18 September
20	1998, and a PinICL is effectively an incident report
21	within ICL.
22	Can we very briefly look at page 4, please. In the
23	"Introduction" there, this should give you enough
24	flavour. I don't know if this is something you have
25	seen mentioned at all during this Inquiry or 82

1		attention in the summer of 1998?
2	Α.	No, I think, to be clear, the taskforce here is
2	~.	a different taskforce from the Treasury taskforce
4	Q.	-
•		Oh, absolutely.
5	Α.	That's just worth clarifying.
6	Q.	Yes.
7	Α.	The answer is no. No, these were not brought to our
8		attention. I mean, I think again it's worth a comment,
9		because I think in processes of developing, you know,
10		software and detailed design, incidents will occur and,
11		you know, they have to be dealt with in order of
12		priority, and there's clearly an avalanche of incidents
13		for ICL here. And I think it perhaps takes time before
14		how they interact together becomes apparent.
15		Now, this was the sort of information which it would
16		have been very valuable for the taskforce sorry, for
17		the panel to have, and it is the sort of information
18		which one would have hoped, had it been available at the
19		time, the parties brought to the panel in the list of
20		issues to be considered, but it was not the case.
21	Q.	Thank you. Perhaps we can look at page 18 of that
22		report to give you a little more flavour. It says:
23		"Whoever wrote this code clearly has no
24		understanding of elementary mathematics or the most
25		basic rules of programming."
		84

1		That's in reference to one example of code.	1
2		Can we go back to your report at POL00028094 and	2
3		look at page 32. This is a list of meetings that you	3
4		had with ICL and POCL. So am I right to say that, as	4
5		your panel, you sat and I think you've referred today	5
6		already to presentations that were made. So on 11 May	6
7		there was the initial presentation by all parties; there	7
8		were then private presentations of issues by parties on	8
9 10		11 May; 19 May, presentations of parties' business	9
10		cases; 28 May, demonstration to the panel of Horizon	10
11 12		products; 8 June, final presentations by the parties; and then, 11 June, presentation to parties of panel's	11 12
12		initial findings.	12
13		Did ICL give you any inkling, at this time so	13
14		quite close in proximity to that taskforce of those	14
16		kinds of issues that they were experiencing?	16
17	Α.	No, they didn't.	10
18	Q.	Should they have?	18
19	Q. A.	I think it depends on their state of knowledge regarding	10
20	Λ.	these incidents. I mean, I note that the report you	20
21		referred to a moment ago was dated in September. This	21
22		was five months previously. Things probably developed	22
23		quite quickly. If there had been, I think,	23
_0 24		a significant possibility that the code could be	24
25		dysfunctional, you would certainly have hoped that, in	25
		85	
1		the report that we had, they'd have needed to interact,	1
2		to use a neutral word, with ICL, and they were much	2
3		closer to the detail than the panel could possibly have	3
4		been.	4
5		But, equally, you know, they're not all seeing, all	5
6		knowing either, so they're rather dependent on what	6
7		people tell them. I mean, they could have and clearly	7
8		they did make detailed enquiries because, otherwise, you	8
9		know, the detailed list of recommendations could not	9
10		have been produced by the panel. So they've obviously	10
11		had an interaction with Pathway. And, as I say, I don't	11
12		think I don't think it could have been disclosed at	12
13		this stage, (inaudible) at this stage.	13
14	Q.	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	14
15		report was produced. Can we look at HMT00000021,	15
16		please. Thank you very much. This is a note from you	16
17		to Harry Bush, Harry Bush being in the Treasury?	17
18	Α.		18
19		who was, I think, in charge of this project and who was	19
20		the person who had invited me to attend that first	20
21	~	meeting in March.	21
22	Q.	Thank you.	22
23		So this is 6 July 1998, and your report was produced	23
24 25	^	in July 1998, this came after your report was provided?	24
25	Α.	Certainly after the initial findings had been 87	25
		.	

I		all candour, they would have mentioned it. And you
2		would have if the parties had had that inkling, you'd
3		have expected them to mention it. I mean, I think the
4		difficulty is the panel the panel was a recipient of
5		all these advices from the parties and our job, with the
6		assistance of PA, was to try to assess them overall.
7		I think there was probably an element of
8		salesmanship, defensive positioning on ICL's part.
9		I don't recall the precise interactions between us and
10		the parties in those sessions that you referred to.
11		Unfortunately, I don't think any of the documents have
12		survived. But I expect they were, you know, reasonably
13		detailed presentations. But I think in ICL's case,
14		I think it will be natural that they put slightly
15		a positive spin on events.
16	Q.	Were PA Consulting tasked with finding out, under the
17		spin, the truth of the matter?
18	Α.	Well, you know, we asked them to give us material that
19		we could use in the panel report in the areas that
20		they've covered in their own report and, you know, they
21		were tasked with advising the panel regarding the
22		technical viability of the project. I think I think
23		they were themselves, you know, looking at it with the
24		benefit of the detailed report they'd done the previous
25		year. As I've said, I think that, in order to complete
		86
1		communicated to the parties. I've seen somewhere
2		a suggestion that my the panel report is not
3		available until 22 July. It was some time in July.
4		There may have been a draft available at this point.
	~	
5	Q.	Thank you.
6		I'll just read a little bit from paragraph 1, it
7		says:
8		"This minute addresses three issues what we should
9		be doing to try to stabilise the Horizon programme in
10		the short term to prevent any further deterioration
11		pending Ministers' decisions, whether there is any
12		compromise between Option 1 and Option 2 which might
13		command the support of both BA and POCL, and who the
14		troubleshooter might be."
15		We have heard a lot about this period, I don't want
16		to spend any time on it really, can you briefly
17		summarise for us what was going on at a political level
18		in July 1998 with regards to various options?
	٨	
19	Α.	I think the political level was not visible to me.
20		I mean, I think that the background to this note was
~ 1		C C
21		that I think we must have had a meeting with POCL and
21 22 23		C C

all candour, they would have mentioned it. And you

- 23 we told them about our initial findings. I think it's
- 24 clear -- and to be clear, you know, the way forward that
- we suggested was going to involve some pain on the part 25 88

1		of all three of the parties to the transaction.	1
2		And what we were trying to do was to find a way	2
3		forward that was kept the greatest value for money	3
4		and involved the least disturbance, and so we did opt	4
5		for what's known as option 1, the continuation of the	5
6		project with some changes. And I think we must have	6
7		discussed this with the Benefits Agency and, not to put	7
8		too fine a point on it, they were having none of it.	8 9
9 10		You know, we had got to the stage where the Benefits	9 10
10		Agency were far removed from their the support they must have given the project at the outset, because it	10
12		was a joint procurement, and had moved to the point	12
12			12
13		where they had a strong preference for ACT, Automatic Credit Transfer, and they weren't going to willingly	13
14		compromise.	14
16		So I think, you know, after that meeting, I was	15
17		really rehearsing with Harry Bush whether there was any	10
18		alternative that might allow us to cut through this	18
19		logjam on the public sector side.	10
20	Q.	Can we look at the first bullet point, please, if we	20
20 21	Q.	could scroll down slightly. I'm going to read what it	20
21		says there for the purpose of the record, it says:	21
23		"The Panel report has a list of actions which need	23
24		to be completed by the end of July. Some of these	23
25		presuppose ministerial decisions one way or the other,	25
20		89	20
1		the conclusion the panel report, the leadership in the	1
2		discussions switched back to the officials in all three	2
3		Departments who had had the conduct of it prior to the	3
4		panel, and I think this was slightly outside my brief.	4
5	Q.	It may have been outside your brief but it looks there	5
6		as though you are suggesting that there needs to be more	6
7		follow-up once your report has concluded; is that a fair	7
8		summary of that paragraph?	8
9	Α.	Well, it is indeed a fair summary. You know, I think	9
10		that the Treasury's way of working tends to sit over the	10
11		Departments and check that the Departments are handling	11
12		things effectively. It's quite rare for the Treasury to	12
13		take the lead in assuming control over the process, and	13
14		I think I was perhaps outside my brief in assuming that	14
15		that could be done.	15
16	Q.	When you wrote your report, did you see that as	16
17		a snapshot in time, or did you see it as something that	17
18		could be used for the next six months, a year	18
19	Α.	I think it was inevitably a snapshot in time, because,	19
20		you know, the fundamental tenet of that report was that	20
21		it interacted with the submission of the parties and the	21
22		report of PA, and things were moving evidently quite	22
23		fast and, therefore, I think it would need to have been	23
24		refreshed over the months that followed.	24
25	Q.	Do you think that that was clear to those who were	25
		91	

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 2 13 14 15		and will therefore have to be put to one side for the time being (essentially those affecting the 'strategic issues'), but many of the actions relating to the critical or operational issues will adversely impact the future timing of the programme if they are not pushed through on a timely basis. We need to frogmarch the parties into resolving these issues. To encourage them to do so, we discussed a weekly forum to monitor progress. This might meet [for want of a better alternative] under our chairmanship, and might be informed by a hands-on monitoring role on the part of PA. I have spoken to Peter Copping about this and he has sent in a proposal, which I attach. The price is significant, and we need to consider whether the role represents value for money."
16		So you're there proposing a hands-on role by
17		a technical expert, is it?
18	Α.	Erm, I think it would need it would need to have had
19		direct official input to command the right degree of
20		authority, but clearly a technical expert would have
21		been invaluable to help the chairman, whoever it was
22		going to be, conduct the forum effectively.
23	Q.	Do you know if that role actually was established?
24	Α.	I don't know. I mean, I think I was a bit outside my
25		brief in making this suggestion. You know, I think with 90
1		involved in the project?
2	Α.	I honestly can't tell you that. I mean, I think one of
3 4		the challenges of the public sector is that, sometimes, these reports occupy a terribly important part of the
4 5		debate and you don't continually ask yourself how the
6		situation has evolved. So but I think it did come to
7		have a slightly totemic value.
' 8	Q.	Can we look at page 4 of this note, please, and it's the
9	ω.	final paragraph. Thank you.
10		We have heard a little bit about the role of
11		Graham Corbett. Can you tell us a little bit about that
12		and how he was chosen?
13	Α.	Well, I think recognising that any of the options we had
14		considered would require some difficult decisions to be
15		taken by all the parties, I thought we believed that the
16		intervention of a third-party troubleshooter with
17		a mandate to try to provide an acceptable way forward
18		for all parties or an acceptable way forward, not
19		an ideal way forward would be a useful contribution.
20		And so the troubleshooter was recommended, suggested in
21		the panel report and then the question was: who should
22		the troubleshooter be?
23		As I said in this note, Steve Robson came up with
24		the idea of Graham Corbett. I had known Graham Corbett
25		quite well in the past, because he had been the finance

1		director of CFO of Eurotunnel, and he's a very robust
2		character he was a very robust character, so
3		I thought in terms of someone who'd be able to immerse
4		himself in the detail, financial details in particular,
5		of the procurement at the time that it's it was
6		you know, at this time. I thought he would have,
7		potentially have a very positive influence on the
8		outcome.
9	Q.	You have said that he may be able to "knock heads
10		together if the parties are unable to hammer out
11		a detailed commercial solution for themselves". I think
12		you also noted that he wasn't, in brackets, about
13		halfway down that paragraph, he's not, as far as you
14		know, in the IT field. Was his report intended to be
15		a look into the IT side?
16	Α.	Not so far as I'm aware. I didn't see his terms of
17		reference. Indeed, I wasn't connected I wasn't
18		concerned with his report. I do not believe he would
19		have held himself out as having any capability to
20		address technical details, but he's fundamentally
21		a financial and a commercial man, and his role could
22		have been very decisive, I think.
23	Q.	Thank you very much.
23	ч.	Can we look at POL00028098, please. Perhaps we
24		could go to page 3. This is his report. Did you see
25		93
		00
1		of the Horizon Programme Office now situated within
1 2		of the Horizon Programme Office now situated within POCL, and with PA Consulting keeping close to and
		C C
2		POCL, and with PA Consulting keeping close to and
2 3		POCL, and with PA Consulting keeping close to and guiding their discussions. PA's final report as of
2 3 4		POCL, and with PA Consulting keeping close to and guiding their discussions. PA's final report as of 14 October is attached at Annex E together with the HPO's high level end-to-end plan for the programme which
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	Q.	POCL, and with PA Consulting keeping close to and guiding their discussions. PA's final report as of 14 October is attached at Annex E together with the HPO's high level end-to-end plan for the programme which has been signed off by all parties. Attention is drawn to the generally encouraging overall summary at the end of the PA report, but also to the continuing high risk area of acceptance procedures, both the definition of the tests themselves and the consequences of failure." Perhaps we can look at their report, it's at page 32. I don't need to go into this in any detail, but perhaps we can look at this very briefly and also over the page. Were you aware, at that stage, that PA had carried out this work? Erm I don't have any very clear memory of it. I may have been. It looks there to be quite a high level analysis. Could we look at the page before, please? Thank you very much. Did you have in mind something more significant than this kind of work when you referred to hands-on monitoring?

1		his report at the time?
2	Α.	l can't remember. I may have done.
3	Q.	Okay. I'll only look at it very briefly. It starts
4		there with "Background", it says:
5		"On 17 September [this is to the chief secretary to
6		the Treasury] you appointed me as independent adviser to
7		this project with the terms of reference set out in
8 9		annex A and B [and something] with a reporting date of 16 October."
10		So, again, this is a very short timescale for
11		a report, similar to yours in many ways, in terms of the
12		timescale?
13	Α.	In terms of timescale, I think he was under probably
14		even greater pressure than the panel was to come up with
15		some findings. I think it has a slightly different
16		focus, because, as he says in that first paragraph, he
17		had been unable to reach agreement on a commercial basis
18		for proceeding, so I think that was clearly the focus of
19		his efforts.
20	Q.	Can we look at page 6, please. At the bottom of that
21		page, it sets out another role for PA Consulting. It
22		says:
23		"Soon after my appointment we established a working
24		group of the programme directors from each of the
25		parties working under the chairmanship of the Director
25		parties working under the chairmanship of the Director 94
25		
25		
		94
1		94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart
1 2		94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart commercially. You know, there may be unclear technical
1 2 3		94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart commercially. You know, there may be unclear technical issues, and, I mean, I think it's characteristic of
1 2 3 4		94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart commercially. You know, there may be unclear technical issues, and, I mean, I think it's characteristic of those projects, shared by this project, that there's a sort of denial, a refusal to get down to basics and understand precisely what the issues are.
1 2 3 4 5		94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart commercially. You know, there may be unclear technical issues, and, I mean, I think it's characteristic of those projects, shared by this project, that there's a sort of denial, a refusal to get down to basics and
1 2 3 4 5 6		94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart commercially. You know, there may be unclear technical issues, and, I mean, I think it's characteristic of those projects, shared by this project, that there's a sort of denial, a refusal to get down to basics and understand precisely what the issues are. And I think what you need is what Graham Corbett provided on a commercial basis for a short period of
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart commercially. You know, there may be unclear technical issues, and, I mean, I think it's characteristic of those projects, shared by this project, that there's a sort of denial, a refusal to get down to basics and understand precisely what the issues are. And I think what you need is what Graham Corbett provided on a commercial basis for a short period of time, which is a heavyweight who takes the chair, forces
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart commercially. You know, there may be unclear technical issues, and, I mean, I think it's characteristic of those projects, shared by this project, that there's a sort of denial, a refusal to get down to basics and understand precisely what the issues are. And I think what you need is what Graham Corbett provided on a commercial basis for a short period of time, which is a heavyweight who takes the chair, forces people to confront the issues, and does bang heads
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17	Q.	94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart commercially. You know, there may be unclear technical issues, and, I mean, I think it's characteristic of those projects, shared by this project, that there's a sort of denial, a refusal to get down to basics and understand precisely what the issues are. And I think what you need is what Graham Corbett provided on a commercial basis for a short period of time, which is a heavyweight who takes the chair, forces people to confront the issues, and does bang heads together. That's the way you rescue a project. I didn't see any of that, well, at any time really, in the autumn of 1998. That's what was required. That's essentially what the panel had suggested. Thank you. Can we look at POL00031114, please. Now, you well, I'll ask you actually. Are you aware of a further
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 2 3 14 15 16 17 18	Q.	94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart commercially. You know, there may be unclear technical issues, and, I mean, I think it's characteristic of those projects, shared by this project, that there's a sort of denial, a refusal to get down to basics and understand precisely what the issues are. And I think what you need is what Graham Corbett provided on a commercial basis for a short period of time, which is a heavyweight who takes the chair, forces people to confront the issues, and does bang heads together. That's the way you rescue a project. I didn't see any of that, well, at any time really, in the autumn of 1998. That's what was required. That's essentially what the panel had suggested. Thank you. Can we look at POL00031114, please. Now, you well, I'll ask you actually. Are you aware of a further report that was carried out by Project Mentors? Perhaps
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	Q.	94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart commercially. You know, there may be unclear technical issues, and, I mean, I think it's characteristic of those projects, shared by this project, that there's a sort of denial, a refusal to get down to basics and understand precisely what the issues are. And I think what you need is what Graham Corbett provided on a commercial basis for a short period of time, which is a heavyweight who takes the chair, forces people to confront the issues, and does bang heads together. That's the way you rescue a project. I didn't see any of that, well, at any time really, in the autumn of 1998. That's what was required. That's essentially what the panel had suggested. Thank you. Can we look at POL00031114, please. Now, you well, I'll ask you actually. Are you aware of a further report that was carried out by Project Mentors? Perhaps we could go over the page. This is a summary of the
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 2 3 14 15 16 17 18	Q.	94 speaking, you know, the parties are a long way apart commercially. You know, there may be unclear technical issues, and, I mean, I think it's characteristic of those projects, shared by this project, that there's a sort of denial, a refusal to get down to basics and understand precisely what the issues are. And I think what you need is what Graham Corbett provided on a commercial basis for a short period of time, which is a heavyweight who takes the chair, forces people to confront the issues, and does bang heads together. That's the way you rescue a project. I didn't see any of that, well, at any time really, in the autumn of 1998. That's what was required. That's essentially what the panel had suggested. Thank you. Can we look at POL00031114, please. Now, you well, I'll ask you actually. Are you aware of a further report that was carried out by Project Mentors? Perhaps

21 "As you will see, all three of Andrew's team [that's
22 Project Mentors] are (I quote from Andrew's letter to
23 me) 'deeply concerned that their findings show a serious
24 problem with the way in which ICL Pathway have developed
25 the system. The impact of this is likely to be that
96

1		there will be failures to meet essential user	1 2			
2		requirements, causing the need for extensive re-work				
3		before the system can be accepted and, potentially,				
4		operational problems if the system is rolled out."				
5	That is eight days after the letter that I showed					
6		you earlier from Peter Mandelson, referring to the	6			
7		system as "robust".	7			
8		Were you aware at this stage or at any other stage	8			
9		of a further review being undertaken into Horizon,	9			
10		a further technical analysis such as this?	10			
11 12	A.	I was not aware of the Project	11 12			
12	Q.	Mentors.	12			
13	A.	Mentors report, until it landed on my desk last week. Yes. Were you aware of any other significant report,	13			
14	Q.	prior to the rollout of Horizon, into the robustness or	14			
16		reliability of Horizon?	15			
17	Α.	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	10			
18		because, you know, in the autumn of 1998 my involvement	18			
19		was significantly less than it had been during the	10			
20		summer.	20			
20	Q.		20			
22	ч.	1999 with the Horizon project?	22			
23	Α.		23			
24		act as a commercial facilitator at one stage. This is	24			
25		in December, I think, 1998. And I'll go back	25			
		97				
1		Looy Lood not occur that conact until loot wook	1	,		
1 2	мр	I say, I had not seen that report until last week. BLAKE: Thank you.		(N		
2	WIN	Sir, I have about ten more minutes of questions, so	3			
4		I'm going to continue, unless you feel we need a break.		S		
5	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Well, as it happens, I would quite like		N		
6	0	a short comfort break, but I literally mean short, so	6			
7		all wait for me to disappear and then return in a minute	7			
8		or two, if that's all right.	8	4		
9	MR	BLAKE: You may not be the only one. Perhaps if we break	9			
10		for ten minutes, but then we'll sit through lunch,		C		
11		because I won't be very long at all.	11			
12	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Are there any questions other than yours,	12			
13		Mr Blake?	13			
14	MR	BLAKE: I think it's unlikely. Mr Stein looks like he	14			
15		may but, if he does, it will be brief, I'm sure.	15			
16	MR	STEIN: Sir, if I can just add, we may have one question	16	ŀ		
17		but I may be able to discuss that with Mr Blake so that	17			
18		we can deal with it.	18			
19	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Let's have five minutes for my comfort	19			
20		and everyone else's who needs it, and then we'll carry	20			
21		on.	21			
22	MR	BLAKE: Thank you very much.	22			
22 23		BLAKE: Thank you very much. Perhaps I may join you, sir.	22 23			
	Α.					

1	slightly.
2	I think there were four attempts to secure
3	a financial accommodation with ICL during the autumn.
4	Graham Corbett's was the first. There was then a letter
5	from the chief secretary, I believe, to ICL saying
6	"You've got to come up with some sensible proposals".
7	ICL responded. The proposals were not regarded as
8	sensible or acceptable. There was a last ditch
9	negotiation, which I think I was involved in. I have no
10	memory of what happened in that at that stage. And
11	then, finally, just before Christmas, probably under
12	extreme pressure, ICL volunteered some further
13	reductions. But these were negotiations really
14	conducted at a high commercial level, and did not
15	involve any recalibration of the technical assessments.
16	I think this is quite an interesting note, again
17	I hadn't seen it, but I think it's a sort of
18	pre-litigation note. It's written under the cover of
19	the legal advisers' correspondence. I'm sure it's
20	accurate. I mean, I think it's perhaps viewed from
21	a litigation perspective, you'd expect it, I think, to
22	be quite critical of ICL, it obviously is quite critical
23	of ICL. I think some of the evidence I have seen since,
24	in the earlier phases of this Inquiry, now suggest that
25	the observations may well have been accurate. But, as 98

(1.03 pm)

MR BLAKE: Thank you very much, sir. Can you see and hear me? SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I can, thank you. MR BLAKE: Thank you. I'm going to ask you a few questions about PFI. Was this the largest PFI project you dealt with? A. No, there were quite a few larger than this, it was probably the largest IT project. Q. A witness that we've heard from, Mr Folkes from the Post Office, has described PFI as creating a black box where the service provider's job was to ensure it created the right output but the contents of the box weren't available, so how it worked, how it was built. Do you agree with that? A. No, not really. I think I said earlier on that the task of the procuring authorities in a PFI project is to be absolutely specific regarding their requirements. Now, I think the philosophy of PFI is, with a very specific output specification in front of them, it is for the contractor to decide how to achieve that specification. But that does not mean that the procuring authority

- sort of goes away and comes back again in four years' time. The procuring authority should reserve to itself
- rights to check progress, to be informed as to the way

1	in which the detailed engineering phase is being
2	undertaken, and there should be check points where the
3	contractor has got to produce evidence of testing or
4	evidence of how the specification is being undertaken.
5	So the essential difference is that the contractor
6	has probably a greater influence over its methods of
7	working than you would necessarily expect in
8	a conventional procurement, but it should not mean that
9	the procuring authority has no control of it.
10	There was, as an example, in PFI a very strong
11	procurement, at around the same time, handled by the
12	Treasury taskforce, and it concerned the Department of
13	Treasury, the National Savings.
14	It was a business transformation project, it was not
15	of the same scale as Horizon, but it was very
16	complicated because it involved the transfer to
17	a private sector contractor of the majority of national
18	savings business processes, so a large element of
19	re-computerisation, a large transfer of civil servants
20	into the private sector.
21	This transaction was reviewed by the National Audit
22	Office and was commended as the right approach to
23	transactions of this sort. It's clear that Horizon was,
24	you know, conducted at an earlier phase when there was
25	less understanding of what made for a good PFI project, 101

1	Q.		lack	of	sharing?
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- 2 **A.** No.
- Q. There were renegotiations about the contract when the
 Benefits Agency had pulled out of the project. Was
 increasing access to information from ICL something that
- 6 was raised with you at the time or discussed at all?
- 7 A. I wasn't a part of those negotiations, so I'm afraid8 I can't answer the question.
- 9 Q. Do you think that a project of this kind was suited to10 PFI?
- A. I think the experience of PFI generally -- I'll come
 back to the specific question -- the experience of PFI
 generally is that it required a good deal of
 sophistication on the part of the procuring authorities.
 Dealing with PFI was not a job that many civil servants
- had training in or experience of and, therefore, a very
 important role was taken by the financial advisers to
- 18 help them structure a procurement effectively, and there
- 19 were some procurements where the Treasury taskforce
- acted as a sort of in-house adviser to the Departmentconcerned, and when you had the right combination of
- 22 experienced civil servants, the right calibre of
- 23 financial advice, and sometimes the involvement of the
- 24 Taskforce, then I think projects could come to fruition
- 25 very successfully.

- 1 but I think "black box" is too simplistic a description. 2 Q. I think you explained at the beginning of your evidence 3 that you were quite critical of the negotiation process. 4 Did you think at the time -- were you aware of concerns 5 about the sharing of information --6 Α. No, I think I was -- I mean, you asked me general 7 questions, which didn't specifically focus on my state 8 of knowledge regarding the negotiations but, in view of 9 what I know now, I would have been critical of them 10 because I think they were -- they failed to take 11 advantage of the fact that, in a PFI project, until the 12 contracts are signed, the balance of negotiating 13 advantage is always with the procurer because the contractor wants the business. Afterwards the balance 14 15 shifts a bit towards the contractor. 16 So is it your view that contractual provisions regarding Q. 17 the sharing of information should have been agreed at 18 an early stage? 19 A. I think the full scope of the intervention that 20 a procuring authority might want to make during the course of production of the platform, production of 21
- 22 Horizon, that ought to have been specified.
- 23 Q. Were you aware at the time of concerns about the sharing
 24 of information or --
- 25 **A.** No.

1		I mean, an example is the Prison Service, which
2		conducted PFI procurements to the same model over five
3		or six different, usually, prisons and, by the time they
4		got to the end of this, they were a cracking good
5		procurement unit because they had all the experience,
6		they had all the contacts, they were very effective.
7		But first time procurements with inexperienced civil
8		servants, perhaps with the wrong calibre of financial
9		advice I don't know who gave the financial advice on
10		this project and a lack of determination to extract
11		maximum advantage from the opposition as the procurer
12		before signing, that's a recipe for a bad outcome.
13	Q.	The Chair will, in due course, be considering
14		recommendations to make to avoid problems in the future.
15		Is there something that you can identify in that regard,
16		with regard to the PFI project, that should be avoided
17		in the future or that should be done better in the
18		future?
19	Α.	I can think of lots of things. I mean, PFI has rather
20		fallen out of fashion, I think because of indifferent
21		quality of execution of these projects. I think that
22		the well-executed projects are outstanding, the badly
23		executed projects have attracted all the adverse
24		commentary. I think it is a combination of experience
25		in the Civil Service to manage these procurements, the 104

1		right calibre of financial advice, an understanding of
2		the risks you're trying to transfer, and an awareness of
3		how you control this transfer during procurement.
4		I might point you perhaps to the National Savings
5		outsourcing, where the NAO reviewed it in detail and
6		came up with a number of positive recommendations.
7	Q.	We discussed earlier that part of the PFI contract was
8		for the contractor to bear the risks, and that, as we've
9		heard, was one of the reasons why ICL won the project in
10		the first place. Were you aware in 1998 of ICL
11		demanding a positive return on their investment and
12		a shift away from that risk-based model?
13	Α.	Well, the financial negotiations in the autumn of 1998
14		clearly showed that ICL wanted to repair its finances
15		and secure improvements in the financial terms to
16		achieve a positive NPV, and I think the interactions
17		that Graham Corbett had with ICL were quite important
18		because they showed a reluctance on the part of the
19		public sector parties to go as far as ICL was seeking.
20	Q.	Do you think that, ultimately, ICL obtained the benefits
21		from PFI, in respect of determining the solution but
22		without ultimately bearing the risks?
23	Α.	I think you'd have to ask ICL that. I'm afraid I can't
24	_	comment.
25	Q.	Did you have an opinion at the time? 105
		103
1		certainly not aware of them.
2	Q.	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
3		you were asked to look into as part of your report?
4	Α.	No.
5	Q.	You left the project in the New Year of 1999, and Steve
6		Robson took over, as you've explained. Who was Steve
7		Robson?
8	Α.	Steve Robson, I think he was the Second Permanent
9	_	Secretary at the Treasury.
10	Q.	Why was he a suitable person to take over?
11	Α.	Well, I mean, the panel will be taking evidence from him
12		in a few days' time, you'll make your own judgements of
13		his suitability. He is an extraordinary civil servant,
14		very senior, very experienced, very clear in his
15		judgements. I think if anyone had had the opportunity to turn this around, it would have been Steve Robson.
16		to turn this around. It would have been Steve Robson.
	~	
10 17 18	Q.	Thank you. I don't have any further questions. Is there anything that you would like to say at this stage?

19	Α.	No, I've already, I think, expressed the sympathy I feel
10	~ .	ite, i ve alleady, i allink, expressed the sympathy i leer

- 20 for the subpostmasters and subpostmistresses. Some of
- 21 the evidence in the first phase was truly distressing,
- 22 and painted a very vivid picture of the way that they
- 23 had suffered under this procurement. They have my
- 24 sympathy.
- 25 MR BLAKE: Sir, do you have any questions? 107

1	Α.	Well, you know, I wasn't surprised that ICL were					
2		projecting to suffer a considerable loss on the					
3		contract. They had clearly underestimated the risk.					
4		I mean, the Project Mentors report shows that they were					
5		ill prepared for the size of the task that faced them.					
6		They were unprofessional in the way they handled it.					
7		None of this was apparent earlier in 1998 and so					
8		it's not a surprise that they were going to suffer					
9		a loss. It's not a surprise that they were trying to					
10		recover it. I think, you know, successive rounds of					
11		negotiation were quite robust in denying ICL the extent					
12		of the improvements in their finances that they were					
13		claiming, but ICL was on the hook for this contract.					
14		I can comment until, I think, Christmas 1998. When					
15		Steve Robson took over the baton in early 1999, I had					
16		I was copied in on some of the documents, although					
17		I really had no continuing involvement with their					
18		discussions.					
19	Q.	I want to ask you about prosecutions. Did you give any					
20		thought as to the Post Office's prosecutions of					
21		individuals using data from Horizon during your					
22		involvement in the project?					
23	Α.	None at all. I mean, I I don't think that we were					
24		aware at this stage I don't understand if there were					
25		prosecutions at this stage but, if there were, we were 106					

1	Questioned by SIR WYN WILLIAMS
2	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, only to ask you, Sir Adrian: you
3	gave a brief summary of what might be called the hints
4	of recommendations in respect of PFI contracts in
5	general terms and what we might learn from the Horizon
6	PFI in particular.
7	If in due course I were to ask you to make a written
8	statement about such matters, would that appal you or
9	would you co-operate?
10	A. I would certainly co-operate, and it would be
11	a pleasure, sir.
12	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you.
13	A. I have some very firm views on what makes for a good
14	procurement and a bad procurement.
15	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So I've gathered.
16	Thank you very much for making your witness
17	statement and for coming to answer the questions this
18	morning. I'm grateful to you.
19	A. Thank you.
20	MR BLAKE: Thank you very much, sir, we're back on Tuesday.
21	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I believe that is the case, Mr Blake, and
22	10.00 on Tuesday, yes?
23	MR BLAKE: Thank you very much.
24	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much, everyone.
25	(1.17 pm)
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