

[REDACTED]

14. Less impressive has been progress on privatisation by which the Estonians set great store. In mid-year the State Property Band and the Privatisation Board were merged but the new Privatisation Agency has not yet bedded down. There is much incompetence and corruption: several deals have had to be cancelled which has proved an embarrassment. What the Agency really needs is a stronger Minister at the helm than the present Minister of Reform, nice lady though she is.

OBJECTIVES

15. We are on course to achieve these. In December we started issuing visas to resident visa nationals. After a slow start we are getting more applicants. After UK training for my LE Commercial officer, we are now able to offer an improved service to British and Estonian businessmen.

16. I am copying this despatch to HM Ambassadors in Moscow, Riga, Vilnius, Helsinki, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Kiev, Minsk, UK Rep Brussels, UKDEL NATO, UKMIS New York and Washington.

I am Sir
Yours faithfully



B B Low