

CIVIL SERVICE MANPOWER CUTS

The Government believes it is in the national interest to reduce the role of government in our lives. It is also determined to control public spending so that more of our resources can be concentrated in those areas which will lead to real economic growth. The announcement yesterday (Thursday 6 December) by Lord Soames, Lord President of the Council, of substantial cuts in the Civil Service, is an important contribution to both these objectives. Our aim is to cut out unnecessary bureaucracy, which the country does not want and cannot afford.

Already this year 20,000 civil service posts have been cut. And a further 40,000 are to go by 1982/3. 40,000 fewer civil servants represents a saving of about £212 million a year. That is no small saving. And it is not the end.

More savings are expected from reviews now going on in some Departments (MOD, DOE, DHSS) but which are not yet completed. And Sir Derek Rayner, the Managing Director of Marks & Spencer, is already helping us achieve greater economy and efficiency in central Government administration. 30 separate Rayner projects are already completed or near completion in different Departments. They are only the start. The Government has now embarked on a rolling programme of such projects in all Departments with the aim of asking (a) Why is this job done at all? (b) Could it be done in a more economical and efficient way? And arrangements have also been made to see that the cost-cutting lessons learned in one part of the Service are applied elsewhere.

This is not an attack on the Civil Service. The cuts in staff are strictly related to cuts in functions. And these have been carefully selected on their merits. The targets have been services which are not essential or are better left for others to do. Most if not all the cuts in staff should be achieved by natural wastage.

Our prime concern is to ease the cost of central Government administration on the country and to ensure that the tax-payer gets value for money.

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civil service Manpower file

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cc Mr Peterson

Mrs Miller CSD.

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR DEFENSIVE USE AT LOBBY

Reductions in Civil Service Manpower

Those on the public pay roll located at 10 Downing Street are a part of the Civil Service Department's complement.

Such staff serving the current Prime Minister show a reduction of seven from the complement at the beginning of 1979. The reductions are one Private Secretary post, two Press Office posts, and a Policy Unit which is two posts smaller (and one of the remaining Policy Unit posts is now part-time). Two supporting staff members have also been saved alongside these reductions.

Outside these areas of No. 10 the complement of the Prime Minister's office has not changed in the course of 1979, although we have from time to time had to draft in extra temporary help to deal with the enormous volume of letters addressed to the new Prime Minister.

Staff in post at 10 Downing Street as at 1 December 1979 on CSD books were ninety, plus three part-time. These include two Special Advisers. The staff in post figure is not a reliable guide, because the constant turnover of staff seconded from other Departments sometimes creates temporary gaps and sometimes involves double staffing for several weeks during handover.

Sir Derek Rayner and his small office are also on the books of CSD, and are theoretically part of the Prime Minister's staff, but they are not located at 10 Downing Street. There are also certain staff located at No. 10 carried on the books of other Departments or authorities:-

Department of the Environment: drivers, custody guards

Post Office: telephonists

Metropolitan Police: detectives, police.