



Prime Minister

ABM  
R 24/7

THE BAN ON CIVIL SERVICE RECRUITMENT

I strongly support the Lord President's proposal, in his minute to you of 17 July, that we should announce before the Recess the lifting from mid-August of the general ban on recruitment. As he says, the reduction in the cash limit is a relatively refined instrument of control, and we do not need beside it another, blunter, instrument that has already served its original purpose.

If the ban were to continue I believe the efficient discharge of existing functions will be put in danger. For my part, I should be bound to consider enlarging the field of exemptions.

Moreover, we run a real risk of militant action by the staff if, having established the cut in cash limits, we continue the recruitment ban as well. I have, for example, heard that the Staff Side in the Immigration Service, which is under heavy and mounting pressure but has nonetheless refrained from encouraging its members to follow the union instructions to refuse to work overtime or cover the work of other people or of unfilled vacancies, have made it clear that if this ban is continued a campaign of militant action would be started. In that case, it would stem to a very large extent from the genuine commitment of the staff to the operational efficiency of their service.

I am sending copies of this minute to other Cabinet Ministers, the Minister of Transport and Sir John Hunt.

hslw

20 July 1979



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