

Subject



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Personal Minute

No. M8/80

HOME SECRETARY

Senior Posts in the Civil Service

It is important that the reductions in Civil Service staffing should apply in equal proportions to the senior ranks in the Civil Service as well as to the junior. It would be wrong, and open us to public criticism, if senior ranks were to be left untouched while junior ranks are being substantially reduced.

So far, this necessary reduction has not happened. Staff at Under Secretary level and above have only been reduced by 4 (0.5%) since April 1979, while the Service as a whole has come down by 24,000 (around 3%). We must improve on this.

Ministers must of course be properly supported. We have had, and shall continue to have, a crowded programme of our own making. I realise that external forces, including the new Departmental Select Committees, are increasing the pressures on Ministers and their senior officials still further. Nevertheless, we must be as rigorous about staffing at senior levels as everywhere else. The Minister of State, Civil Service Department, has, with my support, instructed his officials from now on to adopt a very stringent line, and to challenge any posts about which there are doubts. All proposals for new posts at this level will be turned down unless the case is both urgent and established up to the hilt.

/ I ask my colleagues

A handwritten signature in the bottom right corner of the page.

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

- 2 -

I ask my colleagues to adopt the same attitude, to comb out all senior posts which are not essential and not to seek to create new ones unless they are both urgent and essential.

Copies of this minute go to all Cabinet colleagues, the Minister of Transport, the Minister of State, Civil Service Department, Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir Ian Bancroft.

*Raymond Indles*

---

31 March 1980