

p.a. Civil Service W.H. T.H.

Prime Minister

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Encouraging figures, despite the Lord President's fears for the future. I have set out some previous figures below.

PRIME MINISTER

W.H. T.H.

CIVIL SERVICE MANPOWER

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Departmental returns of staff in post on 1 July have just been received. The total of 684,400 shows a net fall of 5,200 in the second quarter (2,900 non-industrials and 2,300 industrials) after taking account of an increase of about 2,500 in the Department of Employment.

This puts us already 4,500 below the April 1982 target. But later this year we shall need to take on yet more staff as the increase in unemployment works through. We may also need more in law and order departments. Some colleagues have also told me that recruitment of essential replacements has been slower than they had planned. So it looks as if the rate of reduction may fall and that there is no room for complacency. Continued efforts will be needed from all colleagues if we are to maintain the good progress made so far.

I have also been thinking about prospects for the future. In this year's public expenditure survey I have been concentrating with colleagues on their manpower totals for April 1983, in order to leave them with a manageable and credible last stride to their 1984 target. In my view, by April 1983 we need to be down to 660,000. So far the survey is going well and I am grateful to colleagues for the progress they have made in bringing down their planned numbers. With further co-operation from some colleagues I hope to round off this survey with a total of 663,500. Even that is too high for comfort and I will need to press departments when we come to look at their Estimates at the end of the year so that the 1983 figures are a clear step on the way to 630,000 in 1984. If we can do this we have a fair prospect of achieving the 1984 target.

Copies of this minute go to Cabinet colleagues and Sir Robert Armstrong.

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	Total	Quarterly Reduction
1 April 1979	732 300	
1 July 1980	700 200	3100
1 October 1980	697 100	2000
1 January 1981	695 100	5500
1 April 1981	689 600	5100
1 July 1981	684 400	

SOAMES

30 July 1981

W.H. T.H.

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