

c. ~~Mr. Lankester~~  
Mr. Wolfson  
Mr. Duguid  
Mr. Ingham

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MR. PATTISON

CIVIL SERVICE INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The Prime Minister may wish to know before Questions this afternoon that the Civil Service industrial action has now settled down into a pattern which is by no means alarming, despite the statements made by the unions after their meeting with Lord Soames last Friday.

The new action, which affects payment of benefits by DHSS and the Department of Employment, appears to be - at present - very poorly supported: only 19 DHSS local offices out of a total of 536 are closed today, and only five out of about a thousand of the Department of Employment local offices. However, selective action by computer staff has closed the benefit computers at Reading, Livingston and Newcastle.

Industrial action continues much as before in Customs and Excise (selective action, chiefly on the south coast) and MOD. The Inland Revenue reports a somewhat reduced willingness on the part of management to bear the burden of work normally undertaken by junior staff; there is at present no action being taken by air traffic controllers. The DVLC in Swansea is working normally today, following a walk out yesterday by 49% of the staff.

Not too much can be read into all this, since the unions are still sorting themselves out for the new round of industrial action; but there is certainly no reason at present for alarm.

J. M. M. VEREKER

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