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MR SANDERS

cc:- Mr Wolfson  
Mr Ingham  
Mr Duguid

PA/CF  
f/w  
MS

CIVIL SERVICE INDUSTRIAL ACTION, 28 APRIL, 1981

The Prime Minister may wish to be aware before Questions this afternoon of the main developments reported to Mr Heyhoe's group (chaired this morning by Sir John Herbecq), apart of course from the factual points on which you will already have been briefed:

1. The prospect is for continued severe disruption of civil air traffic for the next five weeks, with a typical pattern of the morning shift being on strike and the afternoon shift catching up on the backlog. Today, Edinburgh and Prestwick are virtually closed, and Glasgow is disrupted; later in the week the plan is for disruption in the Midlands and the South. Yesterday's "air miss" was unrelated to the dispute: there was apparently equipment failure on an aircraft.
2. Roughly half of the staff at the Inland Revenue sorting and distribution office at Kew is on strike today, which will cause great disruption to the Revenue's inter-office mail, but will have no discernible effect on revenue.
3. The pattern elsewhere is unchanged, although increasing use is being made of the threat of Temporary Relief from Duty (TRD).
4. Sir John Herbecq said that in his opinion the proximity of the Civil Service trade union conferences meant that prospects for developments in the negotiations were poor until the week beginning 11 May, and that managers would be wise to plan on the assumption that the Civil Service dispute would continue throughout the month of May.

/Members of the group

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Members of the group have been asked to give their opinion tomorrow on the desirability of Civil Service management continuing with their present policy of containing the dispute as far as possible, responding firmly where necessary, but taking no initiative to escalate it; or, on the other hand, using the threat of TRD more thoroughly and on a larger scale, which might possibly lead to the need to take action against those for whom no work was available.

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