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Civil Service

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

24 July 1980

Dear Sir John,

Thank you for your letter of 4 July about the recent pay offer to scientific Civil Servants. As a Government we are committed to doing all that we can to persuade able people to seek careers in science and technology and I do not agree that the offer is in any sense incompatible with that objective.

You are no doubt aware of the general principles of Civil Service pay determination. There is no suggestion that the rates we have offered are less than is generally available outside Government. We simply cannot pay more than the rest of the community for equivalent work.

So long as we have the present broad groupings of staff, determining the pay for each of them will present management difficulties at the margins. I do not underestimate those difficulties. But I am quite clear that we cannot just abandon the evidence of the market when it is inconvenient, and level up rates of pay.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Thatcher

Sir John Mason, FRS

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