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John Christopher

CIVIL SERVICE MANPOWER REDUCTIONS: DEPARTMENTAL TARGETS

You copied to me your minute of 7 November to the Prime Minister, and I have also seen the Minister of Agriculture's minute of 12 November and the Prime Minister's Private Secretary's letter of 13 November.

I entirely agree that an early announcement on the manpower cuts is needed. Otherwise, as you say, we shall get speculation, leaks and uncertainty.

For my own part, I urgently need to tell the Manpower Services Commission, the Health and Safety Commission and ACAS their share of the cuts falling on the DE Group. The MSC in particular will shortly be finalising their Corporate Plan for the next five years and to do this they must know what manpower reductions they will have to bear. Moreover, the longer I defer telling these bodies what reductions they must make, the greater the likelihood of difficulty in achieving the cuts.

I very much hope, therefore, that a general announcement can be made as early as possible in the new session. If not, I shall need to go ahead with informing the Commissions and ACAS, and the Staff Side, which will inevitably lead to the DE Group's reductions becoming public knowledge. But I would, much prefer to do this at the same time as a general announcement.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of your minute.

John Christopher



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