



Civil Service Department
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From the Private Secretary

7 April 1981

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

CAW MW
7W
You have already seen
Ian Bancroft's letter, but
you should see the list
of interviewees attached
to this copy. MAR 7/4

Dear Mike *MAD*

BBC RADIO 4 SERIES ON CIVIL SERVICE

You spoke to me about this last week.

The Producer of this series, Mrs Anne Sloman, has now sent - as she undertook to do when she discussed this series with Sir Ian Bancroft - a list of the interviews she has so far arranged with Ministers and civil servants. It is not a final list since she is still considering further interviews which she will let us know about in due course, but I thought you would be interested to see what our involvement amounts to so far.

There are obvious difficulties in attempting to co-ordinate contributions from so many Departments. I have written to my colleagues in other Departments to make sure they keep their Chief Information Officers informed of any approaches from Mrs Sloman about this series. They in turn have been asked by our Chief Press Officer (who is in touch with the No.10 Press Office) to let him know of any approaches their Departments might be considering and any interviews they have agreed to give.

... Sir Ian Bancroft has also written a letter of guidance about the series to Permanent Secretaries with again a request to keep CSD informed. (I enclose a copy of his letter).

Finally, Mrs Sloman has undertaken in a letter to Sir Ian Bancroft that she or Mr Young will let prospective interviewees know a week in advance the ground they want to cover in their interview and that she will also tell them which programme or programmes their contribution will be used in.

As you know, Sir Robert Armstrong is declining Mrs Sloman's request for an interview, as is Sir Peter Carey.

Yours Sincerely
Vivien Life

P.P. J BUCKLEY

IN CONFIDENCE



CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT

WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Telephone 01 273 5400

*Sir Ian Bancroft G.C.B.
Head of the Home Civil Service*

Sir Douglas Wass GCB
HM Treasury
Parliament Street
LONDON SW1

3 April 1981

Dear Douglas,

BBC RADIO 4 SERIES ON THE CIVIL SERVICE

As you know, we are cooperating with the BBC in the preparation of a series of six programmes to be broadcast in June. The Lord President's Private Secretary, Jim Buckley, wrote round to Ministerial Private Offices on 27 March about the series. Mrs Anne Sloman, the producer, is I know already busy arranging background chats with Permanent Secretaries; or, having already done that, fixing dates on which to interview them for this forthcoming series. Having given her permission for Ministers and serving senior civil servants to take part in the series, the Prime Minister is anxious that some general oversight and, where necessary, co-ordination is exercised over all our contributions. This task has been assigned to the CSD and our Chief Press Officer, Bert Jarman, will be seeking to keep an up-to-date list of the interviews Mrs Sloman intends to record with Ministers and officials in all Departments. I would be grateful if you could ensure that your Chief Information Officer keeps him informed, as far in advance as possible, of any interviews that are arranged for this series in your Department.

There are a number of difficulties which our participation in this series presents:

- i. Mrs Sloman will no doubt wish to make all her interviews as wide-ranging as possible. For example, in an interview which has as its centre a discussion about a particular aspect of Departmental work to be used as an example of the kinds of problems with which civil servants have to deal, she may very well insert more general questions on, for example, the size of the Civil Service, its efficiency (or lack of it), its professionalism (or lack of it) etc, simply to gather together as many and as widely divergent opinions by civil servants (and Ministers) on our profession as possible. There is nothing wrong with that approach in itself, provided the civil servants who are interviewed start from the same shared

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basis of fact. It cannot be automatically assumed that they do. It would simplify matters all round therefore if such general questions about the Civil Service were answered normally in interviews with Permanent Secretaries. I would be grateful, if any officials other than yourself are to be interviewed in your Department, if that general rule could be applied.

ii. The Civil Service has been under scrutiny, if not attack, from so many quarters for so long that Mrs Sloman and her presenter, Mr Hugo Young the Deputy Editor of the Sunday Times, will certainly not be lacking in material on which to draw to challenge us. It would be unfortunate, if, in the face of so many quotable critics, we became too defensive. The Quarry provides a good deal of useful ammunition on a number of basic issues which are bound to come up in one guise or another. I hope everyone who is involved with this series will make good use of it.

I think we should all, given a suitable opportunity in our interviews, be particularly concerned to emphasise the efforts that are being made to improve the efficiency of the Service, both within our own Departments and across the Civil Service as a whole. We are generally far too coy in asserting our achievements and the difficulties to be overcome in securing them. This series presents us with an opportunity to be a bit more forthcoming. I hope it will not be missed. The White Paper on Efficiency and Elimination of Waste is likely to be published shortly after Easter. It should provide useful material to deal with some at least of the questions Mrs Sloman and Mr Young are likely to aim at us.

The subject heads for the programmes in the series are:

Programme One: The Civil Service is too Big;
 Programme Two: The Civil Service is too Powerful;
 Programme Three: The Civil Service is Inefficient;
 Programme Four: The Civil Service should be more Accountable;
 Programme Five: The Civil Service should be more Political;
 Programme Six: The Effect of the EC.

I do not think it would be wise for serving civil servants to become too involved with questions on Programme Two or on Programme Five for obvious reasons. Mrs Sloman is at liberty to interview senior retired civil servants on those questions.

We are now seeking to obtain from her a more up-to-date and detailed outline of the series which I will send to you as soon as I can.

Mrs Sloman has undertaken in a letter to me on 4 March that:

a. Her presenter Hugo Young would "telephone everyone taking part in the programme about a week before the interview to go over the area of questioning". We should hold her to that undertaking.

b. "It would of course be made absolutely clear to those taking part which programme they were being interviewed for".

Once these facts are known about any interviews which may be taking place in your Department for this series, it would be helpful if they could be relayed to Jarman via your Chief Information Officer, so that we in turn can keep No 10 informed.

I am copying this to other Heads of Departments; and also to Derek Rayner and Clive Whitmore (for information).

*Yours ever,
Ian*

IAN BANCROFT

BBC RADIO 4 SERIES ON CIVIL SERVICE

Timetable of Interviews with Ministers
and Civil Servants

Weds. 8th April

- 0930 Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State
for the Environment
- 1100 Les Barclay, Assistant Secretary, Dept. of Energy
- 1630 Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, Minister of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food
- 1730 Sir Brian Hayes, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Weds. 15th April

- 0800 Sir Derek Rayner

Tues. 28th April

- 1530 Michael Partridge, Deputy Secretary, Dept. of Health
and Social Security
- 1615 Tim Nodder, Deputy Secretary, Dept. of Health and
Social Security

Weds. 29th April

- 1115 Barney Hayhoe, Minister of State, Civil Service Dept.
- 1200 Lord Soames, Lord President of the Council
- 1500 Sir Donald Maitland, Permanent Secretary, Dept. of Energy

Tues. 19th May

- Sir Ian Bancroft, Head of the Home Civil Service
- 1500 Valerie Smith, Principal, Ministry of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food
- 1700 Sir Brian Cubbon, Permanent Secretary, Home Office

Tues. 26th May

- 1700 Sir Patrick Nairne, Permanent Secretary, Dept. of Health
and Social Security

To be arranged

- Rt. Hon. James Prior, Secretary of State for Employment