

PRIME MINISTERSir Douglas Wass Lecture to RIPA

I suggest that, if you have time, you read in full the attached lecture which Sir Douglas Wass is planning to give to the RIPA. <sup>next Thursday, 2 December</sup> It is designed as, and will be seen as, a major statement on the current issues facing the Civil Service. It is also, in a sense, Douglas Wass' valedictory.

He told me that he has tried very hard to be balanced and to say some hard things to the Service, as well as defending it on some issues. To my eye, he succeeds in coming across as a thoughtful, dignified, open-minded and thoroughly nice man.

However, the press will undoubtedly make trouble if they can, and Bernard Ingham and I have been through the piece, asking what we would pick on if we were journalists trying to make trouble by writing a story that Douglas Wass is criticising you and the Government. I have highlighted the passages which present the greatest risk:-

- Page 5 - Cost-cutting does not always lead to greater efficiency
- Page 11 - The passage about politicisation of the Civil Service will be seen as an answer to John Hoskyns, although he is not mentioned.
- Page 14 - The passage about pay and comparability
- Page 16 - Index-linked pensions, <sup>though he does not say anything substantial</sup>
- Page 19 - "There has been a flood of criticism in recent years that the service is a burden on society rather than an asset, and parasitic in nature ... Frankly no institution which is subjected to sustained criticism of this nature can be expected to maintain its self-esteem and morale."

Page 20 - "The distinction of activities in society between those which 'create wealth' and those which are ancillary to that creation is I think a dubious and dangerous one".

I doubt whether any of this is very important except perhaps the passages I have quoted from pages 19 and 20, which - however unfairly - could <sup>cause the lecturer to</sup> be written up as 'Civil Service Chief hits back at Maggie'.

I know that Sir Douglas hopes very much that you will agree that he should make the speech in toto. My feeling is that you could, subject perhaps to his softening the paragraph on page 19 and removing the sentence on page 20.

Sir Douglas Wass has told me that if you had more fundamental worries about the lecture he would like the chance to discuss it with you.

F.R.B.

Sir Douglas is free to say  
whatever he wishes. I shouldn't  
dream of trying to stop him

26 November, 1982.

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