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and Semce

MR. VILE
CABINET OFFICE

A TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN FOR E(CS)

Sir Robert Armstrong minuted the Prime Minister about this yesterday. The Prime Minister would like Mr. Prior to take over the Chairmanship of E(CS) in Lord Soames' absence.

T. P. LANKESTER

SL

22 November 1979

Ref: A0710a



Prime Minister

Agree that Mr Prior
should take this on?

Yes out

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21/11

PRIME MINISTER

A Temporary Chairman for E(CS)

If the Lord President has to be put on detached duty for a time, the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Industrial Relations in the Civil Service will be temporarily without a chairman at a time when industrial relations in the Civil Service could be under particular strain following the announcement of the Government's proposals to save Civil Service manpower. The two obvious candidates to fill the post in Lord Soames's absence are the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Employment.

2. The Home Secretary is the chairman of the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) and the two tasks march, in part, together. He is, however, heavily loaded already; and the Secretary of State for Employment is much more closely involved than the Home Secretary in trade union and industrial relations matters generally, and is, on that account, already familiar with the sorts of issues which may arise.

3. I should be grateful for your instructions, so that we may move quickly to fill the gap if and when Lord Soames becomes unavailable.

RIA

(Robert Armstrong)

21st November 1979