

~~Mr. Gwynedd~~
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Civil Service

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PRIME MINISTER

CIVIL SERVICE PROTEST MEETINGS

The recent meetings by the Council of Civil Service Unions, during working hours, to protest at the breaking of the Civil Service Pay Agreement, were attended by 30,000 non-industrial civil servants (about 6% of the total). Those who attended did so without authority and will lose pay. Additionally, some meetings, not originally planned by the CCSU, took place outside working hours - we do not know how many civil servants attended these meetings in their own time, but the Unions are claiming a further 20,000.

The planned meetings were held at centres throughout the country; the degree of absenteeism varied - 8,000 staff in Scotland took part, nearly 6,000 in the North-West of England and nearly 5,000 in the North-East. All Departments were affected, some more than others (11,000 Inland Revenue staff, for example) and there was inevitably some short-term disruption to services to the public.

The extent of support for the meetings was higher than we could have expected for this type of demonstration - only 11,700 non-industrial civil servants took part in the TUC day of action in May. It is a pointer to the likelihood of industrial action in the early months of next year.

I am copying this to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, members of E(CS) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

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SOAMES

8 December 1980