

Civil Service 2



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Secretary of the Cabinet and Permanent Secretary to the Management and Personnel Office

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A083/1495

CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER

I have been asked to advise you on the letter which you have received, as Chairman of the Conservative Party, from the General Secretary of the Association of First Division Civil Servants, asking for the Party's answer to two questions. I attach a copy of Mr Ward's letter for ease of reference.

2. I attach the draft of the reply to Mr Ward, which I think represents Government policy in relation to the two questions which Mr Ward asks.

3. I am sending copies of this letter and of the attachments to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Lord Privy Seal.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

24 May 1983



Association of First Division Civil Servants

17 Northumberland Avenue London WC2N 5AP · Telephone 01-839 7406/7

From the General Secretary
JOHN WARD

Your ref
Our ref

The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson MP
Conservative Central Office
32 Smith Square
London SW1

16 May 1983

Dear Mr Parkinson

All four main political parties have been invited by the Council of Civil Unions to answer questions on major issues affecting the Civil Service.

One issue not covered by the CCSU questions but which is of great interest to members of my Association is the concept of a politically neutral Civil Service. I would be most grateful therefore if you could give me your party's answer to the following questions:

1. Do you support the concept of a politically neutral Civil Service as it has been traditionally understood?
2. Would you propose to make any changes in the way in which senior civil servants are appointed and promoted?

I will see that your party's response is circulated to FDA members.

Yours sincerely

JOHN WARD

DRAFT LETTER FROM THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY
OF LANCASTER TO JOHN WARD ESQ, ASSOCIATION OF
FIRST DIVISION CIVIL SERVANTS, 17 NORTHUMBER-
LAND AVENUE, LONDON WC2N 5AP

Thank you for your letter of 16 May, on which you ask for my party's answers to two questions.

In answer to the first question, the Civil Service in this country has traditionally been politically neutral, and has served the duly elected Government of the day without fear or favour and with the same professional skill and loyalty, whatever party has been in power. The Conservative Party believes this to be a healthy tradition, and right for the constitution and circumstances of the United Kingdom. We shall continue to support the principle of a politically neutral Civil Service. If a Minister or the Government feels the need of advice which is specifically oriented to the politics of the party in power, there are other and better ways of securing that than by seeking to replace particular civil servants or grades of civil servants with non-career civil servants chosen on the basis of their political opinions.

As to the second question, the appointment of civil servants at Permanent and Deputy Secretary levels is made with the approval of

the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the Official Head of the Home Civil Service after consultation with the Minister in charge of the Department concerned. We do not propose to make any change in these arrangements.

2 JULY 1965

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