

Ref. A083/1536

~~MR BUTLER~~

c Mrs M E Brown

Resignations from the Civil Service

In July last year, because I was concerned at some of the anecdotal impressions beginning to circulate about resignations from the Civil Service as an indication of low morale, I thought it right to institute an exercise to monitor resignations more systematically, so as to see if it was possible to arrive at more soundly based conclusions about the trend of resignations and the reasons for them.

2. The Prime Minister may like, when she has a moment, to see the attached copy of a letter I have sent to Permanent Secretary Heads of Departments reporting the results of the exercise. I have found these results interesting and useful; and, as you will see, I am proposing to continue the exercise into future years, in the hope of getting a run of figures.

3. I am sending a copy of this minute and of the letter to the Private Secretary to the Lord Privy Seal, in case she may also be interested.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

31 May 1983



cc- Mr. Lecheminant
 Mr. Peterson
 Mr. Tobias

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

CABINET OFFICE	
A	Ref. A083/1528
FILING INSTRUCTIONS	
FILE No.	_____

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

26 May 1983

Resignations from the Service

In July last year I set in train an exercise to monitor the resignations from the Service at Principal level and above. My interest was not so much to establish the numbers of those leaving but rather to gain some impression of their reasons for doing so. I am now writing to let you know the results of that exercise.

Overall Figures

The returns show that there were 135 resignations at Principal level and above during 1982, 60 in the first half of the year and 75 in the second. These were spread over a wide range of occupational groups, with the Administration Group accounting for 28 of the losses; the Science Group 8; the P & T Group 13; Tax Officers 17 and Medical Officers a further 16. There were also 7 resignations from the Open Structure. A breakdown by grade and Department is attached.

Reasons for Leaving

As yet we have too insubstantial a statistical base to be able to draw any firm conclusions, but already some useful indicators are emerging. Although for a substantial number of people no reasons for leaving were known, in those cases in which Departments could guess at reasons by far the largest proportion (50 per cent) were believed to involve comparatively low pay and poor promotion prospects. The next most frequently mentioned reasons were: family reasons (17 per cent); the desire to move to a job which enabled the individual to work on after 60 (5 per cent); the desire for greater responsibility (4 per cent); and unwillingness to comply with the mobility obligation (4 per cent).

Administration Group

Of the Administration Group resignations, 5 were Assistant Secretaries and 23 were Principals. All 5 Assistant Secretaries left to take up jobs in the private sector. Of the 23 Principals

/who

P E Middleton Esq

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

who resigned, 12 were former ATs or APs and 1 was a direct entry Principal. This is broadly in line with the pattern of fast-stream Principal resignations in recent years, which was as follows:

<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>
9	19	12	10	12

There is as yet therefore no overall sign of the feared increase in departure of fast-stream Principals. However, closer analysis of the figures shows a potentially worrying feature: a very large proportion of the resignations came from the Treasury. As the reasons Treasury staff gave for leaving echo those given elsewhere in the Service, and it is only in respect of numbers relative to size that the Treasury stands out, I would attribute this to the fact that Treasury staff are amongst the most marketable in the Service and represent the vanguard; an upturn in the economy could well see the pattern reflected in a wider range of Departments. It is impossible to tell how much truth there is in this hypothesis on the basis of one year's figures, but it is sufficient reason to continue the exercise into future years.

Other Groups

Outside the Administration Group, the most concentrated losses came from the Tax Inspectorate, closely followed by Medical Officers. Although overall losses of Tax Inspectors were about the same as in the recent past, a worrying feature was that a high proportion came from more senior grades. Most went to higher paid employment in the private sector with the hope of better prospects. The loss of 16 Medical Officers is also noteworthy. One possible reason for this is that National Health Service doctors may continue working until 65 while their Civil Service colleagues must leave at 60.

We will need a firmer statistical base before we can draw significant conclusions from the resignations in other groups.

Male/Female Ratio

Of the total resignations in 1982, 107 were men and 20 were women (some returns did not specify sex). It is noteworthy that of the women only 3 left the Service for other employment; of the remainder, the majority resigned to have a child or for other family reasons.

Conclusion

These results present an interesting picture and I am sure that it is worth continuing the exercise into future years. To do so we need to put the exercise on a more formal basis, in order to ensure as much consistency between returns as possible. I have asked my staff in the Management and Personnel Office to set this system up and to make to me an annual report which I can circulate.

I am sending copies of this letter to other Permanent Secretary Heads of Departments.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

RESIGNATIONS FROM THE HOME CIVIL SERVICE AT PRINCIPAL LEVEL AND ABOVE IN 1982

Department	Per. Sec	Deputy Sec	Under Sec	Assistant Sec	Principal ⁽¹⁾	Scientific Officers	PCTO	Economist	CS Lawyers	Accountants	Research Officers	Medical Officers	Tax Officers	Information Officers	Others	Total
Treasury			1	3	4			3(EAs) 1(EA)								11
MAFF					1											1
Customs and Excise				1	4	8	10									1
MOD	1															24
DES			1													1
DE (Group)			1		1						1	6			4	13
DOE and Transport						4	1	2	1	3					1	12
Exchequers Audit																0
DHSS					2	2			1			8				13
Home Office					2											5
Inland Revenue									1						3	18
LCD													17			0
NIO																0
PCA																0
Parliamentary Counsel																0
Scottish Office					4				3							0
Industry and Trade		2	1	1	1	3		1		1				1	2	10
Department Energy					1	1	1								3	13
Treasury Solicitors											1				2	5
Welsh Office					1							2				1
DPP																3
ODA					2											0
PSA							1									2
TOTAL	1	2	4	5	23	18	13	7	7	4	1	16	17	1	16	135

(1) Of which 11 were faststreamers; 9 mainstreamers; 1 Entry Principals; and 2 had transferred into the Admin Group from the DS and from the Economist class. "Faststream" being defined as former APs or ATs.

BPP



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Resignations from the Civil Service

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute of 31 May (A083/1536) with its enclosure about the results of the exercise on resignations from the Civil Service. The Prime Minister has read and noted this.

I am copying this letter to Mrs. Mary Brown, (Minister of State's Office, Privy Council Office)

E. E. R. BUTLER

20 June 1983