



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

14 October 1985

**INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY CPSA
AT COMPANIES REGISTRATION OFFICE**

The Prime Minister was grateful for your full report of the position on this dispute (letter of 11 October).

(DAVID NORGROVE)

Michael Gilbertson, Esq.,
Department of Trade and Industry.



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Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

11 October 1985

CONFIDENTIAL

David Norgrove Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Ronnie Nixon 2

*full explanation of
the problem*

*John
W. H.*

Dear David,

INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY CPSA AT COMPANIES REGISTRATION OFFICE

... The Prime Minister drew the enclosed press cutting to the attention of my Secretary of State at the Party Conference this week. I attach a short briefing note on this dispute, which the Prime Minister may find useful.

*Yours ever,
Michael*

MICHAEL GILBERTSON
Private Secretary



MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY CPSA AT CRO CARDIFF

Scope of Strike Action

1 All 23 typists at the Companies Registration Office in Cardiff have been on official strike since 1 October. In addition approximately one half of CPSA's 450 other members at CRO responded to a call for a half day strike on the afternoon of 2 October. They have since returned to work. There are no pickets.

Cause of Strike

2 Ostensibly, the 23 typists have been called out on strike in response to the new Registrar of Companies' decision to install a word processor in his secretary's office. His predecessor's secretary had only a manual typewriter and all word processing work was undertaken in the main typing pool. CPSA maintain that the National and Departmental agreements on the use of word processors - which have been drawn up mainly with typing pools in mind - do not extend to the installation of word processors in secretaries' offices. DTI Management have never accepted this view, and word processors have been successfully installed in many secretaries' offices throughout the Department, including the Business Statistics Office which is a few miles from Cardiff.

3 It is clear to local and Departmental management that the precipitate strike action taken by the CPSA reflects other anxieties. Most importantly, there is some fear that a combination of the more intensive use of computerised technology and a new and firmer style of management may lead to job losses at Cardiff in the future. There is also fear of a general tightening up, following management studies that indicated the scope for this. There is also concern over the appointment of a non-union member of staff to the vacant post of secretary to the new Registrar, although this has been strictly in accordance with normal procedure.

Impact of Strike

4 The main procedure affected at CRO is the incorporation of new companies. Normally around 2000 applications are processed each week. This work has ceased, but applications are still being accepted with an acknowledgement note warning of delay. For several weeks, the private sector company formation agents will have enough "shelf" companies to satisfy most types of demand. Thereafter it will be possible, if necessary, for some extra companies to be formed in Edinburgh, Belfast and Dublin.

5 There has also been a temporary suspension in issuing other types of certificates and a more general effect on the work of other parts of the office at CRO which employs 850 in total.



Action to bring dispute to an end

6 Since the strike began, management have been trying to arrange a joint meeting of the Departmental Working Party on secretaries - which is the normal forum for discussing issues surrounding the introduction of word processors into secretaries' offices - and local union representatives. After some initial delay on the part of the unions, this meeting has now been fixed for 15 October. It has a reasonable chance of resolving the dispute.

7 Meanwhile, the appointment of the new secretary has gone ahead and she will be operating her word processor from 14 October. Management have also made arrangements to attempt to get typing work done by other means if the meeting on 15 October fails to resolve the matter. This may lead to an escalation of the dispute and the possible use of Temporary Relief from Duty procedures. The advice of Treasury Counsel is being sought on the possibility of an injunction, but it seems likely that the CPSA will be able to mount a defence based upon their claim to have held a ballot under the 1984 Act.

8 It is quite clear to management and DTI Ministers that a firm stand is needed, especially in view of the programme for improvements in efficiency over the next several years.

ANDREW DUGUID

Strike hits companies registrar

By David Brindle, Labour Staff

A STRIKE by typists at Companies House, Cardiff, has forced the Trade and Industry Department to suspend registration of new companies or changes of company names.

The eight-day-old dispute involves 21 typists and two superintendents, members of the Civil and Public Services Association, who are protesting at the installation of a word processor.

The Department said yesterday the word processor was for the use of the Registrar of Companies. Although it admitted that feasibility studies were being conducted on computerisation, it said the issue was quite separate.

Because of the strike, the Department said, company formations and changes of registered titles could not be dealt with for the foreseeable future.

The Association of Company Registration Agents yesterday stressed that its members' agencies could still provide off-the-shelf companies for would-be entrepreneurs. Mr Stanley Davis, the association's chairman, said agencies had plenty of ready-made companies available to tide clients over this difficult period.