

CONFIDENTIAL

*await Cabinet
Office comment
MMP 5/11*



Civil Service Department
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ
Telephone 01-273 3000

Minister of State

The Lord Cockfield
Minister of State
HM Treasury
Treasury Chambers
Parliament Street
LONDON SW1P 3AG

2 November 1979

Dear Arthur,

Thank you for your letter of 10 October suggesting an across-the-board investigation of the existing level of statistical work in Government.

Officials in CSD with Cabinet Office, Central Statistical Office and Sir Derek Rayner's Office have already been thinking about the possibility of a wide-ranging review of statistical services in the light of the draft report of one of the "Rayner" projects. This has looked at statistical services in the Departments of Industry and Trade and in particular at the Business Statistics Office. It has raised some basic questions about the usefulness of the statistical work and has suggested a number of areas where savings might be achieved.

Officials have now recommended that a wider review on similar lines should be undertaken, to take in the work of CSO and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys as well as statistical work in Departments. I am sure this would be worthwhile. One particular advantage of an across-the-board review of this kind, as you have said, is that it can see whether there is any duplication or overlap of work which can be eliminated.

I have therefore asked CSD officials to explore quickly with the Cabinet Office, CSO and Sir Derek Rayner's unit how best such a review can be conducted. Proposals on this will then be put to the Prime Minister for endorsement, in view of her responsibility for the CSO.

not enclosed
I am sending a copy of your letter and of this reply to the Prime Minister and also to Sir Ian Bancroft, Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir Derek Rayner.

*Yours,
Paul*

PAUL CHANNON

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2 - NOV 1979





with compliments

MINISTER OF STATE

Please relate to our Minister's
letter of 2 November

CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ

Telephone 01-273 5563/4086

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M/S 10 OCT 1979 EG

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

10 October 1979

Dear Paul,

You may have noticed that nearly all Departments have chosen "statistics" as one of the prime areas for staff saving. In this connection the Chancellor has received a protest from the Head of the Central Statistical Office about the proposed cuts in the case of the Customs and Excise. I had already started probing in this area suspecting that there might have been a similar explosive growth of the kind we have seen with economists. The results are shown in the Table appended. This relates only to "statisticians". There will in addition be a large tail of non statisticians employed for example on data gathering and processing - and if the size of the staff savings under this head shown by some Departments is anything to go by it must be a very large tail.

The very fact that Departments generally seem so willing to sacrifice statistical work suggests that they do not think all that highly of what is produced. This in turn must lead one to ask whether there has not been excessive growth and whether despite the cuts now being proposed there might not be more to come. An investigation in depth of the whole area might not therefore come amiss. But this is a service wide problem and not one specifically relating to the Treasury and for this reason I draw your attention to the matter.

Yours,
Arthur

LORD COCKFIELD

Paul Channon Esq
Minister of State
Civil Service Department

Department	No.									
	1964 ⁽²⁾	1969 ⁽²⁾	1972 ⁽³⁾	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
MAFF	6	9	10	15	11	14	16	17	18	18
CSO	18	34	52	61	57	66	66	69	63	65
CSD)	-	3	19	22	28	31	28	20	16	16
CS College)	-	-	4	4	4	7	8	8	8	7
Customs and Excise	-	-	4	4	4	7	8	8	8	7
Defence	12	16	31	30	30	30	35	35	35	33
Education and Science	5	9	15	15	14	16	16	16	17	15
Employment	4	8	18	18	18	23	22	24	24	25
MSC	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	6	10
HSE	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	5	6
Energy	5	10	-	-	(12	14	15	15	16	14
Industry and Trade (incl. BSO)	33	56	75	84	(71	78	80	80	82	81
Environment and Transport	11	23	40	44	45	51	64	65	68	70
Health	11	16	26	28	32	35	38	36	37	41
Home Office	3	6	11	10	16	20	24	24	25	24
Inland Revenue	4	6	10	12	12	11	12	19	20	20
Lord Chancellors	-	-	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
ODA	1	9	10	12	13	17	19	21	19	14
OPCS	5	11	15	24	28	30	27	31	31	25
Scottish Depts.	1	5	13	12	16	18	28	28	28	28
HMT	3	3	12	9	9	10	13	17	13	12
DEA	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Welsh Depts.	-	1	3	3	4	4	3	6	8	12
Total	122	232	365	404	421	477	524	542	541	538

(1) Excludes statisticians on secondment outside the service.

(2) January figure.

(3) July figure.

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