

PREM19

7

CIVIL SERVICE

(Christmas
Message)

32/82

Confidential Filing

Proposal that the Prime Minister send a Christmas message to civil service

CIVIL SERVICE

91

November 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
26-11-79							

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PREM 19/7

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MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR IAN BANCROFT

Christmas Message to Civil Servants

The Prime Minister has considered carefully your suggestion that she should send a Christmas message to the Civil Service. She has decided that she does not wish to send such a message. She has commented that of course she wishes everyone in the Civil Service a happy Christmas but that an "official" message does not seem quite right.

CAW

26 November 1979

A handwritten signature in the bottom right corner of the page.

1

Prime Minister

In favour?

RM

2/11

MR C A WHITMORE

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO CIVIL SERVANTS

I understand that the Prime Minister is to send a Christmas message to the Armed Forces. I would like to suggest that she might also send one to the Civil Service.

As far as we can discover, this would be the first message of this kind from a Prime Minister to the Civil Service and it would therefore have much more than a merely routine significance. Now would in my view be a particularly opportune time for the Prime Minister to do this. Morale in the Service has become depressed, for a number of reasons. These include attacks on the Service in the media, usually in circumstances which make it impossible for those concerned to reply. And now several of the Civil Service unions have been seeking to give their members the impression that the Government's review of the efficiency and the functions of the Service stems from a hostile attitude towards civil servants themselves.

A message of the type I have in mind would make it clear that - as I know is the case - Ministers do appreciate the work done by the Service. It would counteract the tendency for individual civil servants to feel that it is to their unions, rather than to management, that they should look for concern for their interests. I think that it would be widely appreciated.

... The Prime Minister will have her own views about the content of such a message, but I attach a draft to illustrate the form it might take.

If she decides in favour of the proposal, the best way of issuing it might be for you to send the text of it to Ministers in charge of Departments, asking them to arrange for it to be brought to the attention of their staff.

MB

IAN BANCROFT
20 November 1979

I just don't think this is a very good idea.

Of course we wish everyone a Happy Christmas - but an

'official' message doesn't seem quite right.

M.T.

DRAFT MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

This is the first time that a Prime Minister has sent a Christmas message to the Civil Service. I write this to you now not as a matter of routine but because I want all members of the Service to know that I and my colleagues in the Government have greatly appreciated the way the Civil Service has faced its task since we took office last May.

Some people have interpreted the review we have carried out of the functions of the Civil Service as an attack on civil servants themselves. This is the very opposite of the truth. It is not the fault of civil servants that the role of Government has expanded over the years. The decisions we have taken to reverse this trend have been necessary for the well-being of the nation; but they will also, I believe, benefit the Civil Service because it will be better adapted to the country's needs.

The task which lies ahead for all of us in restoring the future of our country is not an easy one. The New Year will be a challenging one for Ministers and civil servants alike. But in the meantime I wish all of you a well-earned and happy Christmas.

END

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