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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

10 March 1986

CIVIL SERVICE MANPOWER

The Prime Minister has seen the Chief Secretary's minute of 7 March, which she has noted without comment.

I am copying this letter to Tony Laurance (Department of Health and Social Security).

Mark Addison

Richard Broadbent, Esq.,  
Chief Secretary's Office,  
H.M. Treasury.

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FROM: CHIEF SECRETARY

DATE: 7 March 1986

1. Mr. Norgrove F see  
2. Prime Minister (2)

PRIME MINISTER

MBA 7/3

## CIVIL SERVICE MANPOWER

I minuted you on <sup>at trap.</sup> 17 February reporting the latest staff in post figures, and indicating the prospects, as I then saw them, for achieving the Government's targets for reductions in the size of the Civil Service.

2 I have recently agreed with Norman Fowler sizeable increases in DHSS manpower for the current year and for 1986-87 to relieve the very heavy pressure on local social security offices resulting from increased workloads, to enable the department to handle new work and to increase the numbers of staff dealing with fraud. The increase this year will be to 93,400 at 1 April 1986 (an increase of 2,300). There will be a further addition next year of 3,350 posts to a new target of 96,750 at 1 April 1987. Because DHSS manpower was previously planned to decline, the total addition to the target for 1 April 1987 will be nearly 8,000. Norman intends to make the announcement today by written PQ. In doing so he will take credit for an increase in local office staffing of 5,000, taking the two years together.

3 Of themselves these increases will not take overall Civil Service numbers above the announced targets for 1 April 1986 and 1 April 1987, provided other departments hold to their targets and there are no other increases for policy reasons. But there can be no certainty about the target for 1 April 1988.

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4 I suggest that, if the question of the impact of the DHSS figures on the Government's targets arises, we should take the line that the Government makes adjustments to individual departments' manpower targets when the need arises. There are no current plans to revise the targets for Civil Service totals published in the 1986 Public Expenditure White Paper. But they are kept under review and will be next reassessed in the context of the 1986 Public Expenditure Survey.

5 I propose to take stock after the Budget of the overall manpower position and prospects and will report to you again, copied to colleagues.

6 I am sending a copy of this to Norman Fowler.



**JOHN MacGREGOR**

*(Approved by the Chief Secretary  
and signed in his absence)*

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