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**Civil Service Department**  
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From the Private Secretary

16 June 1981

Willie Rickett Esq  
10 Downing Street

*Dear Willie,*

**CONTROL OF EXPENDITURE: DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Lord President has considered the Prime Minister's question about the staffing of the central departments, conveyed in your letter of 21 May, as it applies to the Civil Service Department. I understand that the Chancellor's Private Secretary is replying separately in relation to the Treasury.

The question is certainly an important one. Where the CSD is concerned, the new role represents a considerable change of emphasis rather than a totally new departure; since its inception the Department has been advising spending departments on a wide range of subjects which bear on good management. So we have a certain stock, though not enough, of skill and experience on which to build. But the change of emphasis is very important; prescription carries a heavier responsibility than advice and must be more sure of its ground.

The two main areas in which the CSD will be developing its prescriptive role are systems for the control of resources and the personnel management and training which those systems call for. On both fronts the biggest need is in the field of financial management, where the job of the CSD will mainly be to prescribe personnel management and training arrangements to meet the needs of what the Treasury prescribes: the two central Departments will have to work very closely together, as they are doing on the Financial Management Co-ordination Group. Our staffing problem here will be mainly on the training front. We shall want to make use of expert help from outside the Service, but an essential contribution to carrying out the training must be made by experienced and skilled staff from departments, where they will be a valuable commodity in short supply. We expect departments to release them for spells at the Civil Service College for the greater general good. On the personnel management side, arrangements have already been made, as the Prime Minister knows, to check with departments their plans for succession and training for key finance and establishment posts. These will be refined and improved as we make progress.

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On other subjects of CSD concern, we are drawing up plans for a greater element of central prescription in the control of manpower; the use of management levels and the Civil Service grading structure; the use of supporting services such as typing, messengers, stores; and computers and office machines. To a considerable extent we have got the necessary skills and experience in these areas, but we shall need to draw on outside consultants help as necessary. And we propose to put a greater emphasis on the systematic training of CSD staff in the essential elements of the management systems we shall be prescribing and in the best methods of checking their functioning.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Wiggins (Treasury), David Wright (Cabinet Office) and Clive Priestley (Sir Derek Rayner's Office).

Yours sincerely,  
Jim Buckley.

J BUCKLEY

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