



Prime Minister
In favour?
AM
2/11/79

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.