



Report of the Committee on the Political Activities of Civil Servants

*Presented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to Parliament
by Command of His Majesty
June 1949*

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NOTE

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LIST OF MEMBERS

Chairman: Mr. J. C. Masterman, O.B.E.

Members:

General Sir Ronald Forbes Adam, Bt., G.C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E.

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The Rt. Hon. Sir Richard V. Nind Hopkins, G.C.B.

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Sir John W. Stephenson, C.B.E., J.P.*

The Rt. Hon. H. Graham White.

Secretary: Mr. F. C. Newton.

(*Appointed in the place of the Lord Dukeston who died before the first meeting of the Committee.)

LIST OF APPENDICES

1. List of witnesses who gave oral evidence.
2. List of memoranda of written evidence received.
3. Analysis of Civil Service by numbers employed in the main grades.
4. Copy of the Servants of the Crown (Parliamentary Candidature) Order, 1927.
5. Examples of existing departmental rules on "other" political activities.
6. Examples of existing departmental rules on participation in local government.
7. Grades above and below the line of demarcation proposed by the Committee.
8. Position of main staff associations following the repeal in 1946 of the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act, 1927, as regards affiliation to the T.U.C. and political parties.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF WITNESSES

(1) Official :—

- Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C. (Permanent Secretary to the Treasury).
- Sir Edward Appleton, G.B.E., K.C.B., F.R.S. (Secretary to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research).
- Sir Eric Bamford, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G. (Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue).
- Sir Raymond Birchall, K.C.B., K.B.E. (Director General of the Post Office).
- Mr. H. A. Caccia, C.M.G. (Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office).
- Sir William Croft, K.B.E., C.I.E., C.V.O. (Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise).
- Mr. G. H. Curtis (Chief Land Registrar).
- Sir William Douglas, K.C.B., K.B.E. (Secretary to the Ministry of Health).
- Mr. E. M. T. Frith, (Under-Secretary and Director of Establishments, Ministry of Health).
- Mr. R. J. P. Harvey (Regional Director, Home Counties, Post Office).
- Sir Godfrey Ince, K.C.B., K.B.E. (Secretary to the Ministry of Labour and National Service).
- Sir Percivale Liesching, K.C.B., K.C.M.G. (Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Commonwealth Relations Office; formerly Secretary to the Ministry of Food).
- Sir Frank Newsam, K.B.E., C.V.O., M.C. (Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Home Office).
- Sir Thomas Phillips, G.B.E., K.C.B. (Secretary to the Ministry of National Insurance).
- Sir Archibald Rowlands, G.C.B., M.B.E. (Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Supply).
- Mr. J. Scholes, C.B., O.B.E. (Assistant Director-General (Personnel), Post Office).
- Sir Eric Speed, K.C.B., K.B.E., M.C., J.P. (formerly Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War), representing the Service Departments.
- Sir Percival Waterfield, C.B. (First Civil Service Commissioner).
- Sir John H. E. Woods, K.C.B., M.V.O. (Permanent Secretary to the Board of Trade).

(2) Non-official :—

- Rt. Hon. Sir John Anderson, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., F.R.S., M.P.
- Professor F. A. Bland (formerly Professor of Public Administration, University of Sydney, N.S.W.).
- Professor Harold J. Laski (Professor of Political Science, University of London).
- Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur Salter, G.B.E., K.C.B., M.P.
- Professor William A. Robson (Professor of Public Administration, University of London).

(3) Staff side representatives :—

Civil Service National Whitley Council (Staff Side)

- Mr. A. J. T. Day, C.B.E. (Chairman).
- Mr. E. E. Buck.
- Mr. G. V. Carvell.
- Mr. D. J. W. Coward.
- Mr. G. Douglas.
- Mr. W. J. Ellerby.
- Mr. P. H. M. Hoey.
- Mr. T. R. Jones (Secretary).
- Mr. E. C. Redhead, J.P.
- Mr. E. M. Thomas.

Association of First Division Civil Servants:

- Mr. E. F. Muir (Chairman).
- Mr. J. S. Orme, O.B.E. (Vice-Chairman).
- Mr. G. V. Hole (Hon. Secretary).
- Mr. R. R. Goodison (ex-Hon. Secretary).

Trade Union Side, Joint Co-ordinating Committee for Government Industrial Establishments:

Mr. W. D. Goss (Vice-Chairman).
Mr. H. W. Crane (Secretary).
Mr. G. F. Cook.

(4) **Individual civil servants :—**

Councillor T. E. Evans, J.P., Mayor of Southwark (Overseer, London Postal Region).

Alderman B. F. Marsden-Smedley, O.B.E. (Assistant Secretary, Foreign Office, German Section).

and a number of volunteer witnesses from different grades of the Civil Service.

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF MEMORANDA

(1) **Official :—**

H.M. Treasury.
Admiralty.
Air Ministry.
Civil Service Commission.
H.M. Customs and Excise.
Ministry of Food.
Foreign Office.
Foreign Office Research Department.
Ministry of Health.
Home Office.
Board of Inland Revenue.
H.M. Land Registry.
Ministry of Labour and National Service.
Ministry of National Insurance.
Post Office.
Prison Commission.
Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.
Scottish Office.
Ministry of Supply.
Board of Trade.
War Office.

(2) **Staff Side :—**

Association of First Division Civil Servants.
Staff Side, Civil Service National Whitley Council.
Trade Union Side, Joint Co-ordinating Committee for Government Industrial Establishments.

(3) **Non-official :—**

Association of Municipal Corporations
County Councils Association.
Professor Harold J. Laski.
Rural District Councils Association.
Urban District Councils Association.
and a number of individual civil servants

(4) **Overseas :—**

The Government of the Commonwealth of Australia.
The Government of Canada.
The Government of the French Republic
The Government of New Zealand.
The Government of Saskatchewan.
The Royal Swedish Government.
The Government of the Union of South Africa.
The Government of the United States of America.

APPENDIX 3

NUMBERS OF CIVIL SERVANTS CLASSIFIED BY GRADES

I. Non-Industrials (other than Manipulatives) :—

	<i>Approximate numbers on 1st January, 1949.</i>
Administrative (Home and Foreign Services)	4,300
Professional, Scientific and Technical	80,700
Executive	61,000
Clerical	273,500
Typing	32,000
Total	451,500

II. Minor and Manipulative Grades :—

(a) POST OFFICE :—

Postal and Telegraph Supervising Staff	8,600
Telephone Supervising staff	4,200
Postal and Telegraph Officers:	
Counter Clerks	} (interchangeable)
Writing Clerks	
Some Sorting Clerks	
... ..	21,700
Telegraphists	9,000
Postmen, Higher Grade	20,000
Postmen and auxiliary postmen	96,000
Telephonists	48,000
Other P.O. non-industrials (paperkeepers, cleaners, messengers, etc.)	13,000
Total	220,500

(b) OTHERS :—

Messengers	9,000
Porters	3,000
Cleaners	22,000
Clerks of Works (mainly Ministry of Works)	250
Storeholders (Admiralty and War Office)	400
Barrack and Station Wardens (War Office and Air Ministry)	400
Museum attendants and craftsmen	1,000
Mapping staff (Ordnance Survey)	4,250
Launch crews (Customs and Excise)	600
Foresters	800
Progress-men and other non-industrial supervisory staff in Royal Ordnance Factories	1,750
Foremen, etc., elsewhere	2,500
Service Departments' Constabularies	6,500
Prison Service	3,500
Park-keepers	300
Total	56,250

(NOTE:—Part-time civil servants are reckoned as full-time employees for this purpose.)

Approximate numbers
on 1st January, 1949.

III. Industrials:—

Service Departments	...	...	...	...	...	214,000
Ministry of Supply	...	...	...	...	...	65,000
Post Office:—						
Engineering Department:—						
Assistant Engineers	...	...	...	...	...	3,000
Inspectors	...	...	...	...	...	1,000
Technicians	...	...	...	...	...	11,000
Skilled workmen	...	...	...	...	...	37,000
Labourers	...	...	...	...	...	3,000
Youths in training	...	...	...	...	...	3,000
Motor Transport Section Staff	...	...	...	...	...	3,000
Miscellaneous:—						
Tradesmen						
Submarine Cable staff	}	...	...	...	...	1,000
Photoprinting staff, etc.						
Store Department Staff	...	...	...	...	...	2,000
Factories Department Staff	...	...	...	...	...	3,000
					Total	67,000
Civil Departments:—						
Ministry of Works	...	...	...	...	...	33,000
Forestry Commission	...	...	...	...	...	12,000
Stationery Office	...	...	...	...	...	4,500
Royal Mint	...	...	...	...	...	800
Agricultural Departments	...	...	...	...	...	2,500
Ministry of Civil Aviation	...	...	...	...	...	2,000
State Management Districts	...	...	...	...	...	1,000
Home Office	...	...	...	...	...	1,200
Ministry of Labour (Training Centres)	...	...	...	...	...	1,000
Others	...	...	...	...	...	4,500
					Total	62,500
					TOTAL (Industrials)	408,500

(NOTE:—Part-time civil servants are reckoned as full-time employees for this purpose.)

APPENDIX 4

SERVANTS OF THE CROWN (PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATURE)
ORDER, 1927

AT THE COURT AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE,

The 25th day of July, 1927

Present,

THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY IN COUNCIL

Whereas it appears expedient to His Majesty, on representations made to Him by the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the Army Council and the Air Council that the conditions regulating the right of servants of the Crown to become candidates at Parliamentary elections should be made uniform:

NOW, THEREFORE, His Majesty is pleased, by and with the advice of His Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, as follows:—

1. No person employed by or under the Crown to whom this Order applies shall issue an address to electors or in any other manner publicly announce himself or allow himself to be publicly announced as a candidate or a prospective candidate for election to Parliament for any constituency until he has retired or resigned from such employment.

2. This Order does not apply:—

- (a) to persons holding political offices, or
- (b) to officers on the retired or emergency lists of the Royal Navy or Royal Marines or Royal Air Force or to officers and men of any of the auxiliary or reserve forces (including officers in any reserve of officers) as such, except when embodied or called out on permanent or active service or otherwise employed under conditions to be prescribed by regulations made in pursuance of this Order; or
- (c) to persons employed in an industrial capacity in establishments under the Admiralty, Army Council or Air Council, being establishments certified by the Treasury to be establishments of an industrial or predominantly industrial character, other than persons employed in such supervisory grades as may be specified in regulations made by the department concerned and approved by the Treasury;

but, save as aforesaid, shall apply to all persons in the naval, military, air or civil service of the Crown, or otherwise employed by or under the Crown, whether such employment is of a permanent or temporary nature, and whether established or unestablished.

3. For the purpose of this Order, the expression "political office" means any office which is usually held by a member of one or other of the Houses of Parliament, and in relation to officers and men in the naval, military and air service of the Crown, the expressions "retired or resigned" and "auxiliary and reserve forces" have such meanings as may be prescribed by regulations made in pursuance of this Order.

4. The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the Army Council and the Air Council shall provide for the issue of the necessary regulations for giving effect to this Order so far as it relates to persons in the naval, military and air service of the Crown.

5. Article 16 of the Order in Council, dated the tenth day of January, nineteen hundred and ten, relating to His Majesty's civil establishments and the conditions of service therein, is hereby revoked.

6. This Order may be cited as the Servants of the Crown (Parliamentary Candidature) Order, 1927.

M. P. A. HANKEY.

APPENDIX 5

OTHER POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

EXAMPLES OF EXISTING DEPARTMENTAL RULES

APPLICABLE TO NON-INDUSTRIAL GRADES

Treasury rule, adopted by Admiralty, Ministry of Food, Scottish Home Department, and certain other Departments:—

"Civil servants are expected to maintain at all times a reserve in political matters, and not put themselves forward prominently on one side or the other."

Ministry of Agriculture:—

"It is a well-understood rule that civil servants should refrain from taking an overt part in public political affairs."

Board of Customs and Excise:—

"In view of the nature of the work of the Department, the Board expect officers of all ranks to exercise a reserve in political matters and not to engage in active participation in the work of any political organisation."

Foreign Office:—

"No member of the Foreign Service may engage in any political activity which might in any way conflict with the interests of the Service or be inconsistent with his position as a member of the Foreign Service."

Ministry of Education:—

"It is a well-understood rule of the Service that civil servants should refrain from taking an active share in party politics, or engaging publicly in political controversy."

Ministry of Health:—

"No member of the staff may engage in any other occupation or undertaking which might in any way conflict with the interests of the Department or be inconsistent with his position as a public servant."

Home Office :—

"Officers of the Department are required to act discreetly in all matters in which their conduct may become the subject of public criticism. They may not take a prominent part in party politics or in any public discussions with regard to the public conduct of Ministers or the policy of the Government."

Central Office of Information :—

"An officer of the Ministry may not take a prominent part in party politics or in any public discussion with regard to the public conduct of Ministers or the policy of the Government."

Board of Inland Revenue :—

"No serving officer of the Department . . . may become a Parliamentary candidate, nor may he publicly support the candidature of any person standing for election to Parliament. Officers stationed in the provinces are under a special obligation to abstain from taking an active part in public matters of a contentious character."

Ministry of Labour and National Service :—

"A civil servant is also expected to refrain from taking any prominent part in politics, and to maintain a proper reticence in discussing public affairs, particularly those with which his own Department is concerned."

Post Office :—

"(a) Officers of the Post Office are eligible to be placed on the Parliamentary Register, and to vote at a Parliamentary Election. Nevertheless, it is expected of them as Public Servants that they will at all times maintain a certain reserve in political matters, and not put themselves forward on one side or the other. (For Sub-Postmasters only: This is especially the case with Sub-Postmasters, whose study it should be to retain the confidence of their neighbours and carefully to avoid doing anything that may lend colour to the suggestion that in the discharge of their official duties they are influenced by political or party motives.)"

(b) In pursuance of this general principle the following regulations have been laid down:—

- (i) No officer shall serve on a Committee having for its object to promote or prevent the return of a particular candidate to Parliament or to promote the interests of a political party.
- (ii) No officer shall support or oppose any particular candidate or party at any time either by public speaking or writing.
- (iii) No notice soliciting votes for any particular candidate shall be exhibited either within or without any Post Office or other buildings under the control of the Department; and within such buildings no memorial or address with a party object shall lie for signature or be exhibited.
- (iv) Any officer who observes that a mail cart has affixed to it a placard soliciting votes for a particular candidate should report the fact without delay.
- (v) No officer shall, when in uniform, take part in any demonstration of a political or party character.

(c) These regulations are not regarded as necessarily precluding Post Office Servants from undertaking canvassing work at Election times when they are not on duty and are not in uniform. It is, however, obvious that in the case of certain of the more responsible grades, active canvassing would be incompatible with their official position, and whilst the Postmaster General prefers to leave this question to the discretion and good sense of the staff, he must reserve to himself the right to specify certain grades the members of which may be forbidden to undertake political canvassing."

Ministry of Works :—

"Officers of the Ministry are required to act discreetly in all matters in which their conduct may become the subject of public criticism. They may not take a prominent part in party politics or in any public discussion with regard to the public conduct of Ministers or the policy of the Government."

War Office :—

"An official will not engage in any activity which would in any way tend to impair his usefulness as a public servant or which might conflict with the interests of the Department or be inconsistent with his position as a public servant."

The Air Ministry has an identical rule, and the regulation has also been adopted by the Ministry of Supply.

"A Handbook for the New Civil Servant" issued by H.M. Treasury to all Departments, contains the following paragraph:—

"... A civil servant must not take any open part in political controversy, even if he is not thinking of standing for Parliament. This does not mean that you may not have your private political opinions, that you may not vote at an election, or even that you may not belong to a political party; but it does mean that you must not do anything which might cause the general public, who do not know you, to doubt whether you can be an impartial servant. It makes no difference, of course, which political party you adhere to; the party which forms the Government to-day may be in opposition next year, or next week, and if your loyalty to the Government is not doubted now it may be doubted then."

APPENDIX 6

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

EXAMPLES OF EXISTING RULES APPLICABLE TO NON-INDUSTRIAL GRADES

General

"It will rest with the Head of each Department to determine whether, and if so, upon what conditions an officer of his Department may become a candidate for, or serve on, any Local Council, provided that the duties involved in such candidature or service shall not conflict with the personal performance of the officer's duties to the Department." (Treasury Circular of 15th November, 1909.)

Admiralty

"The permission of the Board must be obtained if any officer serving under the Admiralty wishes to stand as a candidate for membership of a County Council, municipal body, etc."

Air Ministry

"(a) Civilians employed in Air Ministry establishments may not hold municipal appointments or parochial offices, or any public situation, except as stated in sub-paragraph (b).

(b) They may become candidates for, or serve on, a County Council, District Council, Parish Council, Borough Council or an Education Committee. With regard to these appointments the policy is to allow civilians reasonable facilities for serving, even although the hours of meeting of Councils or Committees may conflict with the working hours of the establishment; but the Air Ministry reserve the right to require a civilian to retire from any such Council or Committee if it is found that his membership requires him to be absent from official duty during ordinary working hours and that this involves serious inconvenience to the public service."

Central Office of Information

"1. Members of the staff are reminded that they may not stand in Local Government elections, or serve on Local Councils or Council Committees, without the Department's permission, for which they must apply to Establishment and Organization Division.

2. There are reasons special to the work of the Information Services for withholding permission as a general rule, except for industrial staff, typists, messengers, etc. Permission, however, will not be refused to retiring Councillors wishing to stand for re-election to the same Council.

3. Co-option to the Committees of Local Authorities will in general be permitted."

Customs and Excise

"The Board's permission is to be obtained before any officer accepts any corporate office or appointment as a Justice of the Peace or becomes a candidate for, or serves on, any Local Council, Board, or Committee. Applications are to contain a full statement of duties of such office, candidature or service, and the times and place at which the meetings are held."

Ministry of Education

"Officers of the Board are not permitted to serve on any County Council, Borough Council, District Council or Parish Council, without the sanction of the Board."

Ministry of Food

"Officers of the Ministry of Food are not allowed to become candidates for County Councils or Borough Councils nor to serve in any municipal office without special permission obtained in each case from Establishments Department Headquarters. They are not precluded from serving on District Councils (except in the case of Divisional Food Officers, Food Executive Officers and their staff who must obtain special permission as indicated above) or on Parish Councils, if the meetings are held at such times that attendance will not interfere with their official duties."

Ministry of Health

"No member of the staff may become a candidate for membership of any County, Borough, District or Parish Council, or serve as a co-opted member of any Committee of such Councils." (This rule does not apply to Minor and Manipulative staff or to Typing grades.)

Inland Revenue

"The permission of the Board must be obtained before a serving officer becomes a candidate for election to any Local Government body. Permission will not normally be withheld in the case of an officer stationed within the Metropolitan Area."

Ministry of Labour and National Service

"Officers of the Ministry of Labour and National Service are not allowed to become candidates for County Councils or Borough Councils. They are not allowed to become candidates for other Councils or accept municipal office except with the consent of the Permanent Secretary."

Post Office

"An officer of the Department may become a candidate for, or serve on, any County, Municipal or Local Council provided that the duties involved in such candidature or service do not conflict with his duties in the Department. If the duties are found to conflict, the officer will be required to resign from the Council."

Ministry of Town and Country Planning

There is no written Departmental rule, but applications to stand for election to Councils of Local Authorities have been refused.

Ministry of Transport

"No member of the staff may become a candidate for membership of any County, Borough, District or Parish Council, or serve as a co-opted member of any Committee of such Councils without first obtaining the permission of the Head of the Department. Each application will be treated on its merits, but it must be understood that permission will not normally be given to officers serving in branches which are brought into relationship with Local Authorities."

War Office

(a) All Headquarters staff :

"By the terms of Treasury letter No. 22247 of 15th November, 1909, it rests with the Permanent Under-Secretary to determine whether and on what conditions a civil servant may become a candidate for, or serve on any local council. An essential condition would be that the duties involved in such candidature or service should not conflict with the performance of the official's duties in the Department.

Special leave with full pay, up to a maximum of 12 days in each leave year, is granted to members of Town and County Councils and of Urban and Rural District Councils, for the purpose of attending Council meetings. Such leave may be taken in half days."

(b) Civilian staff at War Department Outstations :

"Employees may serve on a local council on the understanding that membership of such public body does not interfere with the efficient performance of their duties as employees of the War Department, and that the usual times of meetings do not conflict with working hours. If, however, a meeting has to be held during official hours, leave may be specially granted, provided that the work of the establishment will not suffer through the absence of the employee concerned. . . . Employees may not hold municipal or parochial appointments or any similar offices without War Office sanction."

APPENDIX 7

THE LINE OF DEMARCATION PROPOSED BY THE COMMITTEE

<i>Grades</i>	<i>Approximate numbers on 1st January, 1949</i>
Administrative (Home and Foreign)	4,300
Professional, Scientific and Technical	80,700
Executive	61,000
Clerical	273,500
Typing	32,000
Service Departments' Constabularies	6,500
Post Office Supervisory Manipulatives	12,800*
Total above the line	470,800

Minor and Manipulative Grades:

(a) Post Office	207,700
(b) Other	49,750

Industrials:

(a) Service Departments	214,000
(b) Ministry of Supply	65,000
(c) Post Office	67,000
(d) Others	62,500

Total below the line	665,950
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The majority of the Committee recommend that these grades be placed above the line.

APPENDIX 8

POSITION OF PRINCIPAL STAFF ASSOCIATIONS FOLLOWING REPEAL OF TRADE DISPUTES ACT

<i>Association</i>	<i>Approximate membership 1948</i>	<i>Whether affiliated to T.U.C.</i>	<i>Whether affiliated to a Political Party</i>
Institution of Professional Civil Servants.	31,000	No	No
Association of Inspectors of Taxes	1,500	—ballot against	No
Society of Civil Servants	26,000	No	No
		—ballot against	
Ministry of Labour Staff Association	18,000	Yes	No
Inland Revenue Staff Federation ...	36,000	Yes	No
Civil Service Clerical Association ...	149,000	Yes	No*
Association of C.S. Designers and Draughtsmen.	3,500	Yes	No
Civil Service Union	20,000	Yes	No
Federation of P.O. Supervising Officers.	13,000	No	No
		(Decision left to individual associations)	
P.O. Engineering Union	56,000	Yes	No
Union of P.O. Workers	147,000	Yes	Yes

Note

* The C.S.C.A. has announced its intention of holding a ballot on the question of whether to set up a political fund.

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