POSTSCRIPT

Some Observations about the Fulton Report 1968

I INTRODUCTION

The Fulton Report on the Home Civil Service was published on 26 June 1968; in presenting it to the House of Commons, the Prime Minister described the Report as 'an essential contribution to the modernisation of the basic institutions of this country'. The Prime Minister said that the Fulton Committee had produced a 'wide-ranging and fundamental review' of the Civil Service, that he was confident that the Committee's Report 'will stand comparison with the historic Northcote–Trevelyan Report of more than a century ago', and that the Government had decided 'to accept the main recommendations of the Report and to embark on the process of reform outlined by the Committee'.

The first main recommendation of the Fulton Committee accepted by the Government was that a new Civil Service Department should be set up with wider functions than those now performed by the 'Pay and Management' group of the Treasury, which it would take over. The new department would also absorb the Civil Service Commission. The Committee wanted the new department to be under the control of the Prime Minister, who would retain direct responsibility for senior appointments, machinery of government and questions of security. Outside this area, the Committee suggested that the Prime Minister should delegate day-to-day responsibility to a non-departmental Minister of appropriate seniority who was also a member of the Cabinet. The Committee recommended that the Permanent Secretary of the Civil Service Department should be designated Head of the


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Home Civil Service. On behalf of the Government the Prime Minister said that 'We accept the proposal to establish a new Civil Service Department on the lines advocated by the Committee and the steps to bring this about will be taken at the appropriate time. Specific and formal arrangements will be made to ensure the continued independence and political impartiality, within the new Civil Service Department, of the Civil Service Commission in the selection of individuals for appointment to the Civil Service.'

The Prime Minister announced that the Paymaster-General, a member of the Cabinet with no departmental duties, had been asked 'to supervise the setting up of the new department and to control its day-to-day operations when established'.

The second main recommendation of the Fulton Committee accepted by the Government was that a Civil Service College should be set up which would provide major training courses in administration and management and a wide range of shorter courses. The Committee envisaged the College as having important research functions. The Committee said that the courses provided by the College 'should not be restricted to Civil Servants; a proportion of places should be set aside for men and women from private industrial and commercial firms, local government and public corporations'.

On behalf of the Government the Prime Minister said that it had 'accepted the recommendation to set up a Civil Service College to develop the training of Civil Servants broadly on the lines recommended in the Report. The timing of this will, of course, have to be fitted into a programme which takes full account of public expenditure control.'

The third main recommendation of the Fulton Committee accepted by the Government was that 'all classes should be

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1 *Fulton Report*, p. 104. The members of the Committee were: Lord Fulton (Chairman); Sir Norman Kipping; Sir Philip Allen; Mr W. C. Anderson; Rt Hon. Sir Edward Boyle, M.P.; Sir William Cook; Sir James Dunnett; Dr Norman Hunt; Mr R. R. Neild; Mr R. Sheldon, M.P.; Professor Lord Simey; and Sir John Wall.

