

PRIME MINISTER

BBC Radio (producer Mrs. Anne Sloman) wants to make a series of five 25-minute programmes on the Civil Service interviewing past and present Ministers and past and present senior Civil Servants. The presenter would be Hugo Young, Sunday Times.

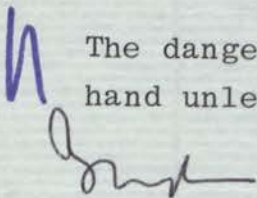
Lord Soames sets out the position in the attached note. While recognising that these things can go wrong, he would on the whole like to recommend co-operation.

We shall not stop the BBC from making this series even if we wanted to do so. Nor can we prevent them from interviewing former Ministers or Civil Servants. But that would not do justice to your efforts to reform the Civil Service or indeed the Service itself.

Consequently, I would advise you to give your general approval to Ministers and senior officials taking part subject to:

- co-ordination of the programme through CSD, reporting to me on your behalf, with a common overall brief for those taking part;
- your office knowing who is to take part in which programme; and
- particularly close liaison, with me acting on your behalf, on the programme which examines whether the Civil Service should be more political.

The danger with this type of programme is that they can get out of hand unless there is reasonably firm control at the centre.


B. INGHAM

13 February, 1981

