

MEMORANDUM FOR CABINET BY THE HON. PRIME MINISTERTransfers of public officers

The Establishments Division of the Office of the Prime Minister has, for some time past, been seriously hindered in the task of transfer of staff from or to the various departments. Numerous protests have been received after the issue of transfer lists. In some instances authorised transfers remained inoperative and, as a result of pressure exerted by departments, decisions on transfers had to be reversed or suspended against the advice of Establishments. Because of this, it is becoming increasingly difficult to cater efficiently for the needs of Ministers and departments and to post staff on promotion. The position has deteriorated to such an extent that one Minister has been driven to submit a memorandum to the effect that Establishments should have the final say in transfers.

2. There is apparently a tendency to confuse the source from which Establishments derives its authority. To some senior Civil Servants, Establishments apparently seems to be just another department, whose directives with regard to the placement of staff can sometimes be flouted. It appears necessary, therefore, to emphasize that 'Personnel' is a function of the Prime Minister and that Establishments is the Prime Minister's agency in all staff matters. In all cases, Establishments try to allocate the available staff in the light of the competing needs of departments, so as to ensure maximum benefit to the Public Service as a whole. The advantage of having a central personnel agency exercising authority on behalf of the Prime Minister is that Ministers are freed from dealing with these petty details of day-to-day administration.

3. Hon. Ministers are asked to recognise that transfers are and should be a matter to be dealt with by Establishments, on behalf of the Prime Minister, and that no interference should be exercised from any source with transfers effected by Establishments. If, after the issue of a transfer list, a Head of Department wishes to make representations, these should be addressed to his Minister who, after carefully examining the position, if he considers it necessary, should take the matter up in writing with the Office of the Prime Minister. In all cases, however, representations should only be made after compliance with the transfer instructions.

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6th November, 1964.