

February 4th 2011

The Prime Minister
10, Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you to express the dismay felt by our members in the Forestry Commission on hearing of your comments in the House, to the effect "I think someone else could do a better job than the Forestry Commission".

As Civil Servants we all accept that Governments may, and indeed frequently do, change their minds and their policies and that it is our responsibility to react and adapt accordingly. It is because of the skills and dedication of the Staff of the Forestry Commission that they have, throughout the almost hundred years of their existence, consistently achieved this extremely efficiently and effectively. This level of performance has deservedly earned them an unrivalled reputation for delivery, which up to now has been acknowledged by politicians of all colours whether in Government or opposition. The Forestry Commission has also earned a huge International reputation in recognition of the level of skills and specialist knowledge that it has amassed over the years.

We all recognise that the role of Prime Minister requires a huge raft of skills and talents and through history various Prime Ministers have displayed these to a lesser or greater extent. Prime Minister, I must congratulate you on demonstrating one uniquely your own, where one World War, several storms and hurricanes, increasing numbers of pestilences, ever harsher financial restrictions and consecutive Governments have failed to dent the morale of Forestry Commission staff, you have succeeded.

Prime Minister, in your role as head of the Government and therefore Head of the Civil Service I do not believe it is unreasonable for your staff to expect a level of support and indeed recognition for their work and dedication. Your comments have left them feeling deeply hurt and feeling they have lost this level of support and recognition. This may not have been your intention I would therefore like to give you the opportunity to apologise and give your assurances of the Government's recognition and appreciation of the years of exemplary service that yours and previous administrations have enjoyed.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Beaney
FCTU Chair