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10, Downing Street  
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23rd January 1985

Dear Bernard,

Thank you for sparing the time to talk last night. Your advice was most welcome.

I enclose a pretty immodest note (for your eyes alone) about my record with civil servants. Among ministers, Geoffrey Howe will vouch best for me - I have no reason to suppose he regretted letting me loose on the Treasury or the Foreign Office and he is enthusiastically making room in his diary to make the speech at our book launch party on March 14th.

These programmes are a serious exercise which as I said, will I hope have a shelf-life beyond the broadcasts in May. I want them to contain some meat about the way Mrs. Thatcher operates as Prime Minister, and the way the job has developed in her hands, and this really does need the evidence of those who work with her in No. 10. If we get a green light I am very happy to come back and talk about the areas of questioning I would like to pursue with some of the people we mentioned last night.

Jaws.  
Anne

Anne Sloman  
Editor, Special Current Affairs



### Participation by Civil Servants in Radio Programmes

Anne Sloman first brought serving civil servants to the microphone to talk about their work fourteen years ago. In "The Case of Flora Ginetio", broadcast in April 1971 an immigration case was traced through the Home Office with evidence on air from the officials whose desks it had crossed. Other Talking Politics programmes in the early seventies to which civil servants contributed included one on Question Time in which the then Under-Secretary at the DTI described in some detail how his division prepared his minister for parliamentary questions. The series was subsequently published as a book Westminster and Beyond. In the foreword Sir William Armstrong, then head of the home civil service, wrote "For civil servants there will always be problems involved in appearing on public platforms, and areas of reticence which they must preserve, particularly in confidential advice to ministers. The line is difficult to draw, but given goodwill on both sides and the common objective of public enlightenment, the attempt can and should continue to be made." Since then Anne Sloman has continued to draw that line with considerable success. In 1981 she produced a series about the home civil service, No Minister, in which serving civil servants from a number of departments and at all levels from Permanent Secretary to principal talked freely about their work. The series was widely debated and reviewed in the press, and was adjudged to have been a success for all concerned, including the officials who participated. The ground rules negotiated by Mrs. Sloman with Ian Bancroft, then head of the civil service department are set out in the foreword to the book of the same name published in 1982.

In 1983, Anne Sloman turned her attention to the Treasury, and with the co-operation of Sir Geoffrey Howe and Sir Douglas Wass (and Sir Peter Middleton who was about to take over as Permanent Secretary) produced five radio programmes, But, Chancellor which looked at every aspect of the Treasury's work, from public expenditure to the Budget. They were again presented by Hugo Young, and as with the earlier series all those who



took part were serving civil servants talking about their current jobs.

The next major department of state to co-operate in such an exercise was the Foreign Office, and the book based on that series, With Respect, Ambassador will be published in March. The Foreign Office took the view that Anne Sloman's record was such that she could be trusted to operate freely under the ground rules established in 1981, and she and Simon Jenkins (who presented that series) were given carte blanche in their visits to embassies abroad to talk on and off the record to officials at every level.

In all Anne Sloman has, in the course of her career as a BBC journalist, interviewed nearly 100 serving officials about their present jobs. Not one has ever complained about the fairness of their treatment in the subsequent broadcasts.