

PRIME MINISTER

cc Mr Wolfson

The Solicitor General has asked to see you about his continued role on the Employment Bill. As he has put it to me, he wants to be "released from his special assignment" on the Bill.

As I mentioned to you in a note last night, Sir Ian was consulted on the redrafting of the consultation document, and he thought he had got Mr. Prior's agreement to tightening up and clarifying the last section of the paper. However, when he saw the penultimate draft yesterday afternoon, he was still very unhappy about it - and in particular, he felt that it left open the possibility of immunities extending to second customer/supplier. Later in the evening he rang me at home to say that his real concern was that Mr. Prior had not accepted Mr. Nott's suggestion that Nawala-type situations should be covered, nor some of the Chancellor's suggested amendments (see also his letter at Flag A). Mr. Prior has written to both Mr. Nott and the Chancellor that their suggestions are unacceptable because they go beyond the policy that was agreed in E last week.

Sir Ian is particularly incensed that Mr. Prior has seen fit to say in his minute to you that he has "had very substantial assistance from the Solicitor General in recasting the last part of the paper". He feels that his name has been taken in ~~fact~~^{vain}.

Sir Ian has told me that his Department will of course continue to assist the Department of Employment as required, but he personally wants to be no longer involved. This seems to me a distinction which cannot stand up very long. I am sure you will want to calm Sir Ian down; and specifically assure him that, when you approved the document last night, you were aware that he was far from happy with it - but that you could not see any point in arguing about the draft further.

R.

19 February 1980

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 February 1980

The Solicitor General has asked the Prime Minister if he can be released from his special duties as a member of your Secretary of State's team on the Employment Bill. The Prime Minister has agreed to this, and the Solicitor General will now revert to his normal duties as a Law Officer. As such, he will of course continue to be available to your Department to provide advice on matters of law as requested.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Bill Beckett (Law Officers' Department).

T. P. LANKESTER

I. A. W. Fair, Esq.,
Department of Employment.

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