



Econ Policy. MJ
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 December 1979

Mr. Geoffrey Chandler called on the Prime Minister this morning. They had a general discussion about the December and January NEDC meetings.

One point which I ought to record is that Mr. Chandler told the Prime Minister that Mr. Murray was unlikely to be present at the January meeting. This was because he was planning to be on holiday abroad at that time. The Prime Minister said that she would prefer it if Mr. Murray could attend, and asked Mr. Chandler to see if he could persuade Mr. Murray to break into his holiday.

Mr. Chandler has since told me that he has spoken to Mr. Murray, who has taken note of the Prime Minister's point. He (Mr. Murray) intends to consider the matter further in the light of tomorrow's NEDC meeting. Apparently, he feels that if tomorrow's meeting goes well and if there promises to be no difficulty with the January meeting, he would prefer not to attend. This is not just because of his not wanting to break into his holiday; he is also concerned that, if he were to make a special effort to attend, his trade union colleagues might take umbrage - on the grounds that he would not appear to have confidence in their ability to handle the January meeting. However, if tomorrow's meeting goes badly and it appears that the January meeting is going to be difficult, Mr. Murray will seriously consider attending it.

Notwithstanding what Mr. Murray has told Mr. Chandler, I am sure the Prime Minister would still wish - if possible - that Mr. Murray can attend the January meeting. Perhaps the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Employment might consider how they could persuade him.

There is one other point which you should be aware of. The Prime Minister would like to have the papers for the January meeting so as to be able to read them over the Christmas holiday period, together with the necessary briefing

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from Departments. The briefing will presumably include a speaking note for her introduction to the meeting.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Ian Ellison (Department of Industry) and Ian Fair (Department of Employment).

J. P. LANKESTER

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HM Treasury.

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