

cc Mr Wolfson
Mr Heslyns

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PRIME MINISTER

ms

~~PRIME MINISTER~~We await Mr
Prior's response to
your queries

EMPLOYMENT BILL: BALLOTS AT THE WORKPLACE

MS
14/4

- [A] In his minute to you of 8 April Jim Prior proposes a new Clause in the Employment Bill requiring an employer to provide on request a place for a secret union ballot.
- [B] I have also seen your Private Secretary's letter of 10 April.

I welcome Jim's proposed exclusion of firms employing 20 people or less. The requirement could be onerous for many of these, for example, because of lack of adequate premises. It would be inconsistent with our policy towards small firms to place this additional legal obligation on them.

In the absence of any widespread prior consultation with industry on the details of this requirement we must, I think, indicate our willingness to listen sympathetically to any representations from them and to amend the Clause if necessary to avoid any nonsenses.

I assume that the requirement would apply only to ballots for those purposes specified in the Bill in relation to postal ballots (on industrial action; elections; amendment of rules; union amalgamations etc. or other purposes specified by Order).

/Whatever ...



Whatever the precise form of the resulting Clause in the Employment Bill I hope that the preparation of the forthcoming Green Paper on trade union law to be published later this year will give us an opportunity to consider at more leisure the pros and cons of further legislation on the proper role of ballots before industrial action.

I am sending copies of this minute to the other members of E Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

KJ

K J
11 April 1980

Department of Industry
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14 APR 1980