

PRIME MINISTER

This letter from the Deputy Chairman of the Price Commission expresses concern at reports that the Price Commission may be abolished. He argues for a slimming down and a weakening of the Commission's powers. He also suggests that he might call on a Minister to explain his views.

I think Mr. Pincott's views are roughly in accord with yours, and it would be interesting for the Government to have his ^{detailed} views. However, Mr. Nott is not proposing to see the Chairman of the Commission until after Ministers have decided on the main issue of whether to abolish the Commission or to continue with it in a weaker form (we are trying to fix up a meeting of the Economic Strategy Committee for Monday). It may therefore be difficult for him to call ⁱⁿ ~~for~~ the Deputy Chairman before Monday. I suggest that we ask Mr. Nott to reply, leaving it to him whether or not he calls in Mr. Pincott - alternatively he may be able to get his views in more detail in writing. Agree?

Yes not

TL

9 May 1979

Item removed for reason of intellectual property

Letter from Leslie Pincott to MT 7 May 1979

Summary

Written from his home at Woodsford Square, W14, headed Price Commission (of which he was deputy chairman). Mr Pincott described himself as having long experience in industry and as being "an ardent supporter of your policies", but expressed "personal concern" at reports that Prices Act 1977 would be repealed and Price Commission abolished. Large numbers informed people still think there should be "some surveillance over price increases". With inflation at over 10 per cent trade unions would demand continuing control over prices if agreement to be reached on pay.

Notes "industrial leaders" annoyed by cost of Price Commission investigations. Thinks Commission itself to blame and proposes cut of its activities and staff by "more than half", simplification Notification Order and procedures. Happy to meet a minister to discuss.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 May 1979

The Prime Minister has received the enclosed letter from the Deputy Chairman of the Price Commission; the letter argues for a slimming down and a weakening of the Commission's powers, and Mr. Pincott says he would be pleased to explain his views to a Minister.

The Prime Minister would be grateful if your Secretary of State would reply on her behalf. She understands that Mr. Nott does not propose to see the Chairman of the Price Commission until Ministers have considered the basic issue of the future Price Commission next Monday and that therefore it may be difficult for him to call in the Deputy Chairman in advance. However, she would like him to consider the possibility of this - or at least of getting Mr. Pincott's more detailed views in writing.

I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosure to Martin Hall (H.M. Treasury).

T.G. Harris, Esq.
Department of Trade

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