

1. MR. WOLFSON
2. PRIME MINISTER

National Music for the Blind

You asked us to find a private benefactor to finance Mr. Mills' service of circulating cassettes to the blind by post, now that the Post Office have decided that they cannot justify a concession to him.

The RNIB agreed to act as a channel for a charitable donation. They made it clear that they had some doubts about Mr. Mills' organisation, and that they did not regard his service as a necessary one. But they were prepared to be helpful. *A potential benefactor was found!* See

Mr. Mills, however, has now made it clear that he will not accept this arrangement. He believes that the Post Office should have a moral obligation to carry his packages free. If and when they withdraw the existing concession, he intends to go public and make a fuss about it.

We are at an impasse. Ministers cannot direct the Post Office to continue a concession, which the Post Office believe already puts them in breach of the Post Office Act. Mr. Mills makes it clear that he will not accept any arrangement for meeting his postal charges. He believes there should be no charges.

We may now have to accept that the Post Office will impose charges, and Mr. Mills will seek to create a public row. If you agree that we are left with no alternatives, there are two steps which we might usefully take:-

1. We should ensure that the Post Office does not withdraw the present arrangements until after Christmas - I suppose they might time it to coincide with the increase in postal charges.
2. We might arrange for social services correspondents to be briefed on the efforts made by Ministers to arrange private financial assistance to meet Mr. Mills' postal costs, thus making it clear that Mr. Mills' complaint is not that he has been prevented from continuing his service, but that he feels the Post Office have a duty to service him free of charge.

/ Agree

Agree that we should now allow the Post Office to withdraw the existing concession, and that we should take these precautions?

MA

Yes

3 December, 1980.