



MR. GOW

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 July 1980

At lunchtime today, the Prime Minister had a word with the Lord Chancellor about the amendment to Clause 17 of the Employment Bill which has been proposed by Lord Orr-Ewing, and about the letters which the Prime Minister has received from Sir John Stebbings, Mr. Peter Taylor, Q.C., and Mr. Thomas Morison, Q.C..

The Lord Chancellor said that, while Clause 17 of the Bill was complicated and might have been drafted differently, it was in his view workable, and a satisfactory expression of the policy line that had been agreed. He considered the criticisms of Sir John Stebbings and the other correspondents to be ill founded, and he was opposed to the Orr-Ewing amendment on policy grounds. If it would be of any help, he would be happy to meet Sir John Stebbings and the others to go over their criticisms.

The Prime Minister said that she did not wish to reply to Sir John Stebbings with a point-by-point rebuttal as suggested by the Department of Employment (Richard Dykes' letter of 2 July). Instead, if the Lord Chancellor agreed, she would reply that she had spoken with him, in his opinion Clause 17 was quite adequate, but he would be happy to discuss the various criticisms with them if they so wished. The Lord Chancellor said that he was quite content.

I am sending copies of this letter to Richard Dykes (Department of Employment), Bill Beckett (Law Officers' Department) and Mary Howat (Lord Advocate's Department).

T. P. LANKESTER

Ian Maxwell, Esq.,
Lord Chancellor's Office.