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ANR/srg

14th December 1977

MRS. THATCHER

c.c. Mr. Whitelaw
Mr. Prior
Sir Geoffrey Howe

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Mr. Whitelaw's Letter to Mr. Griffiths about Police

May I suggest that it might be sensible to amplify Mr. Whitelaw's letter by a small addition at the end of paragraph 8. The following words would, I think, strengthen Mr. Whitelaw's case:

"In particular we must note that any solution for police pay must be found within the context of the cash limit system, and be consonant with the broader philosophy we wish to develop for dealing with a number of other difficult public sector pay claims such as those for the firemen and the armed services."

*Boo
technical*

The reasons for suggesting this small addition are, I hope, obvious.

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ADAM RIDLEY

Copy sent to A.R. 15/12 99.

DRAFT REPLY FROM MR. WILLIAM WHITELAW TO MR. ELDON GRIFFITHS

Thank you for your letter of the 7th November, 1977 in which you raised the question of the attitude of the Shadow Cabinet to ~~Judge Edmund Davies's~~ Committee which is reviewing the future of the Police Service.

As you know, I have consistently argued, for some time and with the full support of my Shadow Cabinet colleagues, that the police must be given a place in the national wages league which would alleviate the persistent undermanning in the police service.

I advocated on the 12th July in the House of Commons an independent inquiry into Police pay and conditions. After a great deal of damaging delay the Government finally accepted this proposal.

Against this background it is clear that the Shadow Cabinet will be guided by the recommendations of Judge Edmund Davies's inquiry both on pay and on the other aspects of police work and negotiations which the committee is also examining.

But pay is the crucial element at present. We fully accept the need for an interim report on pay to be made as quickly as possible.

We accept that the committee is and should be free to recommend a degree of phasing of any pay award it recommends.

Obviously we cannot commit ourselves to all the Davies Committee's recommendations before we know what they are.

The present Government has reserved the right to consider the phasing of the implementation of the recommendations and this should also be our position.

I should just like to add that we have made it perfectly clear that one of the few areas where we believe we need to increase public spending is on the police because the present deteriorating crime situation combined with police undermanning poses a serious threat to our citizens.

A future Conservative Government would not necessarily regard the Davies Committee report as the last word on the police. We would certainly want to talk directly with the local authorities, the Police Federation and senior police officers about what steps should be taken to ensure that the police have the support and resources they need to combat the growth of lawlessness in our society.