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PRIME MINISTER

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Cabinet: Community Affairs

In the absence of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary in Kuala Lumpur, the Lord Privy Seal might be invited to report on his and Lord Carrington's recent talks on our budget problem with the Irish Foreign Minister.

2. The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food might be invited to report on the outcome of the 3rd-4th March Agriculture Council, with particular reference to the discussions on the Commission's economy and price proposals and their latest initiative on an interim sheepmeat regime.

3. The Secretary of State for Industry might be invited to report on the results of his Minister of State's talks with the Commission on 4th March on the scope for Community assistance to the United Kingdom in alleviating the social consequences of the contraction of our steel industry. It looks as though we might be eligible for up to half of a £20 million allocation from the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) budget for early retirement schemes, provided that the Government can match any Community spending with money of its own and that the other member states agree to increase the ECSC budget to the required extent.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

5th March, 1980

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