

hd 20 2

Prime Minister

cc Mr Hoskyns



I think you took the same view

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

as the Chancellor on this.

PRIME MINISTER

M

R.

1/16

RELATIONS WITH TRADE UNION LEADERS

I have seen a copy of John Hoskyns' minute to you of 6th June. I agree with much of what he says in the early part of his minute, but I must say that I am very doubtful about his suggestion of a public initiative for talks with the TUC on an agenda of our own choosing.

2. I am afraid that an initiative of this kind would tend to build up the TUC when its national standing is declining, and I think on the whole it is best that it should decline further. It would make it look as if we were worried about TUC hostility and anxious to buy them off in some way. If the TUC said yes, the discussions would be difficult. Even if they accepted an agenda limited to the points which John suggests (which is a little difficult to imagine) they would in practice try to expand the discussions into wider subjects. If they said no, I am afraid it would look like confrontation.

3. There is so much foolish talk about "U-turns" around and so many journalists are waiting for signs of it that they would surely pounce on this and interpret it in this way, no matter what we might say about the agenda and about our unwillingness to discuss the Government's economic policy.

/A time may

CONFIDENTIAL



4. A time may come when it may be right to have talks with the TUC on some of these matters. Even so, I am not persuaded that John's is the right way - or that that time has yet come.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be the initials "J.H." with a flourish.

(G.H.)

12 June 1980

CONFIDENTIAL



12 JUN 1981