

Prime Minister

I think we should
go firm on February,
And you can discuss
the agenda with the



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Agree?

PRIME MINISTER

I was very pleased to hear that you would like to take the chair again at the National Economic Development Council in the near future, and I have been giving some thought to when would be the best time for you to come. I have consulted the other parties represented on the NEDC about this, and our feeling is that the best date would be either 7 January or 4 February. In view of the difficulty of preparing for an important Council meeting over the Christmas period, February would be the better of the two dates for us, but I know that the Council would be very happy for you to come in January if you would find this more convenient.

2. The agendas for the January and February meetings have not yet been fixed, and so it should be possible to construct one which you would feel worthwhile. If we wished to take a relatively low key line we could usefully discuss, for example, small firms, industrial research and development.

3. An alternative might be to invite, Terry Burns for example, to begin the proceedings with a broad presentation of economic problems and then to embark upon a pretty pointed discussion of central economic issues: jobs, prices, productivity and pay. Or we could try to devote most of the time to a discussion of productivity, competition and marketing - drawing on some of the studies that are available about the Japanese threat. Perhaps we could have an early word about this general choice?



4. Either way I think it would be useful for the agenda to include a presentation by a chairman of one of the Sector Working Parties, possibly on diesel engines.

5. If you would let me know which date you would prefer, I will make the necessary arrangements with NEDO: we can go firm on the agenda as soon as possible thereafter.

(G.H.)

7 October 1980

CONQUEROR