



DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY
ASHDOWN HOUSE
123 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1E 6RB

TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-212 3301
SWITCHBOARD 01-212 7676

PS/ *Secretary of State for Industry*

29 October 1980

Tim Lankester Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Tim

Mr Lykan
Mr Hodgson
Mr Beecher

Prime Minister
Mr

DL

29/10

BL CARS' DISPUTE

As promised in my letter of 27 October, I am writing to give you further news on this dispute.

2 Up to the time of the mass meetings which are being called at all BL Cars plants in the course of 30 October, the management will be appealing directly to each of the 73,000 workers involved not to take industrial action at a time when the Metro has just been successfully launched, and when BL's market share, in response to this, has risen to 23 per cent.

3 If, as BL think is not unlikely, a sufficient number of plants give support to strike action, they will put every possible pressure on the unions to draw back from the brink, up to and including the time of the union meeting on 3 November which will assess the response made at the mass meetings. Sir Michael Edwardes is currently seeking his Board's approval of a statement by him on or before 3 November to the effect that if a substantial part of the workforce takes strike action, the Board will withdraw the recently submitted Corporate Plan and will seek no further funds from the Government for BL Cars.

4 I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Employment.

Yours ever
Catherine Bell
CATHERINE BELL
Private Secretary