

This is a copy. The original  
has been extracted and  
retained under S.3(4)

From: Minister

Agree with Minister's answer

come within the scope of the  
inquiry?

the  
box

Ref. A03606

MR. WHITMORE

Thank you for your minute of 18th November about Mr. Peter Hennessy's article in that day's Times about the Civil Contingencies Unit.

2. That day's article was no more than gossip column stuff about Brigadier Bishop, and as such did not seem to me to justify a leak inquiry.

3. I take a very different view of today's article, which reports Ministerial disagreements about the use of volunteers in emergencies. This follows earlier articles by Mr. Hennessy on 17th and 18th July.

4. The source document for the leak on 17th July was one of the Department of the Environment's MINIS returns, which had been copied to the Department of the Environment's trade union side. We hoped that that discovery, and the action taken as a result of it, would have prevented further leaks by that channel. It seems that the leak continues - though not necessarily through that channel; and I have come to the conclusion that we should now formally investigate it.

5. I am proposing accordingly to Sir Ian Bancroft. I have spoken to him informally and I understand that he is likely to agree. I hope that the Prime Minister will agree that Ministers should be included within the scope of the inquiry.

Paragraph 6 deleted and retained under Section 3(4).

OWayland

13/9/11

RTA

(Robert Armstrong)

19th November, 1980

## Echoes of the General Strike in hardliners' plan

# Cabinet split on use of civilian volunteers during stoppages

By Peter Hennessy

A fierce dispute among ministers about whether it is desirable or practical for the Government to muster civilian volunteers to replace striking workers in essential industries and services in a winter of discontent is still unresolved after eight months of discussion.

Should the hardliners in the Cabinet triumph and a rash of industrial disputes materialize, the country could witness the introduction of non-service personnel on a substantial scale for the first time since the General Strike of 1926.

The argument has taken place inside a secret Cabinet committee, the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU), chaired by Mr William Whitelaw, the Home Secretary, who has grave reservations about the plan and given leadership to the doves. Prominent among the hawks have been Mr Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr John Biffen, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and Mr John Nott, Secretary of State for Trade.

Confidential discussions with local authority associations, carried out during the summer by Mr Frank Elders of the Department of the Environ-

ment's defence planning and emergencies division, met with a cool and sceptical response.

The softliners have so far achieved one notable victory in killing the idea that the 70,000-strong Territorial Army should be used alongside Regulars in substituting for striking workers under the procedure known as military aid to the civil ministries.

With considerable difficulty Mr Francis Pym, Secretary of State for Defence, persuaded the Prime Minister that the basic military purpose of the country's reserve forces could be jeopardized, especially as many reservists are trade unionists should they be used in strikebreaking activities.

The idea of involving the Territorials had great appeal for Mrs Margaret Thatcher and the hawks as winter crises tend to stretch the regular forces to near breaking point. A maximum of 20,000 regulars can be used in industrial disputes at any one time without weakening the country's contribution to Nato or its role in Northern Ireland. An upper ceiling of 30,000 can be reached if withdrawals are made from the British Army of the Rhine.

Mrs Thatcher has also been persuaded that Territorial Army drill halls should not be used for the mustering of civilian volunteers.

The CCU, which normally convenes as a mixed committee of ministers and civil servants, met as a purely ministerial body, with only official minute-takers present, in the Cabinet Office two weeks ago to try to resolve the fundamental disagreement between hawks and doves. The discussion, which passed through some rough patches, focused on a paper prepared by the committee's secretary, Brigadier Richard Bishop, which set out the pros and cons of summoning and using a civilian volunteer force.

The meeting proved inconclusive and the expectation in Whitehall is that the Prime Minister will have to intervene to resolve the impasse fairly swiftly before the preliminary skirmishes of the 1980-81 strike season develop into a full-blooded winter of discontent. There is some nervousness inside the contingency planning community which, with a few exceptions is against the idea of civilian volunteers, that Mrs Thatcher will side with the hawks.

## HOME NEWS

# Protests over jailing of two sisters who killed sadistic father

By Robin Young

A campaign to overturn the three-year prison sentences imposed at Leeds Crown Court on Monday on two sisters who killed their sadistic father was rapidly gathering support yesterday.

Annette and Charlene Maw, aged 21 and 18 respectively, were sentenced by Mr Justice Smith after admitting manslaughter.

Two Labour MPs from their home town, Bradford, said yesterday that they would campaign for their release.

Mr Thomas Torney, MP for Bradford, South, said that he was writing to ask the Lord Chancellor to "quickly alter the extremely harsh and vindictive sentences". Mr Benjamin Ford, Bradford, North, said the sentences were "excessively severe".

Mr Kenneth Norman, of the Cumbria-based Portia Trust, said that the sentences were "absolutely ridiculous".

Mr Martin Wright, of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "We do not usually comment on individual cases, but we regret that anyone should be sent to prison when they are not any danger to the public." There was no likelihood of repitition

from their father for years; he was said to have forced them to watch as he gassed mice, bit off a live hen's head, and kicked a puppy to death.

Release, the legal advice organization, said: "In numerous manslaughter cases offenders who have suffered less provocation than the Maw sisters have been given light or non custodial sentences."

Mr Stephen Couch, the sisters' solicitor, said applications for leave to appeal and for bail would be made as quickly as possible.

**Suspended sentence:** Last night the protests gained further momentum after a jury in St Albans cleared Mrs Joyce Fuller of the murder of her husband (our Luton correspondent writes).

She was found guilty of manslaughter, and was given a two-year jail sentence suspended for two years and was placed under supervision for two years.

Mr Justice Chapman told her: "There is no necessity for me to add to the troubles you have brought upon yourself by sending you to prison".

Mr Fuller of Welwyn Garden City, died of a knife wound during a quarrel about the rent. Mrs Fuller said that her husband often beat her.

# EEC reform group launched by Tory MPs

By Michael Hatfield  
Political Reporter

Thirty-five Tory backbenchers yesterday signalled their opposition to Britain's present relationship with the European Community at the launching in the Commons of a Conservative European Reform Group.

The move comes when some ministers see Mrs Margaret Thatcher moving away from her agnostic approach to Europe to an identification with the Community.

Mr Edward Taylor, Conservative MP for Southend, East, said that the group was in no way anti-Market. "I can see no one on our list who does not regard himself as 100 per cent behind Margaret Thatcher."

He admitted, however, that several members, including himself, had campaigned against entry into the EEC.

Three other Conservatives had joined the group but asked that their names should not be published; they were not ministers, but MPs who because of the positions they held or for other personal reasons did not want their membership made public at this stage.

The group's aims are: the ending of the common agricultural policy and the restora-