

PRIME MINISTER

Green Paper on Trade Union Immunities

At E Committee on 16 December, Mr. Prior was asked to make various amendments to his draft Green Paper. His minute at Flag A sets out the revisions in detail, and these seem to take into account just about all the points that were made in E.

The Chancellor has subsequently suggested one or two further amendments, and I understand that these have been accepted. In addition, John Hoskyns suggests that the section on secret ballots should be strengthened to include something on the following lines - "Some have argued that the full range of immunities should only be available for trade unions which conduct elections and strike decisions by secret ballot." Mr. Prior has also accepted this revision.

Mr. Tebbit, however, has now said (Flag B) he is dissatisfied with Mr. Prior's revision of the section on Nawala. Mr. Prior's revision is sidelined at Flag C, and follows precisely the wording of the E Committee minutes. The Cabinet Office tell me that the minutes exactly reflect the wording which Robert Armstrong proposed to you in manuscript, and which you read out. Mr. Prior's strong view is that we should stick to these words.

Mr. Tebbit would like to strengthen the passage to give a greater indication that we are concerned about the operation of the present law affecting international shipping. He claims that the Committee decided only to make a very small adjustment to the form of words proposed by John Nott at Flag D. My own recollection is that it was decided at the end of the meeting to change Mr. Nott's draft rather more substantially - on the lines set out in the E minutes.

I doubt whether it is worth taking Mr. Prior on on this relatively minor point at this late stage - the Green Paper has to go to press tomorrow. If you agree, I will tell Mr. Tebbit's office that you think it would be best to stick to the amendment already put forward by Mr. Prior.

*I believe the minutes are correct. The opening words will be changed to the form which you now use.*