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AT 12/12

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

12 December 1984

*Michael,*

MINERS' DISPUTE

*WJH AT*

I very much welcome the action which the Solicitor General reports in his minute to the Prime Minister of 30 November. The Home Office has drawn the Director of Public Prosecutions' revised policy to the attention of Chief Constables and has asked them to take it into account in cases which are left to them to prosecute.

I wonder if it would be possible to go further than an application for a date to be fixed and for an expedited trial in the case of intimidation offences? It seems to me that in all cases which are both serious and prevalent, and which are likely to put the public in fear or otherwise to involve a serious threat to public order, the Crown could properly - and arguably has a duty to - press for expedited trials and put the argument before the courts that expedition is required in the public interest and especially in order to preserve public confidence in the system of justice. The principle does not apply only to cases arising from industrial disputes, but to any situation where vulnerable groups may be particularly at risk.

A statement of this principle, perhaps by yourself in written reply to an arranged Question, would be much more effective in relation to police prosecutions and would be likely to achieve a more positive response from the courts (including the magistrates' courts) than an invitation for the court to consider an expedited trial in what will inevitably be no more than a small number of individual cases.

I wonder if you would consider making a statement on these lines?

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor.

*Law,  
Law*

The Rt Hon Sir Michael Havers, QC, MP

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COML

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