



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 January 1982

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LEGISLATION

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 23 January on his consultations and conclusions about the industrial relations legislative proposals announced on 23 November. She is, subject to the views of colleagues, content to proceed broadly along the lines he proposes, without a further meeting of E Committee.

The Prime Minister has, however, asked me to raise the following points with you:

(a) Periodic Review Ballots

The Prime Minister is concerned that, as a result of extending the initial period in which ballots are required for closed shops to be "approved", very few ballots may have taken place before the two years are up. Many companies may be tempted to leave this until the last moment - perhaps even until unfair dismissal cases are actually brought. She wonders whether such delay can be defended, and whether there is not political advantage in establishing the new safeguards more quickly. She understands, however, that this question does not affect the drafting of the Bill.

(b) Ballot Percentage

The Prime Minister would prefer to see the ballot threshold expressed as 80 per cent of all those affected, without the option of 85 per cent of those voting. She suggests that this would make it more difficult for unions and compliant employers to arrange votes where most of those voting can be relied upon to support the closed shop arrangements.

(c) Secret Ballots

The Prime Minister asks whether your Secretary of State has considered the suggestion that where

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Government funds for secret postal ballots conducted by unions are not taken up, the same funds should be available to employers if they wish to arrange for independent ballot.

I am copying this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Michael Collon (Lord Chancellor's Office), John Kerr (HM Treasury), Imogen Wilde (Department of Education and Science), David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office), Stephen Boys-Smith (Northern Ireland Office), David Omand (Ministry of Defence), Kate Timms (MAFF), David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Muir Russell (Scottish Office), John Craig (Welsh Office), Michael Arthur (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry), John Rhodes (Department of Trade), Anthony Mayer (Department of Transport), David Clark (DHSS), Terry Mathews (Chief Secretary's Office), Jim Buckley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Julian West (Department of Energy), Keith Long (Paymaster General's Office), Jim Nursaw (Law Officers' Department), Christine Duncan (Lord Advocate's Department), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

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