

AT.



Yes  
an ex l P.C.  
representative

10 DOWNING STREET

A.

At TU Bd mtg.

this pm — wh. I

hope you will allow

me to attend — TK

will probably announce

a compromise pretty

close to his original

amendment; his negotiations

have gone 'well' so far.

Oliver \$17



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

No King's negotiations  
with the dissident Peers  
will continue tomorrow. He  
will not be providing a  
paper but will report  
orally on the outcome.

AT

4/7



CONFIDENTIAL

MR TURNBULL

27 June 1984

TRADE UNION BILL

1. Tom King is worried that Trade Unions will use the Beloff amendment as a means of ridiculing the Government.

2. He points out that NALGO, for example, have already voted to ignore any legislation on the nature of ballots. Following the passage of the Bill, he thinks that NALGO may hold an unimpeachably proper work-place ballot for a Union election, certified by neutral observers, and with a high turnout. If the election is quashed in court on the grounds that it is not postal, Tom guesses that the Union will then hold a postal ballot, with the same result, but with a very small turnout because most members will have been told not to vote. This would provide the unions with a major propaganda victory.

3. These fears may be justified. Powerful unions in a monopoly position cannot always be brought to heel by the law: they will see the Bill as another part of the fight.

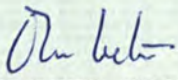
4. But the chance of future embarrassment does not make it sensible to reject the Beloff amendment. The amendment is in principle correct. And the Government would appear utterly foolish if it used Opposition help in the Commons to defeat an amendment favoured not only by its own supporters in the Lords but also - we have no doubt - by many Conservative MPs. (We believe that the business managers in both Houses are still under-estimating the extent of Conservative support for the Beloff position).

5. Nor do we favour Lord Cockfield's suggestion. A "semi-postal" ballot, in which members receive their voting papers at the work-place, would be open to as much abuse as an ordinary work-place vote. One can all too easily imagine a shop-steward "asking" a member whether he would "like to fill in his voting-card at work and have it posted for him". And the suggestion would probably fail to placate Lord Beloff.

6. We recommend that the Prime Minister should urge Tom King to satisfy Lord Beloff and his allies by accepting the principle of their amendment. The Government should draft an amendment that would reassert its parliamentary authority, including clauses to:

- i. exempt Unions with peripatetic members from postal ballots;
- ii. provide for a solicitor or accountant to certify the postal ballot, instead of setting up a new quango.

JMGAAK

  
OLIVER LETWIN

CONFIDENTIAL



## AMENDMENT MOVED SUCCESSFULLY IN THE LORDS

"Every person who is entitled to vote at the election shall be allowed to vote without interference and have a fair and convenient opportunity to vote. // Such elections shall be held by postal ballot, with the voting papers being sent to all members recorded as being eligible to vote in the latest available central register of membership. Responsibility for the surveillance of the distribution, return and counting of voting papers shall be in the hands of an independent body."

LORD BELOFF  
LORD RENTON  
LORD MARSH  
LORD HARRIS OF GREENWICH