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MO 20/17/6

3rd September 1984

Barney

1982 EMPLOYMENT ACT - CLOSED SHOPS IN GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHMENTS

Thank you for letting me have a copy of your letter of 13th August to Tom King.

- will request if just require

It is extremely unlikely that any of the MOD's recruitment or employment practices will present any difficulties internally or compromise us publicly, when the closed shop provisions of the Employment Act 1982 come into force in November.

With one exception there are no closed shop arrangements in the Department, formal or otherwise. Our declared policy is to encourage staff to join trade unions and obviously the unions themselves are anxious to secure, for maximum bargaining advantage, the highest level of individual membership they can. There is no instance where union membership is a requirement either for entry into the Department or in the assignment of conditions of service.

The exception is in the case of the crews of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) whose vessels are classified at present as part of the Merchant Navy. The crews are covered by a closed shop agreement with the Merchant Navy Officers' Association and the National Union

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of Seamen, the employer for this purpose being the National Maritime Board. We are considering at present whether the RFAs should be de-registered, a development which would affect the status of the vessels and also, possibly, the basis on which the crews are employed. But this is for the future and a good deal of consultation and discussion will be necessary before any change could be made.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Patrick Jenkin, Norman Fowler, Tom King and Grey Gowrie.

Yours ent

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "M. Heseltine".

Michael Heseltine