



*Transport.*  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
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Tim Lankester Esq  
Private Secretary to  
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10 Downing Street  
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15 June 1979

*MBM.*

*R 15/79*

*Dear Tim*

Yesterday's meeting at ACAS went better than expected.

The NUR and ASLEF Executive Committees are meeting this morning to consider a proposal worked out yesterday evening for informal 'mediation' under the aegis of ACAS. All three unions (including TSSA, who have supported arbitration all along) will be going back to ACAS at 2.00 this afternoon.

If the unions accept this proposal, the preliminary meeting of the "Mediation Board" would be on Sunday afternoon; the main hearing would be on Tuesday; and the final recommendations on Thursday. The recommendations would not be binding.

The main reason for this very tight schedule is procedural. The NUR Executive Committee is dissolved during the annual Conference which lasts for two weeks, starting on 25 June. The present Executive is anxious to take a decision on this dispute before the Conference.

The possibilities now are:

1. at best - the strike could be called off altogether. This is unlikely to happen today;
2. at worst - the unions could reject the ACAS proposal lock, stock and barrel, and the strike will go ahead;

3. Something in between - the unions could accept the ACAS proposal for arbitration, and postpone their strike until the outcome is known. If this happens it would mean a postponement for at least three weeks until after the NUR Conference.

At present there seems a slightly better than even chance that the third possibility will be the outcome of today's talks. We should know by 4.00 pm at the latest.

Copies of this letter go to the Private Secretaries of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, The Secretary of State for Defence, Employment, Environment and Energy, the Home Secretary, the Paymaster General, the Minister of State, Civil Service Department and to the Chief Whip. I am also sending copies to Martin Vile and the Private Secretary to Sir Clive Rose.

*Jones*

*Genie*

MRS E C FLANAGAN  
Private Secretary

115 JUN 1979

