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14 September 1979

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin, MP  
Secretary of State for Social Services  
Alexander Fleming House  
Elephant and Castle  
LONDON SE1 6BY

*Prime Minister*

*To note Lord Soames' view at X.*

*[Handwritten initials]*

*12/1/79*

*[Handwritten signature]*

*Dear Patrick,*

INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN DHSS: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Thank you for copying to me your minute of 12 September to the Prime Minister about the management response to industrial action by the staff of your department.

We now have to deal with the situation at Newcastle as it is. The order on overtime was rescinded and it would not be very clever management to go back on it. You seem to have the stark alternatives of a retreat or a confrontation which would leave 1000 staff idle but still on full pay. I fancy that this is not the only battle we shall have to fight in the coming months and, given what has passed, I think that you would be better to keep your head down for the moment.

In the meantime, we are, as you know, looking at the legal position of laying-off non-industrial civil servants without pay where a handful of strikers put large numbers out of work.

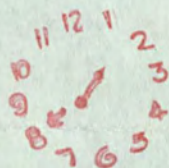
I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, Cabinet colleagues including the Minister of Transport and Sir John Hunt.

*Yours ever*

*Christopher*

SOAMES

19 SEP 1979



*[Faint, illegible handwritten text]*

