

MR. MOUNT

c.c. Mr. Scholar ✓

RAIL UNIONS AND STRIKE PAY

You suggested, rightly, that we ought to be clear whether the rail unions made a practice of paying strike benefit, and to what extent their assets would permit them to do so. I have checked with the Department of Employment, who have good information.

ASLEF's rule book leaves to the discretion of the Executive whether to pay strike pay and, if so, how much. During industrial action earlier this year, ASLEF set up a hardship fund, but did not pay strike pay as such. Their total assets are £2.4 million, of which £1.3 million are fixed.

The NUR rule book provides for strike pay of £5 per week at the discretion of the Executive. There have been no national strikes on the railways for many years, and therefore no clues as to likely practice. But their total assets are £20 million, of which £3.5 million are fixed.

I conclude that in an all-out strike, rather limited strike pay could be made available for a very long time, but that it would not go anywhere near to offsetting the loss of earnings. I am sending a copy of this to Michael Scholar, in case it should be relevant to this evening's meeting.

M. M. VEREKEN

*Tiem del Fuego*

20 May 1982