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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 January 1985

Newcastle Shiftworkers Dispute

The Prime Minister was grateful for the Secretary of State's minute received on 23 January about the Newcastle shiftworkers dispute. She has noted its contents with satisfaction.

(David Barclay)

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S.A. Godber, Esq.,
Department of Health and Social Security.

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apd

Prime Minister ⁽²⁾

Prime Minister

NEWCASTLE SHIFTWORKERS DISPUTE

Good.

I am glad to be able to report that work has now resumed at the Newcastle computer centre.

23/11

The local CPSA strikers have, after dragging out negotiations on the return to work arrangements for four weeks, settled on the same terms as were accepted by the other two unions and the CPSA national executive at the end of November.

This long dispute has been costly but it has achieved an important result in demonstrating our determination to make change where change is necessary - as it will be on a large scale as our computerisation programme develops. We have also exposed more clearly the political factionalism within the CPSA. These results will be of importance to the whole of the Civil Service and I shall be discussing the lessons we have learnt with colleagues.

The immediate task however is to restore services to the public. Our emergency arrangements have worked much better than we could have expected - enabling us to carry through a full uprating of benefits on time despite the strike - but it will take some time to get fully back to normal. I shall give high priority in the recovery programme to providing the fullest information to the public about how they will be affected.

I am copying this to Cabinet colleagues and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

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rec'd 23/11