



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

Andrew Turnbull Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

17 May 1985

Dear Andrew,

LONDON UNDERGROUND - STRIKE THREAT

As you will know, there is a significant threat of disruption on London's Underground services from Monday morning onwards.

In 1983, London Transport reached agreement with NUR and ASLEF to phase conversion of all their Underground services to one person operation (OPO) in exchange for a 7.5% pay supplement for all Underground drivers. OPO has always existed on the Victoria line, where the trains have automatic operation. It was introduced, under the 1983 agreement, on the Circle and Hammersmith and City lines. However, the NUR have now said that OPO is too stressful, and have demanded that drivers should have a 45 minute break after each 2 hours' driving.

This is a totally new demand and (despite the report in today's Financial Times) not standard practice elsewhere.

LRT are now ready to implement OPO on the East London line, from New Cross to Shoreditch. The drivers have been trained and LRT were in fact ready to start OPO last Monday, 13 May. They agreed to an NUR request to postpone it until Monday 20 May, but not beyond that.

Faced with the strike threat by the NUR, LRT have today obtained and served a High Court Injunction restraining the NUR from calling the strike without a ballot. At the time of writing, the signs are that the NUR will ignore the injunction and press on with an official strike. However, even if the official strike is called off, there could be unofficial action, and if this includes action by NUR members in signalling centres there could be widespread disruption.

NUR are
pressing on.

The Underground dispute is for LRT to handle, and not one in which the Government should intervene. My Secretary of State does not propose to issue any statement of his own

over the weekend though he will consider doing so in the light of events on Monday. If questioned by the media over the weekend he will avoid detailed comment but point out that both the law and industrial agreements are made to be kept.

This Department is of course in touch with the Metropolitan Police, who will operate their usual contingency arrangements to keep traffic moving as smoothly as possible.

I will write again in the light of further developments. Copies of this letter go to the Private Secretaries to all members of the Cabinet, to the Attorney General and the Paymaster General, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours,
Richard.

R A ALLAN
Private Secretary

17 MAY 1965

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