

22nd May, 1980

Thank you very much for your letter of 19th May.

I quite understand the reasons which prompted you to write as you did, and I have asked Ian Gow to have a word with you.

Thank you for what you say in the last paragraph of your letter, which has been a great encouragement to me.

Sir William Clark, M.P.

SIR WILLIAM CLARK, M. P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Personal

19th May 1980

The Rt.Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP.  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

*Dear Prime Minister*

I am so sorry to write to you with departmental matters but I really think that this one is so urgent that I should bring it to your attention.

One of the main reasons why we won the Election was that people were fed up with the secondary picketing, etc., in the 1978-79 Winter and firmly believed a Conservative Government would do something about trade union power.

The present Employment Bill has, in my view, many defects: as I do not think it is strong enough, but I fully accept the arguments of Jim Prior that he does not wish to ask too much from the trade unions for fear of upsetting them. Personally I do not subscribe to this view, as whatever amendments are proposed the trade union leadership will resist them and I think it will be extremely difficult to introduce another Employment Bill next session.

The one thing I think which is extremely dangerous is the question of secondary picketing and blacking that will be perfectly legal under the present Bill and we may have a repeat of the trouble we had in 1978-79. The position, as I understand it, is that if there is a trade dispute in Factory 'A' without a strike then in order to bring pressure to bear on Factory 'A' the trade union leadership could legitimately call a strike in Factory 'B' which supplies Factory 'A' with components, etc. I really do think that the Bill should be altered to deal with this section of immunity.

The Bill has to go through the House of Lords and I would have thought an amendment could be moved there and could be accepted by the Government because we did say we would consult with interested parties. It would be quite acceptable to say that after these consultations we have decided to change the Bill to cover the above point.

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The Rt.Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP  
Prime Minister

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I know how busy you are but if indeed you think a talk would be advantageous you have only to let me know.

May I in conclusion say how very much we all admire your leadership and at last Britain is getting firm government at home and leadership in the world.

Yours ever

William

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