

Prime Minister

You will have seen the article in today's Daily
Telegraph about this. WA
4/6

MR RICKETT

The Prime Minister has tonight received a letter signed by six Government back-benchers in support of EDM number 367 urging the Government to introduce further legislation to make certain limited changes in the law relating to closed shop agreements. The motion has now 162 signatures and according to the letter "the support of a number of others who are for various reasons precluded from signing motions".

The letter sets out the specific measures, reference to a meeting next week between the MPs concerned and Mr. Prior and expresses their hopes for meetings with Ray Pennock and Terence Beckett of the CBI, whom they believe may be persuaded round to their point of view.

They write to the Prime Minister not so much to persuade *her* that their proposals are right as to express "our strong conviction that whatever closed shop reforms the Government decides ~~on~~ must be introduced in the next session of Parliament". They ask that the measures should have high priority in the next session's programme and should be foreshadowed in The Queen's Speech. The signatories are Gerry Neale, Reg Prentice, Keith Wickenden, Angus Maude, Marcus Fox and John Loveridge.

In a covering letter to the Prime Minister Gerry Neale writes:

"Dear Prime Minister,

We would be most grateful if an indication could be given, perhaps via Ian Gow, whether there would be any objection to us making known to the Sunday Press and media the attached request to you.

We intend informing them about the meetings next week with Jim Prior and with the CBI and about the points we shall be making on both occasions. By so doing we hope to establish publicly that the groundswell of Parliamentary opinion among the majority of our colleagues is now consolidated in favour of another legislative step in the next session.

It would add greatly to the impact if at the same time we were able to make reference to our request to you. However we would do so only if we were confident that we were not embarrassing you in any way.

Yours ever, Gerry"

Could you please let Ian Gow know of this. I expect that he will wish to reply direct to Mr Neale by telephoning but we will act as messengers if that will be helpful.

M A PATTISON

4 June 1981