

PRIME MINISTER

16 July 1984

The following points should be considered:

1. Nick Ridley's papers to E(A) and the minutes concerning the NDLS, and Department of Employment's text of an amending Bill, would be unhelpful if published at this juncture.

When writing to the dock employers and making the Government's support for the NDLS clear, perhaps the fact that the Government has considered other measures and rejected them on the grounds that they would be disruptive should be made public to pre-empt leaks.

2. A dock strike will cause serious and fast-acting damage. Early settlement remains the best course, even at some cost.

However, you have to plan quietly for no settlement, and even for more bad news involving the NUR, NUS or other unions joining in now that the balance of power is slipping.

If ACAS and other peace moves fail, you will need to:

- (a) Take every available opportunity to put the case across as agreed this morning:

the case on - jobs  
 - the rule of law and the ballot box.  
 - stable economic management

(b) Plan for the use of volunteers to help in the movement of goods. The troops are too few and the police have to be used as impartial upholders of the law.

Involvement of more members of the community in overcoming the strike will help generate support against extremism.

(c) Rapidly update the contingency plans and assess the likely endurance and cost of the dock strike.

(d) Hold an early Parliamentary debate to focus public attention on the seriousness of the situation and to spell out the case for resisting politically motivated picketing. Put the Opposition on the spot about what and who it supports. Aim to carry the Alliance and the Right-wing of the Labour Party with you in resisting intimidation and undemocratic striking.

(e) Encourage use of the law against the TGWU if ACAS fails.



JOHN REDWOOD



NDLS  
Part 5

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

1. Statement : We have no plans to amend, alter, or abandon the DL scheme.

2. Question Are you prepared to say that no such plans will be formulated during the life of this parliament?

3. Answer

The Hon G. is asking me to predict whether some circumstance might arise in the life of this parliament which would force <sup>us</sup> ~~me~~ to abandon our present intention. That is an entirely hypothetical question. I can only reiterate that, as far as I can see ahead, I stick to our intention not to alter, amend, or abandon the DockLS.

1. "We have no plans to amend, alter or abolish the Basic Labour Scheme".

2. Question :

"Are you prepared to say that no such plans will be formulated during the lifetime of this parliament?"

3. Answer :

"That question is hypothetical. There could obviously be unforeseeable circumstances which would make such plans unavoidable. But for as far as I can see ahead, I stick to the undertaking that we "we have no plans".