

I have no objection to meeting the pensioner delegation - indeed I made up the file across the points that only by feder output can there be feder transfer to pensioners. *out*

Prime Minister

To note. Agree that you should not meet a pensioner delegation (X below) ?

I am writing to give you details of my meeting on 14 June with a delegation from the National Pensioners Convention to discuss the case for pensioners adopted at the Convention. The delegation was led by Tom Jackson of the TUC and included Len Murray and Jack Jones as well as several representatives of organisations concerned with the elderly. (You may recall that Len Murray originally requested a meeting with you, but you were unable to see them as the Budget debate was in progress and President Moi of Kenya was paying a State Visit to London at the time).

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12/7

The meeting was amicable and I think I managed to impress on them our real concern to do what we could for pensioners but that substantial improvements to pensions could only be based on a revived and growing economy. The scale of next November's pension increases pleased them, but they were worried about our intention to change the existing basis for increasing pensions from a link with the higher of earnings or prices movements to a link with prices only. I explained the reasons for doing so in some detail, and stressed that the prices only link would be a minimum level, not a ceiling, for pension increases and that pensioners could look forward to sharing in the increasing living standards which it is our aim to achieve.

Other matters relevant to my Department were discussed, including the levels of Death Grant and the Christmas Bonus, and NHS services for the elderly, as you will see from the attached note of the meeting. The delegation also touched on the improvements they would like to see in travel concessions for the elderly, the Electricity Discount Scheme and encouragement for the voluntary housing movement and I have had their views conveyed to colleagues at the Departments of Transport, Energy and Environment, respectively.

X | Finally, they asked if they could have a later meeting with you and I said I would convey their request to you. I should not recommend it as it could be no more than a repetition of the earlier meeting; a polite refusal mentioning that I have kept you fully informed would seem to be all that is called for.

12 July 1979

PJ