

PRIME MINISTER

papers re
MAD
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You said that you would like to see a pensioners' delegation following their meeting with Mr. Jenkin.

Could I suggest that, in terms of not overloading your diary, it would be an unwelcome precedent for you to agree to see such a group once you had arranged for another Minister to see them on your behalf, as in this case. Would it not be preferable to arrange for you to see a group of pensioners next time there is an approach but to assume that Mr. Jenkin has put across your message effectively with the present group? If you now see these, it amounts to some duplication of Ministerial effort and time, which are scarce enough.

Agreed re

MAD

17 July 1979



off seen
file 180

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 July 1979

Tim Lankester wrote to you on 16 July, following your report on your Secretary of State's meeting with the delegation from the National Pensioners' Convention.

The Prime Minister has had second thoughts about the follow-up meeting requested by the pensioners. While she is still prepared to meet a pensioners' delegation some time in the future, she sees no need to see this particular group, when your Secretary of State has already put the Government's message clearly to them. We will therefore be taking no further action on this.

M. A. PATTISON

Don Brereton, Esq.,
Department of Health and Social Security.

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cc Mr. Jones

16 July 1979

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 12 July reporting on his meeting with a delegation from the National Pensioners Convention.

She has noted their request to have a meeting with her and Mr. Jenkin's recommendation against any such meeting. The Prime Minister has asked me to say that, in fact, she would rather like to meet a pensioners' delegation. Perhaps you could get in touch with Caroline Stephens here to discuss how this might be set up.

T.P. LANKESTER

Don Brereton, Esq.,
Department of Health and Social Security.

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