

hli, ea

Subject
cc master



10 DOWNING STREET

13 June 1985

From the Private Secretary

Des High

The Prime Minister had a short discussion after Cabinet this morning with the Home Secretary about police matters.

The Home Secretary said that police manpower overall had recently dipped slightly but was now rising: the Metropolitan Police Force was also now growing. He believed a major reason for the fall had been uncertainties before the Budget about the taxation of lump sum payments. Overall the police were somewhat under establishment. But there was nothing to prevent them recruiting up to that limit.

The Prime Minister said the Metropolitan Police Commissioner's remarks reported in the press that the Met was under-funded were unfortunate. The fact was the police generally had done very well under this Government in terms of pay, numbers and terms and conditions. The Met's cash limit was adequate; what was required was a disciplined approach to ensure their resources were cost-effectively deployed. The Home Secretary noted this was beginning to happen. Sir Kenneth was, for instance, getting to grips with the problem of overtime.

On the recruitment of civilians, the Home Secretary noted there were many jobs currently done by uniformed officers which might more cost-effectively be allocated to civilians. These civilians could it was true become members of trade unions such as NALGO and NUPE. But while there was no rule or agreement to prevent strikes among this group, so far they had shown no inclination to take industrial action.

On the serving of summonses by non-police staff, the Home Secretary agreed this might in some circumstances offer scope for savings. But sometimes, e.g. in rural areas, a separate service could prove more expensive.

On rent allowances, the Home Secretary said he understood the Police Federation were currently considering issuing a writ. In fact, the arrangements for determining these tax free rent allowances had not changed. The allowances were fixed in relation to the District Valuer's assessment of the rent on a selected house. To check that the house was genuinely typical, the Valuer now had regard to its rateable value. It might be that this entirely proper check had resulted in concern that rent allowances

ECU

could be adversely affected. However, any suggestion that rent allowances in practice had been depressed was not born out by the facts. Of the eighteen forces for whom agreements had been reached, rent allowances in most cases had risen by between 10 and 20 per cent.

On drugs, the Prime Minister noted that effective police investigation of drugs related crime was vital, and might require some extra manpower.

The Home Secretary said he believed police concern over the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill was misplaced. This should not cause them any difficulties; it required forces to adopt no more than was normally accepted as good practice and procedure. The Prime Minister noted with regret that the House of Lords had seen fit to exclude hats from the stop and search powers provided to the police under this Bill.

The Prime Minister thought the Police Federation magazine generally adopted a sour critical tone, and this was bound to influence police morale and its view of government. The Home Secretary said that any morale problems faced by the police probably had less to do with specific grievances than with the consequences which have flowed from the end of the miners' strike. The strike had undoubtedly placed great strains on the police. But it had also made them a centre of public attention, rightly earned them many tributes from the people they served, and, of course, also generated a good deal of overtime.

Summing up the discussion, the Prime Minister noted the police had little real reason to feel aggrieved. The Government had treated them fairly and well. She hoped the police leadership would help get this message across. The Home Secretary would continue his efforts to do so.

Y ew
Mark Addison

(Mark Addison)

Hugh Taylor, Esq.,
Home Office.