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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon Tom King MP
Secretary of State
Department of Employment
Caxton House
Tothill Street
LONDON SW1H 9NF

13 August 1984

Tom King

1982 EMPLOYMENT ACT - CLOSED SHOPS IN GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHMENTS

When the 'closed shop' provisions of the Employment Act 1982 come into force in November, we must ensure that our actions as employer are consistent with our words as Government. As you know 'de facto' closed shops exist in a number of Government establishments amongst industrial employees in trades such as printing.

Our basic approach is perfectly clear: we are against closed shops in principle and there can be no question of a civil servant being dismissed for not holding a union card, as I made clear in the recent dispute at HMSO's Manchester Press.

However, as you know, closed shops are sanctioned under the 1982 Act provided there is an appropriate balloted majority and a UMA is agreed. No doubt some private employers who may well oppose the closed shop in theory will end up deciding to maintain one on purely pragmatic grounds - perhaps as the lesser of two evils against the alternative of strikes, disruption and deteriorating industrial relations.

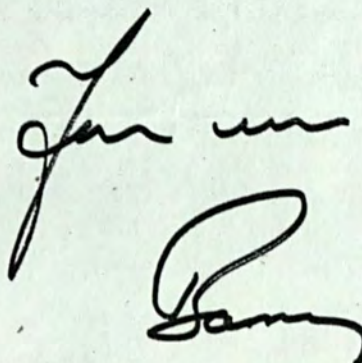
I hope we can avoid such difficulties in our industrial areas where, as I say, some closed shops operate in practice already, and have done so for a very long time. No doubt the unions will seek to maintain the status quo especially if a dispute arises about the continued employment of someone who has resigned or been expelled from a union, or who will not join it. When we make it absolutely clear that we will not dismiss such a person we are likely to face damaging industrial action - for example the loss

CONFIDENTIAL

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of Hansard. We will have to meet these problems as they come and I have asked for any potential difficulties to be reported to me. As I have said, I think it essential that our actions as an employer are fully in accord with the aim of our legislation and I would of course be grateful for any advice you can offer to this end.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, Patrick Jenkin, Norman Fowler and Grey Gowrie.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barney Hayhoe', with a large flourish at the end.

BARNEY HAYHOE

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