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CABINET

MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC STRATEGY

REVIEW OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Note by the Home Secretary

When I reported to colleagues in July (E(79)27) about the dangers of industrial problems in the next pay round, I promised to report back in the autumn on a comprehensive review of our contingency plans.

2. The attached report by Officials covers that ground. I should like to draw attention to several important points:-

a. All our existing plans have been re-examined in the light of past experience. The report's Annex A lists the essential supplies and services whose disruption could seriously affect the life of the nation. Colleagues should note that not all of these services can be effectively protected; and that in none of them could "service as usual" be maintained. But I am confident that we have taken what steps we can at this stage (subject to some specific actions to which I seek the agreement of the Committee below). And in many areas contingency plans can delay the severe consequences of industrial action for a number of weeks.

b. I was concerned that we might face exceptional disruption of a widespread semi-political nature this winter, as a result perhaps of local concentrations of unemployment. That may well still be the case. As paragraph 18 of the report indicates however an official group have reached the conclusion, with which I concur, that the existing contingency planning is also appropriate to cover this risk.

c. As always the coal industry presents particular problems. I promised in September (E(79)9th meeting) to report specifically on the contingency plans for the coal industry, and the state of fuel stocks. This is covered in Para 16 of the report. The main conclusion is that in the event of industrial action early steps might be needed to limit fuel consumption by statutory controls, by Order under the Energy Act.

d. At our previous discussion colleagues suggested that more use could be made of volunteers to counter strike action. There are of course risks as well as advantages - as discussed in Para 15(iii) of the report. On balance I think we should plan for using volunteers in the NHS, but not in other services - although we could consider the latter again if necessary in the light of events.



e. The existence of contingency plans that are likely to be effective may depend on preliminary consultation between the management concerned and the source of substitute labour (notably the Services). I have already obtained agreement of colleagues in correspondence to consultation about the use of Service personnel in providing an emergency ambulance service. But I think that we should now extend that principle more widely as necessary - as discussed in Para 25 of the report - so as to ensure that our plans are as soundly based as possible. If news of such consultations gets out, I believe we have a strong defensible case.

f. Finally I should like to emphasise the importance of publicity to explain the Government's stance. This is an area where previous Governments have failed badly, with the result that the unions have made all the running. I strongly support the report's recommendation (Para 25.iv) for a Central Press Unit under Ministerial Chairmanship - perhaps that of the Paymaster General - to take this on.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The decisions we need to take are summarised in Paras 26-33 of the report. My recommendations are as follows:-

- i. Food stockpiles. Although these are held primarily for emergency use in wartime, we should in principle be prepared to use them as necessary to alleviate shortages arising from industrial disruption.
- ii. Volunteers. Plans should be made now for using volunteers in the NHS; but not in other contexts, although the position can be kept under review.
- iii. Civil Service. There is no overlap between the CCU and the new Ministerial Sub-Committee of E. The latter is concerned with management policy. CCU will remain ready, in this as other areas, to handle the consequences of civil service disputes if they reach the point of affecting essential supplies and services.
- iv. Coal. In the event of industrial action, the Ministers concerned (meeting in CCU) should be prepared if necessary to impose statutory controls to reduce consumption.
- v. Semi-political disruption. No additional plans are needed.
- vi. External consultations. These should be undertaken as necessary, on the authority in each case of the sponsor Minister concerned.
- vii. Service assistance. Plans should allow in principle for the Services to use civilian vehicles and equipment; but authority for actually taking over public property, or requisitioning private property, would be a matter for collective Ministerial decision (in CCU) in each case.
- viii. Publicity. We should prepare a contingency plan for a Central Press Unit under Ministerial chairmanship for use in times of emergency.

I invite my colleagues to note the present state of contingency planning against the interruption of essential supplies and services, and to agree the proposals listed above.

W. W.

Home Office

Queen Anne's Gate

10 October 1979



CONTINGENCY PLANNING AGAINST INDUSTRIAL ACTION

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Note by Officials

INTRODUCTION

1. If forecasts in the Press are to be believed, "there is a grim outlook on strikes in the coming winter."
2. The Home Secretary informed colleagues on 19 July (E(79) 27) that contingency plans, which exist in some fields to maintain supplies and services essential to the life of the community in an emergency, were being brought up to date in the light of lessons learned and to ensure political acceptability. He promised (E(79) 6th Meeting, Item 3) to report to colleagues when that review was complete.
3. The purpose of this report is to honour that promise. The report is in five parts -
  - i. The scope and method of work of the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU)
  - ii. Contingency arrangements
  - iii. New areas
  - iv. Measures to increase preparedness
  - v. Summary of Ministerial decisions required.

There are three annexures -

- 'A' Contingency plans for essential supplies and services
- 'B' Fuel stocks as at 2 October 1979
- 'C' Guidelines for relations between volunteers and non-professional workers.

THE CIVIL CONTINGENCIES UNIT

4. Since 1972, successive Governments have established the CCU with the tasks of co-ordinating the preparation of plans for ensuring in an emergency the supplies and services essential to the life of the community; of keeping these plans under regular review; and of supervising their prompt and effective implementation in emergencies.

5. The Unit can meet at either Ministerial level under the Chairmanship of the Home Secretary or at official level under the Chairmanship of a deputy secretary of the Cabinet Office (Mr R L Wade-Gery). It is basically an operational unit and its main functions are -

- a. to provide early warning of potential industrial disputes which might lead to an emergency situation;
- b. to co-ordinate information and decisions during a time of emergency or threatened emergency;
- c. to advise the Chairman on issues that call for Ministerial consideration and to brief him and other Ministers on emergency issues as may be required;
- d. to review contingency plans prepared within Departments for the maintenance of essential services;
- e. to consider, in draft, Orders and Directions arising out of an emergency which Departments propose to put to their respective Ministers;
- f. to decide questions of priority on the use of resources, for example, on the provision of electricity standby generators or the allocation of fuel.

6. CCU has no executive powers. The executive responsibility for dealing with any emergency still rests with the Department or Departments concerned. In the context of industrial action, with which our report is concerned, the Unit is concerned only with the consequences of disputes and then only when they threaten supplies and services essential to the life of the community. It is not concerned with handling such disputes in any other sense, nor with settling them. CCU could also be involved with natural disasters and environmental pollution incidents beyond the scope of local authorities, but that aspect of the Unit's functions is not covered in this report.

7. In an emergency, or the threat of an emergency, the Unit meets frequently, generally under the Deputy Chairman when the need is to collect information and assess the situation. When it is necessary for the Unit to seek the collective views of Ministers, the Chairman will usually take the meeting. There is however no hard and fast rule as to when the Deputy Chairman or the Chairman should preside.

8. In times of very severe emergency in peace, a regional organisation for taking such decisions as may be assigned to it (eg settling local priorities) can be brought into operation on the authority of the Chairman of CCU, by activating 12 Regional Emergency Committees (RECs) in provincial centres throughout the United Kingdom. RECs would also have a role in the gathering of information and in the co-ordination, monitoring and publicising of contingency arrangements. Standing instructions for the Chairmen of RECs are contained in the Cabinet Office Civil Emergencies Book, which also summarises factors affecting civil emergencies generally and the means available to deal with them.

#### CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

9. The potential threat to essential services is always hard to assess, but one can identify those industries and services on which the essentials of life (food, water, light, heat, health and social services, communications, movement, sewage and refuse disposal) depend. If any vital industry or service should be disrupted, immediate measures are needed to mitigate the short-term consequences.

10. CCU has selected 15 industries and services where stoppages could lead to the essentials of life being put at risk. Annex 'A' to this report lists these and summarises specific ways of mitigating the immediate effects of industrial action. As described later (paragraphs 17-25) we have also identified additional areas within CCU's field of interest which might be at risk to damaging industrial action during the coming winter for which no contingency plans exist, and on which work is now proceeding. Food manufacture and distribution are not amongst the services listed in Annex A, nor amongst those for which plans are being considered. Food supplies will, however, quickly be put at risk by action curtailing supplies of energy or disrupting transport. The situation has to be closely monitored as it develops but it is difficult to plan, in advance, for the remedial action that might need to be taken.

11. It must be remembered that the limitations imposed on contingency planning are significant and such plans cannot maintain essential services at the normal level. Furthermore, whilst the procedures for



implementing contingency measures can be lengthy, the timescale is short and the ability to maintain even an emergency service is limited. Arrangements already in being give some short-term protection against a strike and ensure that the Government is not completely at the mercy of threats to essential supplies and services. But some severe threats to the essentials of life cannot adequately be countered by contingency plans (eg the generation of electricity) and while Servicemen can sometimes provide alternative skills and labour as a last resort, both their number and the range of their skills are limited. And, of course, the same men, though earmarked for a number of different plans, can only be made available for one plan at a time. Nevertheless, four specific ways of moderating the immediate effects of an industrial stoppage can be identified -

- a. statutory controls;
- b. stockpiling essential supplies;
- c. providing alternative resources;
- d. bringing in substitute labour.

The remaining paragraphs of this part of our report discuss the measures available, under each of these four headings and examine, in particular, plans against the possibility of industrial trouble in the coal industry and the outlook for energy supplies in the coming winter.

## 12. Statutory Controls

i. Emergency powers are available under the Energy Act 1976 and the Emergency Powers Act 1920 (in Northern Ireland, the Emergency Powers Act (Northern Ireland) 1926). The Emergency Powers Acts require a proclamation of a state of emergency to enable Regulations to be made by Order in Council. Under the Energy Act, the making of an Order in Council, declaring that an energy emergency exists or is imminent, enables the Secretary of State for Energy to make Orders and give Directions to control fuel consumption (as well as production, supply, acquisition and use). Orders and Directions have been drafted and can be introduced quickly and effectively in the case of oil to ensure that supplies from filling stations are confined to priority users or to enforce a percentage reduction in deliveries across the board. In the case of coal a voluntary scheme would be used at first to achieve the same result; only in the event of very severe shortages would the statutory measures which are available need to be taken. Orders and Directions

(also prepared in draft) to control electricity consumption can also be introduced under the Act or under Emergency Regulations made under the Emergency Powers Acts; such controls would take the form of restrictions on consumption and/or rota disconnections; rota cuts are effective but indiscriminate, and are necessary because the domestic user cannot readily be made subject to statutory controls on consumption. Orders and Directions have been drafted to control the use of natural gas (and town gas where applicable). These controls would either prohibit completely the use of gas in specified areas or prohibit its use for heating or industrial purposes except in specified types of premises or for specified purposes. The Emergency Regulations give the Secretary of State powers to control port traffic, sewerage, the use of water, road, rail, sea and air transport, the distribution of food, and powers of requisition. These powers are, however, primarily to allow the bodies concerned to refuse supply or to give dispensation from contractual or statutory obligations. In general, the curbs on consumption depend as much on public co-operation as on statutory measures.

ii. Coupon rationing provides a means of fair distribution to consumers of such products as motor spirit and diesel but it requires a long lead time and great administrative effort to introduce it. At least 12 weeks would be required, for example, to issue petrol coupons to 20 million vehicles and to set up an organisation to deal with appeals and supplementary applications.

iii. It is generally accepted that separate legislation would be needed for the introduction and enforcement of a food rationing system. A Bill has been drafted which would enable a fairly rough and ready rationing scheme to be introduced covering, if necessary, up to six commodities. But for financial reasons not all the forms needed for its operation have been printed and it would probably take at least 3 months to introduce. Experience in the 1979 road haulage dispute suggested that the resourcefulness of the food distributive trade might well be more important and effective than any use of statutory controls.



13. Stockpiles

i. Under this heading we do not distinguish between reserve stocks which are held at fixed levels in public and private sector depots for specific purposes (e.g. food) and operating stocks (e.g. fuels), the levels of which vary according to seasonal rates of consumption.

ii. A stockpile is valuable in so far as it protects against shortages caused by industrial or other action elsewhere. Its effective use will depend upon the means of distribution and the co-operation of workers using it. Thus, stocks of coal at the pithead against the risk of a miners' strike are useless if the railwaymen refuse to move them (which, traditionally, they do). Most large businesses carry stocks of fuel and raw materials as part of their normal trading cycle; in times of uncertainty they may decide to hold relatively high stocks, but it is for them, rather than for the Government, to determine and finance stock levels in the light of their commercial judgement. Contingency plans cover stocks of 3 resources: fuel, some food and emergency hospital supplies.

iii. Fuel. The stock levels of coal and oil (including the stock position at power stations) as at 2 October are given at Annex B. The estimated endurance of particular oil products in days supply are also at Annex B. Annex B illustrates stock levels in diagrammatic form for the period 1967-76 and for the years 1977, 1978 and 1979 to date. The main value of these various stocks is to guard against interruptions in supply. For most products up to half the total holding is required in the "pipeline" to ensure uninterrupted distribution to consumers; below this level there will be local shortages and delays in re-supply.

iv. Food. A strategic food stockpile is held to provide emergency food stocks in war. The stockpile comprises flour, sugar, fats, biscuits, yeast and boiled sweets and is held at 150 depots of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food throughout the United Kingdom. The aim is to stockpile sufficient quantities to give cover for 90 days before re-supply, taking into account commercial stocks

and those that might be available at the time under EEC Intervention Arrangements. Whilst these items and the levels of stocks were chosen because of defence needs and not for civil emergencies, they include important commodities which have been seriously affected by civil emergencies (eg sugar and yeast). The stockpile could be used if, for example, a prolonged dock strike and panic buying depleted food stocks. It was, in fact, used in 1974 to deal with a sugar shortage. The composition and level of stocks has recently been reviewed (HDO(79) 9) and Ministers have decided to increase stocks of sugar and yeast and to add salt to the commodities held in view of the vulnerability of the food industry to a salt shortage revealed during the road haulage dispute. Purchases of sugar are now being made and should be completed by the end of the year; it may be some months before additional yeast is purchased and salt can be added to the stockpile. There are no special statutory requirements governing the maintenance or use of the stockpile. Its use in an emergency would be a matter for decision by the Minister of Agriculture in consultation with other Ministers concerned who would include those having responsibility for defence.

v. Hospitals. Hospitals hold stocks of tinned and frozen foods and disposable linen. Disposable linen is not suitable for use in long-stay hospitals.

14. Alternative Resources

i. Standby power generators for electricity supply can, in the nature of things, satisfy only a small part of normal power requirements at vital installations. On the other hand the existence of standby generating plant on the Government estate allows rota disconnections to be used without the most vital services being affected. Many other parts of the public sector (eg water authorities) are similarly equipped. In the private sector firms having some generating capacity of their own may be able to keep going for a time, subject to supplies of fuel being available and to the reliability of the plant in use.



ii. Standby generators with emergency fuel supplies have been provided for those Government services where the possibility of even minimal interruption of power cannot be entertained. Such services would include -

a. Communications, essential heat, light and office services for Ministers and essential officials, in HQ and Regional offices and Regional Emergency Committee offices, who would be actively dealing with such an emergency. The Departments concerned would be mainly the Cabinet Office, the Treasury, the Civil Service Department, the Home Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Departments of the Environment, Health and Social Security, Employment, Energy, Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Offices;

b. Computers necessary for the payment of pensions, social security or unemployment benefits and other computers essential in the context of the emergency situation;

c. Services on the Government estate essential for health or safety reasons.

iii. Standby power has also been provided outside the Government estate for most National Health Service hospitals and some sewerage and water installations. However, the standby generators which are provided by some local authorities could cater for only a very small proportion of Residential Homes for the elderly and handicapped.

iv. In an electricity supply emergency, CCU would be responsible for deciding questions of priority on the deployment of limited resources of mobile generators from PSA and Ministry of Defence uncommitted reserves.

15. Substitute Labour

i. When others undertake the work of those on strike - whether they are willing volunteers or Servicemen carrying out orders - there is a risk that more harm than good may result. But this is a political problem to be faced at the time. Ministers will wish to weigh the balance of advantage in taking resolute action to maintain "the essentials of life" against the risk of damaging the chances of an early return to normal work. Each case will deserve to be judged on its merits always remembering that, in many industries, there can be no substitute for the particular skills of the manpower on strike.

ii. Servicemen. Contingency plans exist for the use of Servicemen as a last resort (see Annex A), but at best they can only provide a reduced service, in some cases for a limited period. Apart from limitations in skills and numbers, Servicemen are at 7 days' notice to deploy. Notice can be reduced, with Ministerial approval, provided the situation merits such a step, but this has penalties in terms of turbulence and disruption to normal training and carries with it the risk of a leak of Government plans. Training for a civil task only takes place immediately before deployment and the co-operation of supervisory and managerial staff is almost invariably a prerequisite to the use of Servicemen. In reviewing plans for the provision of military aid to civil ministries (MACM) we have attached special importance to the political acceptability of the concept of any plan and have also struck out plans where Ministry of Defence resources and skills do not match the requirement (eg because of technological developments in the industries affected).

iii. Volunteers. There have up to now been no plans for the employment of volunteers in an industrial dispute, except in the rather special case of "compassionate services", because it has always been held that their use would carry too much risk of exacerbating the dispute. But volunteer bodies such as the Red Cross, St John's Ambulance, Women's Royal Voluntary Service etc



have an established role in helping local authorities and others with compassionate services in natural disasters, and this was also extended to emergency services in last winter's disputes. There may be much greater scope for volunteers, particularly if they are organised without fanfares on a local basis, to help out at hospitals in short-lived emergencies and the Department of Health and Social Security have specific proposals for consideration (see paragraph 24 iv). In general however there are a number of obvious constraints which need to be weighed against the likely benefits of using volunteers (or increasing their numbers) to deal with industrial disputes in any industry or service -

- a. the greater the skill required the less use can be made of volunteers;
- b. use of volunteers may prolong a dispute or lead to it spreading, so further jeopardising the services it is intended to safeguard. It can also alienate essential supervisory and management staff;
- c. there is a risk of confrontation between strikers and volunteer workers at picket lines;
- d. where an emergency service was being maintained by strikers (eg ambulance drivers) the presence of volunteers might lead to its being withdrawn;
- e. the routine use of volunteers in non-emergency situations could be affected (cf the current guidelines jointly agreed between 4 unions and some voluntary bodies primarily concerned with health and social services at Annex C).

Thus a difficult balance will need to be struck: on the one hand, the help that volunteers can give, both physically and as a token of wider public support; on the other, the public relations disadvantage of being seen to breach guidelines and the risk of hardening the attitudes of the strikers and of scenes of confrontation.

iv. Civil Servants. Subject to powers under Emergency Regulations, some contingency plans depend on the use of civil servants to undertake additional duties, such as the requisitioning of vehicles (eg oil tankers). The increasing militancy of some Civil Service unions makes it uncertain that they would invariably countenance this, although the Armed Services could provide a limited number of qualified individuals to assist senior officials with this sensitive task. Management implications of industrial action in the Civil Service are now being studied by a Ministerial Sub-Committee (E(CS)) under the chairmanship of the Lord President of the Council supported by a group of officials. But this will not supersede the CCU role in handling the consequences of such disputes.

#### 16. The Coal Industry

i. We were instructed to report (E(79) 9th Meeting, Item 1) on the state of contingency planning against the possibility of industrial trouble in the coal industry during the coming winter and on the outlook for energy supplies and stocks, particularly for the electricity industry. In the event of a coal miners' strike, the stocks held by consumers (particularly by power stations) effectively determine the endurance period. The National Coal Board (NCB) are currently delivering the maximum amount of coal to power stations that they and British Rail are capable of supplying. In an emergency, the usual voluntary arrangements between the NCB and the coal trade would operate to ensure priority deliveries to hospitals, food producers, etc and defined categories of households such as the elderly. If these measures prove inadequate, powers are available under emergency legislation (see paragraph 12 i) to control consumption.

#### ii. Power stations - England and Wales.

a. Coal. As Annex B shows, coal stocks are below the level of recent years and are not as well distributed as we would wish. This means that stocks will be considerably below normal by the end of the winter, even without possible interruptions in production from industrial action. If coal deliveries are disrupted during the peak winter months the Central Electricity



Generating Board (CEGB) would probably be able to maintain full output for about 4 weeks (the supply of essential ancillary materials is not expected to be a constraint within that period). After that it is likely that the imbalance of fuel stocks as between stations and other factors would affect generation which could then continue on a reducing basis for a few weeks more. The NCB and British Rail are co-operating closely to maximise coal deliveries to power stations and coal imports are coming into power stations to the full extent of present capacity to ship in and transport internally. There does not appear to be further scope for raising coal deliveries.

b. Oil. On the other hand, oil stocks are at record levels, approaching full storage capacity. The CEGB are planning to use more oil this winter to husband coal, by moving up from the minimal level of oil burn. They will however retain some oil in stock as a reserve against contingencies.

c. Gas. Additional gas could not influence stocks more than marginally and is unlikely to be available owing to the pressure on supplies. In the light of the rising cost of oil, consumers are increasingly seeking to switch to gas, but we are assured that the British Gas Corporation is monitoring applications and will not accept new customers if this is likely to endanger supplies to existing consumers, or to threaten safety.

d. Nuclear. Nuclear capacity provides some 12% of total annual electricity supplies and if unaffected by special factors, such as the supply of essential materials, could be expected to continue.

iii. Power Stations - Scotland.

The coal stock position in mainland Scotland is slightly better than last year: SSEB expect to finish the winter with 6 weeks coal and 4 weeks oil stock in hand provided that there are no difficulties

arising from cash limit constraints. The Scottish Board should therefore be able to maintain production in the event of a disruption in coal supplies for longer than the CEGB, but would be dependent upon continued supply of ancillary materials. (The SSEB holds a somewhat lower supply of these than the CEGB). The Scottish islands will run into difficulties more quickly if oil supplies, mainly diesel, are not forthcoming.

iv. We conclude that the key to extended endurance during industrial action is to restrict demand by voluntary or legislative controls at an early stage. This could mean a decision to introduce statutory powers soon after fuel supplies are interrupted.

NEW AREAS

17. Although there may be danger in always "being prepared for the last war", it is equally dangerous to suppose that measures not required in the last emergency will be of no value in the next - or in the one after that. Thus, we have retained in our 'armoury' all the contingency arrangements in the categories described in paragraph 11 which seem to remain sound and practicable. We have also considered whether any new plans are needed. The remainder of this part of the report describes our conclusions.

18. Disruption

In July, the Home Secretary commissioned a study by officials on the likelihood in the coming winter of industrial action of a semi-political nature not linked to any specific pay dispute, and on whether any additional contingency planning was desirable. The official group (MISC 15) has reported separately to the Home Secretary but its conclusions are summarised below -

i. To threaten essential supplies and services a dispute must be relatively prolonged. The most likely cause, in this as in previous winters, is from protests over pay.



ii. However, disruption caused by protests over national unemployment, industrial relations legislation, and specific job cuts is also likely. Of these, the biggest threat is from protests over job cuts within an industry or service, with only token stoppages or demonstrations over the other items.

iii. The most damaging protest action for essential supplies and services is likely to be over any closures in the coal industry and over forced redundancies in the public services.

iv. Existing contingency arrangements to assist in maintaining essential services in the event of strikes arising from pay disputes could be adapted to dealing with protests or strikes from these causes.

v. There are special arrangements for the police response to widespread political protest, but the police would be overstretched if a number of large public order incidents coincided with general unrest in the prisons.

We conclude that no additional contingency plans are required.

#### 19. Civil Aviation

About half of the United Kingdom's international scheduled services are provided by British airlines, predominantly British Airways; non-scheduled services are provided more by British than foreign airlines. Most of the traffic in United Kingdom uses airports owned by the British Airports Authority (BAA) and all of it depends on services provided by the National Air Traffic Control Service manned jointly by the Ministry of Defence and Civil Aviation Authority.

A strike by British Airways employees causes delay and inconvenience to many passengers, but people are still able to travel by other British and foreign airlines and by rail or ship. A strike by BAA firemen would close BAA aerodromes to all traffic. A strike which reduces the capacity of the air traffic control system causes delay to all airlines, and delays tend to lead

to the cancellation of flights, expense for airlines and inconvenience to travellers. Without civil air traffic controllers (and therefore, little or no civil air movements) there would be slight difficulties for military air traffic but these could be overcome, without operational penalties.

Certain categories of flight need to be kept going in an emergency. These are -

- air ambulance flights
- air/sea rescue flights
- flights in support of off-shore oil activity
- scheduled services to the Scilly Isles and Scottish Islands

These involve chiefly minor aerodromes and small aircraft. Air/sea rescue is undertaken by the armed services and (with the single exception of a helicopter in Scotland operated by BA Helicopters Ltd), would be unaffected by industrial action aimed only at civil aviation. It is expected that the other categories of flight could be maintained during a strike, if necessary by agreement with the unions concerned.

The other area of civil aviation activity vulnerable to industrial action is the delivery of fuel by pipeline and tanker for which separate contingency arrangements exist.

We conclude that no new contingency plans are required against industrial action in the civil aviation industry.

#### 20. Banking

An interruption in the supply of money, preventing wages being paid, etc, would have an immediate and severe effect on the community. However, Eire has recently survived a lengthy period when banks were closed and the Treasury is considering whether contingency arrangements against industrial action affecting United Kingdom banks are required.



21. Road Clearance in Winter

The exceptionally severe winter of 1978/79, coinciding with a strike by local authority road workers, closed many routes, increased traffic accidents and brought much of the country's road traffic to a halt. A review of military aid to local authorities and the Department of Transport in these circumstances has begun with a view to reaching conclusions on whether new contingency plans are required. This is quite separate from standing arrangements whereby the military provide aid to the civil community in an environmental emergency, unconnected with industrial action (eg the collapse of a bridge through flooding).

22. Manufacturing Processes

The Department of Industry, in conjunction with other Departments concerned, is studying whether contingency arrangements are required to protect the manufacture of essential products against industrial action. The Department has identified a wide range of products (eg hydrogen for cooling electrical generators, other industrial gases, packaging materials, medical supplies) which are used to support or maintain essential services without which the service would collapse or be severely damaged. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is examining a number of key foodstuffs concentrating on the location of the main production units, availability, origins and reserves of raw and ancillary materials, energy and packaging requirements and transport needs - including specialised transport. The studies in hand or planned cover oils and fats, flour milling, animal feeds, bread, salt, yeast, slaughterhouses, pigmeat, poultry, eggs and milk. Indications are that the scope for contingency planning, for example in the holding of increased commercial stocks, is limited, but much detailed work remains to be done both by Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and other Departments on the wider field, before firm conclusions can be drawn.

25. Prison Officers

In the light of the Report of a Committee of Inquiry into the United Kingdom Prison Services (the May Committee), contingency plans against industrial action by prison officers have been considered by the Unit (CCU(79) 3rd Meeting, Item 4). The Home Office, Scottish Home and Health Department and Northern Ireland Office are reviewing their arrangements and bringing plans to readiness

for implementation at short notice if required. The Department of Health and Social Security is reporting separately on the situation affecting special hospitals in England and Wales.

## MEASURES TO INCREASE PREPAREDNESS

24. We describe below measures already taken or required to increase the national state of preparedness for industrial action and to improve on means of mitigating the immediate effects of stoppages -

## i. Statutory Controls

A routine review of the text of the Emergency Regulations to be made under the 1920 Act (see paragraph 12.i) is under way. This will lead to amendments due to legislation changes within departmental folios which have received Royal Assent since 1 November 1978, or are expected to receive Assent before the end of 1979, and come into force before 30 April 1980. The "insides" - the bulk of the text - will be pre-printed on 1 January 1980 and stored by HMSO ready for binding with the outside page when the dates of making are known. HMSO require one working day after the order to print is given to produce copies for public distribution.

## ii. Stockpiling

We have already referred (paragraph 15.iv) to the decision to increase the food stockpile and to add salt to the commodities stored.

## iii. Alternative resources

We have also drawn attention (paragraph 14) to the improved situation as regards standby power, especially in hospitals.

## iv. Substitute Labour

Ministers have already expressed the view (E(79) 6th Meeting, Item 3) that the possible use of volunteers in minimising the consequences of strikes should not be underestimated. We have commented in paragraph 15.iii on the constraints that may apply to the use of volunteers in particular situations. We do not believe it would be appropriate to issue any general dispensation in relation to the use of volunteers but recommend that proposals which may be brought forward by Departments for the use of volunteers in



industrial disputes should be considered individually in the light of their own particular circumstances. A specific request for Ministerial authority has been put forward by the Department of Health and Social Security as regards the use of volunteers in the National Health Service. This case has been considered by CCU officials (CCU(79) 3rd Meeting, Item 2) and we recommend Ministers should authorise the Department of Health and Social Security to inform Health Authorities that they are free to make use of volunteers as they think fit during industrial disputes.

## 25. Other measures

### i. Consultations outside Government

During the last two winters the implementation of contingency plans to deal with industrial action, particularly where Servicemen were involved, were preceded by consultations with management outside Government who were concerned in a dispute. The personalities concerned in these managerial consultations usually included Army District Commanders, Chief Constables, senior representatives of the service or industry in dispute (eg Chief Fire Officers, Water Authority Chief Executives, Health Authority Executives, etc) and, where local authority workers were involved, Chief Executives of those authorities.

Consultations were not authorised until the last possible moment for fear that knowledge of them would leak out and prejudice the chances of avoiding industrial action through the normal processes of negotiation. However, such postponement made it more difficult for departments to plan effective contingency arrangements and officials agreed (CU(78) 17th Meeting, Item 2) that arrangements might be usefully invoked at an earlier stage in future, though it would be necessary for Ministers to approve this on a case by case basis. Further, the Unit gave informal approval to the Home Office for confidential consultations with the President and Secretary of the Association of Chief Police Officers (APCO) to be held at their discretion where plans involved the use of police.

We now recommend that Ministers should formally authorise Home Office officials to consult the President and Secretary of APCO as indicated, and Scottish Home and Health Department officials to undertake equivalent consultations in Scotland, and should judge other requests for early consultation on their merits.

### ii. Service Assistance

The effectiveness of Service contingency plans is partly dependent upon using the correct 'tools for the job'. In the 1977 firemen's dispute and 1979 ambulancemen's dispute, Servicemen were denied the use of civilian vehicles and equipment for fear of provocation. We recommend that Ministers reach agreement in principle on whether to authorise the use of appropriate civilian property (crown or private) in future disputes to facilitate contingency planning. Such agreement would be subject to endorsement in relation to specific cases. We have already made a submission in the case of NHS ambulances (Home Secretary's letter to colleagues dated 27 September).

### iii. Regional Emergency Committees

We have already referred to the existence and function of Regional Emergency Committees (paragraph 8). Ministers will wish to note that guidance for the chairmen of these committees has been revised and reissued in the light of experience gained whilst they were activated during January-March this year.

### iv. Publicity

The experience of the winter 1978/9 points to the importance of keeping the public informed of the action being taken by Government in an emergency and the reason for it. We recommend that Ministers authorise the preparation of a contingency plan for the setting up of a Central Press Unit under Ministerial chairmanship, responsible for defining channels of communication for disseminating Government policy and clearing areas of doubt in an emergency.



## SUMMARY OF MINISTERIAL DECISIONS REQUIRED

26. Stockpiles (paragraph 15.iii)

Ministers will note that it would be a matter for decision by the Minister of Agriculture, in consultation with other Ministers concerned, whether to authorise the use of the strategic food stockpile in an emergency arising from an industrial dispute.

27. Volunteers (paragraphs 15.iii and 24.iv)

Ministers are asked to decide whether sponsor Departments should be invited to bring forward specific proposals for maintaining essential supplies and services by the use of volunteers. In particular, a decision is required on whether Health Authorities are to be advised that they are free to make such use of volunteers as they think fit during industrial disputes.

28. Civil Service (paragraph 15.iv)

Ministers will note that separate consideration is being given by a Ministerial Sub-Committee of the Economic Strategic Committee to industrial relations questions in the Civil Service.

29. The Coal Industry and Energy Supplies (paragraph 16)

Ministers are invited to note our appraisal of contingency plans for industrial action in the coal industry, and the outlook for energy supplies, and to endorse our conclusion that statutory powers may have to be taken to control consumption soon after fuel supplies are interrupted.

30. Consequences of Disruption (paragraph 18)

Ministers are invited to endorse the conclusions of the Official Group (MISC 15) that no additional plans are required to deal with the consequences of disruption of a semi-political nature.

31. Consultations outside Government (paragraph 25.i)

Do Ministers authorise the Home Office to consult the President and Secretary of the Association of Chief Police Officers at their discretion where contingency plans involve the use of Police? (and SHHD to undertake equivalent consultations in Scotland?) Do they agree in principle that arrangements for early consultations with management outside Government should form part of contingency plans but will require separate authority on each occasion?

32. Service Assistance (paragraph 25.ii)

Do Ministers agree in principle that contingency plans should include the use of civilian vehicles and equipment, where appropriate, but authority for taking over crown property or requisitioning private property would be reserved for Ministerial decision according to the merits of each case.

33. Publicity (paragraph 25.iv)

Do Ministers agree to the preparation of a contingency plan for a Central Press Unit under Ministerial chairmanship in an emergency?

Cabinet Office

8 October 1979



## CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

ANNEX A

Industries and Services in which industrial action can most seriously affect the life of the nation

	Statutory Controls	Stockpiling	Alternative Resources	Substitute Labour	Remarks
a	b	c	d	e	f
<b>CIVIL SERVICE</b>					
a. Non-industrial	None	N/A	Payment of pensions could continue at Post Offices if staff willing using old book counterfoils. Payment of Social Security benefits less easy.	Contractors for printing. Servicemen at defence establishments.	Total stoppage unthinkable. But selective strikes in key areas (eg defence and computers) can be severely disruptive
b. Industrial	None	N/A		Contractors for some services if non-industrials cooperate; servicemen at defence establishments. See also Serial 3, column e.	Unions becoming more expert at hitting key areas
<b>COAL MINERS</b>	Energy Act 1976 to control consumption	At power stations See Annex B. Also commercially and by merchants	Oil and nuclear electricity generation to limited degree. Standby power	None	Strong support from unions (eg NUR) not in dispute
<b>ELECTRICITY WORKERS</b>	Energy Act 1976 and Emergency Powers Act 1920 to control consumption		N/A	Standby generators partial supply for vital installations. Commercial generation small and uncertain	210 Servicemen to assist in operating PSA standby generators
<b>FIRE SERVICE</b>	None	GREEN GODDESSES at Home Office and SHHD reserve depots	Very limited industrial and Service fire brigades	Up to 20,000 Servicemen for emergency fire service	Little public sympathy so soon after 1977.
<b>GAS WORKERS</b>	as for Serial 3		N/A	Domestic heating may not be insurmountable, but cooking much more difficult. Industrial substitutes possible only in minority of cases.	Up to 7000 Servicemen for safety duties.
<b>NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE</b>					
a. Hospitals	None	Disposable linen; food	Early discharge and restrict admissions to reduce hospital population	6000 Servicemen for ancillary duties. Plenty of scope for volunteers	Most workers disposed to keeping emergency and life support systems going
b. Ambulancemen	None		N/A	Restrict service to emergencies only	4000 Servicemen for emergency ambulance service, plus police and volunteer services
<b>INFORMATION SERVICES</b>	None		N/A	BBC would expect to provide a restricted radio service	None



## CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

Industries and Services in which industrial action can most seriously affect the life of the nation

a	Statutory Controls	Stockpiling	Alternative Resources	Substitute Labour	Remarks
b	c	d	e	f	
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY WORKERS</b>					
a. Sewerage (as agents for water authorities)	EPA to absolve statutory obligations	N/A	Discharge into rivers	1200 Servicemen to cope with emergencies	Some support from NHS workers
b. Waste Collection and Disposal	None	Plastic bags	Self help by householders. Local authorities organise collection points	Contractors. Service plan ad hoc as last resort. Scope for volunteers.	Not urgent for some weeks
c. Burials and cremations	None	N/A	Storage of bodies in refrigerated accommodation is feasible, if objectionable	As for Serial 8b	
d. Roadworkers (Snow-clearance)	None	N/A	None	As for Serial 8b	
<b>OIL WORKERS</b>					
a. Oil tanker drivers	As for Serial 3 also for requisitioning	As for Serial 3 but petrol stations empty within 48 hours	Movement by alternative means, eg rail	9,600 Servicemen to distribute in requisitioned vehicles	Requisitioning process dependent on Civil Service co-operation
b. Refinery workers			None		
<b>PORT WORKERS</b>					
	EPA for control of port traffic	Food and fuel. Particular needs of offshore islands	Some airlift of vital items	12000 Servicemen to unload ships and help distribution of perishables	
<b>POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS</b>					
	N/A	N/A	Private enterprise for postal service. Radio link to Regional Emergency Committees	150 Servicemen for Government switchboards	
<b>RAILWAYS</b>					
	EPA for transport of passengers and goods by alternative means	N/A	Movements by alternative means eg road, air, sea	300 Servicemen to construct additional London car parks	Much inter-rail union rivalry
<b>ROAD HAULAGE</b>					
	EPA for relaxation of restrictions and transport of goods. Also for requisitioning	N/A	Movement by alternative means eg rail, air, sea	See Serial 9. Service plan gives a variety of limited options	Many private non-union operators
<b>SEAMEN</b>					
	EPA for sea transport	See Serial 10	Movement by ships of other flags	None	
<b>WATER INDUSTRY</b>					
(i.e. Water Supply, Sewerage and sewage disposal)	EPA to absolve statutory obligations and control water supply	N/A	Scope for economy campaign and for supervisory staff to maintain basic service	9500 Servicemen to help supervisors to maintain basic service	



2 October 1979

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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ENERGY STATISTICS - WEEKLY STATEMENT <sup>(1)</sup>

\* Includes Summer Bank Holiday

## COAL

		Week ending				
		23.9.78	1.9.79*	8.9.79	15.9.79	22.9.79
Production <sup>(2)</sup>	(m tonnes)	2.48	1.88	2.53	2.30	2.58
Undistributed stocks	"	11.27	11.13	11.10	11.00	10.89
Voluntary absence <sup>(3)</sup>	(%)	4.6	4.3	4.7	4.1	4.8
Involuntary absence <sup>(3)</sup>	"	13.1	9.7	10.7	10.3	10.6
Output per manshift overall <sup>(3)</sup>	(tonnes)	2.28	2.12	2.28	2.24	2.33

## POWER STATIONS

Coal: Stocks	(m tonnes)	20.42	14.42	14.77	15.00	15.34
Consumption	"	1.37	1.41	1.43	1.48	1.50
Receipts	"	1.63	1.33	1.78	1.72	1.84
Oil <sup>(4)</sup> Stocks	"	1.07	1.27	1.34	1.36	1.52
Consumption	"	0.15	0.09	0.11	0.12	0.11
Receipts	"	0.19	0.22	0.18	0.14	0.28
Electricity supplied <sup>(5)</sup>	(GWh)	3,926	3,798	3,927	4,025	4,126
Temperature corrected	"	(4,038)	(3,793)	(3,986)	(3,958)	(4,064)

## GAS INDUSTRY

Oil: Stocks	(m tonnes)	0.22	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
Gas: Sent out <sup>(6)</sup>	(m therms)	204	191	194	211	228

Month ending

OIL COMPANIES' STOCKS - UK <sup>(7)</sup>

		30.9.78	30.9.79	31.7.79	31.8.79	30.9.79
Stock level	(m tonnes)	18.9	18.4	18.4	19.4	20.4
Estimated endurance:	(days supply)					
Motor spirit		53	62	64	69	73
Kerosene		84	74	74	74	79
Gas/Diesel		82	108	97	89	88
Fuel oil		79	112	101	83	78
Naphtha		65	73	63	66	70
All finished products <sup>(8)</sup>		75	90	85	79	78

(5) Steam stations including nuclear

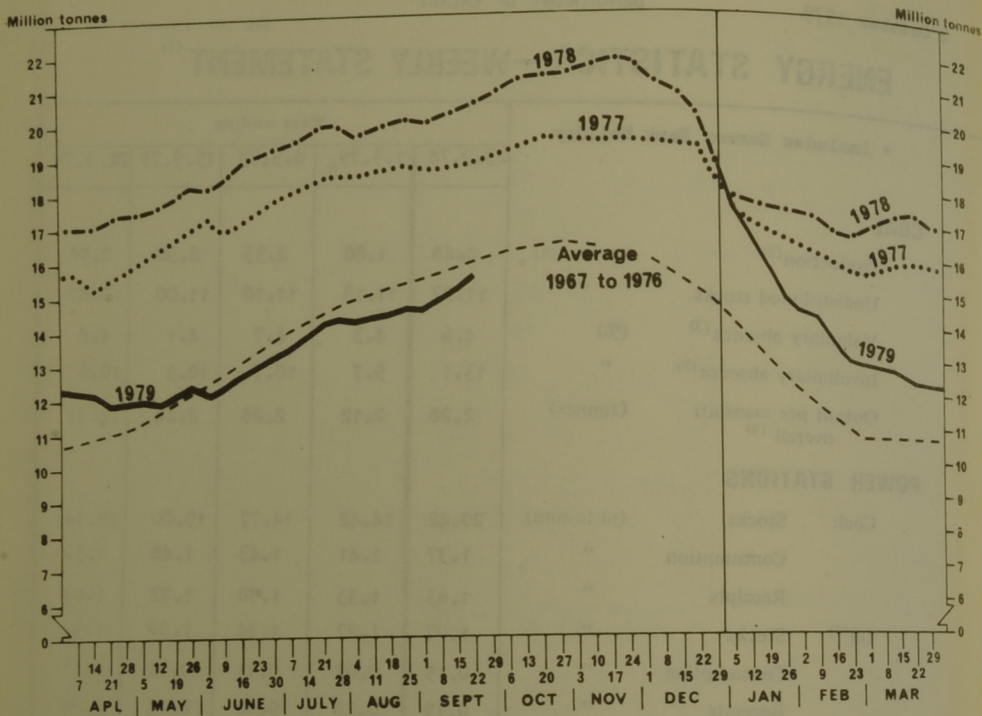
(6) Natural and town gas

(7) Includes the product equivalent of crude and process oils

(8) Includes products not specified above.

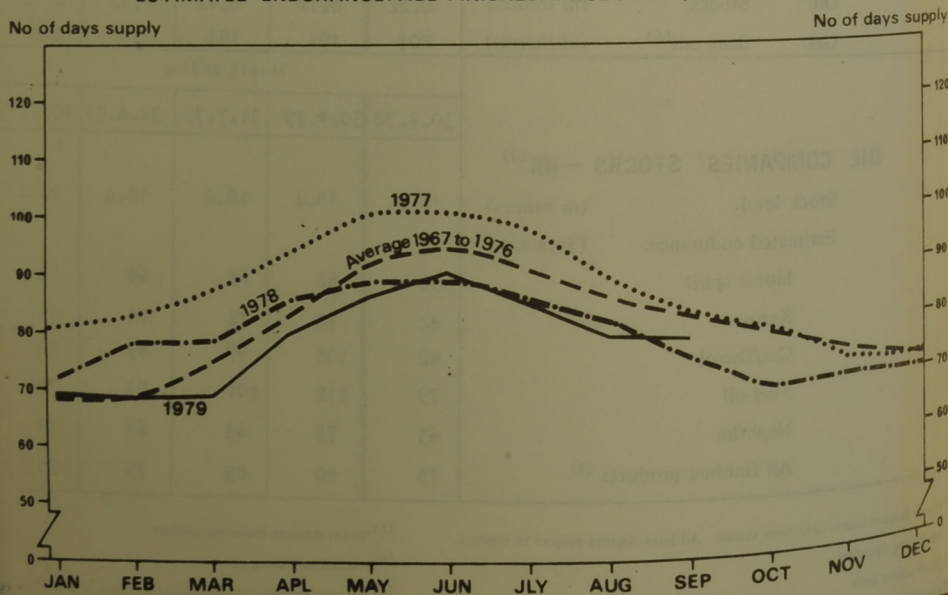


# COAL STOCKS AT PUBLIC SUPPLY POWER STATIONS IN GREAT BRITAIN



## OIL COMPANIES STOCKS - UK

ESTIMATED ENDURANCE: ALL FINISHED PRODUCTS (see Table, Note 7)



## ANNEX C

### VOLUNTEERS

1. In October 1975, a working group of the Volunteer Centre drew up guidelines for relationships between volunteers and paid non-professional workers. 25,000 copies of the leaflet were distributed. In September 1977, the guidelines were updated by a reconstituted group under the Chairmanship of Mr G Drain (General Secretary NALGO), composed of 3 union officials (GMWU, NUPE and COHSE), 3 officials from volunteer organisations (WRVS, Age Concern and MIND), 2 health authority officials and a prison welfare officer.
2. In February 1979, the Chairmen/Directors of 10 community Service organisations issued a statement to the effect that the guidelines commanded the support of both trade union representatives and those from the voluntary sector, and provided a workable method of resolving difficulties arising from industrial disputes. They recommended organisations associated with community services to follow the guidelines.
3. A copy of the leaflet is attached.



## Introduction

The group recognises the value of voluntary activity in appropriate situations, particularly where those in need do not have the support of family or friends.

Voluntary action can be effective both in residential settings and in the community. In hospitals for the mentally handicapped and mentally ill, for example, volunteers contribute an additional form of caring to exist alongside paid care, breaking down barriers between institution and community, and thereby increasing the likelihood of personal rehabilitation. In the community they can support individuals and families who are at risk and who need additional support.

The working group noted that volunteer workers have pioneered many new services thereby often identifying the need for further paid provision.

The group has studied the recent changes in voluntary work, including a new emphasis on neighbourhood care and mutual help among those in need. The group is aware that attitudes towards volunteering vary considerably. These attitudes and ideas reflect widely differing and continually changing opinions in society at large about how people are able to enrich each other's lives, and reflect also different group interests which are affected by changes in voluntary activity. The group also recognises that a great deal of voluntary work is carried on very informally, and that many volunteers prefer to remain unorganised. In this case it is unusual for problems to arise in the relationship between volunteers and paid workers. The group is therefore aware of the complexity of the subject under discussion. It has agreed that guidelines can only be offered in general terms for any situation concerning employers, staff and volunteers. It is the group's view that flexibility and the absence of cut and dry formulae for how volunteers and paid staff should work alongside and together is a strength rather than a weakness.

## Guidelines

- 1 Any change in the level of voluntary service should be preceded by full consultation between interested parties.

Because local situations vary enormously full consultation between management, staff organisations, representatives of volunteers and, where appropriate, through established channels for representatives of those receiving the service should take place. In this way decisions on the nature and extent of voluntary action can take account of the interests of all concerned and result in better all round service.

- 2 Agreements on the nature and extent of additional voluntary activity should be made widely known among interested parties.

The methods of communication can vary widely (written or spoken word) but well thought out agreements can founder if all the people associated with the representatives reaching the agreement are not clear on its nature, extent and practical application.

- 3 Voluntary work should complement the work of paid staff, not substitute for it.

Voluntary work should not be used as a substitute for the work of paid staff, but should instead complement it. The practical implications of this statement need to be discussed at local level. Whilst some tasks currently performed by volunteers could be performed by paid staff if resources were available, there are other activities, such as befriending, which in many cases can only be carried out fully by someone seen by the receiver of the service to be unpaid. We recognise, however, that paid staff are able to act from a mix of motives and offer friendship to clients even though they are being paid to be on duty. Likewise volunteers act from mixed motives. Volunteers should not threaten the work of paid employees, nor feel exploited as unpaid substitutes by the organisation where they are offering their service. Some volunteers may prefer to work to a clear job description, outlining clearly the work they may be required to undertake, with guidelines as to when this is appropriate.

- 4 The action of volunteers should not threaten the livelihood of paid staff.

There have been occasions in the past where, without proper consultation, voluntary activity has been implemented which has threatened the jobs of paid staff and/or has had repercussions on earning levels. Such action, however well meaning or intended, can only lead to a deterioration in the level of industrial relations and result in a poorer service. However, there will be situations in which organisational changes incorporating new notions of care might involve the use of volunteers in ways which could affect the interests of groups of paid employees. For example, new forms of voluntary care, such as the development of small group homes in the community for the mentally ill thereby permitting the closure of wards in psychiatric hospitals, might remove the need for certain kinds of paid staff input. In this situation negotiations should take place with the relevant staff organisations with a view to reaching agreement to safeguard their interests. In this way new social policy initiatives, advantageous to the receiver of the service, can be implemented without any concomitant disadvantage to the staff.

- 5 Voluntary workers should not normally receive financial reward.

Although volunteers should not normally receive financial reward the group recognises that in a number of situations it is common practice to pay out-of-pocket expenses to volunteers.

The group spent a considerable amount of time discussing certain examples of payment of honoraria. Street wardens, for example, often spend many hours either informally standing by or directly offering help. Some local authorities treat wardens in a category between voluntary and paid workers, with regular payments of honoraria in addition to directly acquired expenses. Other authorities pay perhaps £1 per visit to neighbourhood visitors.

The group is unable to agree on a clear attitude to these developments. Those in favour take the view that there may always be grey areas between voluntary and paid work, which may be an essential stage in the process whereby volunteers identify the need for paid services. In addition, street wardens, for example, carry out a function which is partly equivalent to a paid service - vigilance for those at risk, some light domestic services such as shopping etc - and partly equivalent to a voluntary service - befriending at the level of the street. Those who support payment of honoraria to volunteers feel that this development is a way of extending the voluntary spirit into sections of society where shortage of money has hitherto excluded it.

Those disagreeing feel that any element of official payment colours the relationship in the mind of the giver and receiver as a paid service, and hence no argument can be raised for retaining an element of volunteering by undercutting fixed rates; where appropriate, workers should be fully paid. They feel that any blurring between the low-paid workers and volunteers is undesirable. It is likely to cause friction if the volunteer receives, for example, travel and maybe subsistence and child-minding expenses to visit an inaccessible institution, paid in the form of an honorarium, where some staff, while receiving relatively low wages, are required to meet their own expenses.

- 6 There should be recognised machinery for resolution of problems between paid staff and volunteers.

It is an advantage to name an individual responsible for the co-ordination of voluntary work within an institution to whom paid staff can refer in the first instance if they feel that the guidelines are being overstepped; and to make clear that normal negotiating machinery is also available if necessary for settling problems in this field.

## Industrial Action

- 7 Volunteers in the situation of industrial action should undertake no more voluntary work than they would do in the normal situation.

Any departure from normal work should only take place with the agreement of management and those staff organisations involved in the dispute.

- 8 If volunteers are faced with a picket line which is not prepared to agree that the volunteer workers should cross, the volunteers should not attempt to do so but discuss the situation with their organiser of the voluntary service, who should in turn discuss it with union and management officials.

Provided that information on the basis of agreement has been passed through to all levels of management and union members, such conflicts can be avoided. In the event of a picket line it may be helpful for volunteers to be issued with a document signed by management and a shop steward indicating the basis on which the agreement to work has been agreed.

## The Volunteer Centre



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