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CABINET

MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC STRATEGY

THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS DURING INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

Note by the Secretary of State for the Home
Department

At the meeting of the Committee on 16 October (E(79) 11th Meeting) I was asked to arrange for the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) to examine the scope for volunteers and for the greater use of the Civil Defence Organisation (CDO) in industrial disputes. I now attach a copy of the CCU's report.

2. The report concludes that there are six areas where the use of volunteers seems most promising. These are -

- i. driving road vehicles;
- ii. hospital ancillary tasks;
- iii. personal social service tasks;
- iv. 'good neighbour' schemes to cover services affected by strikes to water supply, refuse disposal and clearance of ice or snow from residential streets or pavements;
- v. safety tasks where gas supplies are threatened;
- vi. grave digging.

3. The scope for volunteers in five further areas - broadcasting, the Civil Service, railways, docks and telecommunications - is being studied further by the Departments concerned.

4. The report's main recommendation is that sponsor Departments should now be asked to consult with the relevant employers about the precise scope for volunteers in the areas mentioned above. In the case of hospitals Ministers have already given authority for the

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Nathional Health Service (NHS) management to be told that they can use volunteers as they see fit. I agree that consultations should now be authorised for the remaining areas listed in paragraph 2 above. The results of these consultations should be reported back to the CCU as soon as possible, who would in turn report back to Ministers. We must accept that it will probably become public knowledge that consultations are taking place; see paragraph 7f. below.

5. The main people to be consulted will be the local authorities. The British Gas Corporation will also need to be included to cover 2v. above. Consultation with road transport employers, to cover 2i. above, presents special difficulty, because of the large number of employers concerned. Subject to the views of the Minister of Transport therefore, I suggest that consultation on this item might initially be confined to local authorities. Local authorities should also be asked to bear in mind the scope for volunteer drivers to help in carrying out the tasks in 2iii - 2vi above.

6. The report points out that, especially in low-key disputes, the use of volunteers could sometimes be counter-productive, in stirring up resentment out of proportion to the assistance volunteers could provide. Similarly there is a risk that the use of volunteers may jeopardise police impartiality. In my view these are not reasons for ruling out their use, but only for careful consideration being given to their use in each case. This in turn suggests that, when a central decision in favour of using volunteers has been taken in a particular case, responsibility for working out the modalities should so far as possible be placed on the employers rather than on the Government itself; and that this is a point we should emphasise in our consultations.

Further issues

7. The report also reviews a number of further issues, and my main conclusions on these are as follows.

a. Use of the Territorial Army (TA) (paragraph 9 of the report)
Subject to the Defence Secretary's views, it would be worth investigating further the idea of TA reservists being able to volunteer to carry out military aid to civil ministries (MACM) tasks and to relieve regular servicemen during an emergency. But they could clearly not be called out compulsorily for this purpose unless we changed the law concerned, which I do not recommend.

b. Special Constables (paragraph 12 of the report) I am not yet able to take a final view on the suggestion that Chief Officers of Police should be encouraged to plan more widespread transfer of routine police duties for special constables in an emergency to relieve regular constables for more sensitive duties. I propose that this should be further studied by the Home Departments.

c. Royal Observer Corps and Auxillary Coastguards (paragraphs 10-11 of the report) I agree it is not worth pursuing their use as volunteers.

d. Volunteer Centre guidelines (paragraph 14 of the report)
These guidelines recommend among other things that any abnormal use of volunteers during an industrial dispute should only take place by agreement with the management and staff organisations involved in the dispute. I do not think we can decide in advance of particular cases whether these guidelines should be adhered to.

e. Premises for mobilisation of volunteers (paragraph 18 of the report) Jobcentres or police stations do not look promising. I think decisions on other premises will have to depend on the views of the employers we consult.

f. Role of a Central Press Unit (paragraphs 16-17 of the report)
This is described in a separate note (E(79) 62) by the Paymaster General. If my recommendation for consultations (paragraph 4 above) is accepted, I suggest that the Press Unit should be asked straight away to consider publicity aspects of our consultations with employers, since these may become public knowledge in any event.

g. Civil Defence Organisation (CDO) (paragraph 13 of the report)
The Committee asked me to examine the scope for greater use of the CDO. This was disbanded in 1968 and no longer exists. It would be a major task to reconstitute it. If it were to be re-established in its original form, its primary objective would be to serve as a wartime defence organisation, and its capacity to help in natural or man-made emergencies would be secondary. If colleagues consider that reconstitution of the CDO should be seriously considered, I will pursue the matter with the Defence Secretary and others concerned. But it would not be cheap.

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CONCLUSIONS

8. I invite my colleagues -

- i. To agree that sponsor Departments should now consult local authorities and the British Gas Corporation on the use of volunteers in the areas described in paragraph 2 (other than hospitals where consultations are already in hand), and that the Civil Contingencies Unit should report back to Ministers once the results are known (paragraphs 4-6 above).
- ii. To agree that the Central Press Unit should consider the public aspects of these consultations (paragraph 7f. above).
- iii. To consider whether a review of the case for reconstituting the Civil Defence Organisation is justified (paragraph 7g. above).
- iv. To agree to the proposals on the remaining issues set out in paragraph 7a.- e. above).

W.W.

Home Office

29 November 1979

THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS DURING INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

Note by Officials

INTRODUCTION

1. At their meeting on 16 October (E(79) 11th Meeting) Ministers considered a note by the Home Secretary on a review of Government contingency plans against industrial action (E(79) 48) and agreed that more attention should be paid to the use of volunteers. They invited the Home Secretary to arrange for the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) to study further the possible use of volunteers to maintain essential supplies and services during industrial action, to examine the scope for the greater use of the Civil Defence Organisation (CDO) and to bring proposals to the Committee. This note examines the areas in which volunteer effort might be used and the procedures by which it could be mobilised in an emergency; and also considers whether there is a role for the CDO in this context.

2. Most departments have pointed out that there are several factors common to the whole question of volunteer effort during industrial action which suggest that it would in most cases be desirable to exercise central control over the initial call for volunteers if long term damage to industrial relations is to be avoided. For instance:

- i. Recognising the need to secure public sympathy for their actions, some unions have shown a willingness in past disputes to maintain an emergency service where 'life and limb' are at risk. The presence of volunteers, or knowledge of their recruitment, could lead to the withdrawal of emergency services by strikers; and the use of volunteers could prolong a dispute or lead to it spreading, thus jeopardising the services it is intended to safeguard.

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ii. Contingency plans to maintain essential services depend very largely upon the goodwill and skilled direction of management and supervisors who, on their own, can keep some services operating without help for a time. Before volunteers are introduced it is vital to secure management co-operation and permission to use premises or equipment under their control.

iii. It is to be expected that pickets will attempt to dissuade volunteers from getting to work, leading to confrontation and a requirement for the police to maintain law and order 'at the gates'. This the police will do to the limit of their ability, but manpower resources may be a constraint. (See paragraph 12 below.)

iv. There is the practical constraint of finding volunteers with the right skills to handle particular jobs such as computer operating and driving heavy goods vehicles; and of vetting the reliability and integrity of volunteers to prevent crime, damage to plant, or injury to themselves and others.

v. There is the risk that, once used on elementary tasks to keep a service in operation, volunteers might not succeed a second time since workers would counter their efforts by neutralising - even sabotaging - more complex and vital equipment.

3. But the factors described in the preceding paragraph do not necessarily mean that it would always be wrong to call boldly for volunteers. In some circumstances it would clearly be foolish to exacerbate a dispute which is not causing major disruption and which can properly be resolved by low-key handling. But at the other extreme (for example, if there were a repeat of the public service disruption experienced last winter) Ministers might well consider that a tough response, involving positive and open encouragement to the use of volunteers where appropriate, would be more conducive both to maintaining essential services and to securing an early end to the dispute.

4. Thus a difficult balance has to be struck. The appropriate response will need to be determined case by case in the light of such factors as

i. The likely or actual expression of public opinion for the Government to "do something" when strikes deny the essentials of life.

ii. The degree of militancy adopted by the Unions, especially on picketing, and the adequacy or otherwise of any emergency arrangements operated by the unions.

iii. The ability of the police to offer protection against violent picketing.

iv. The likely usefulness of volunteers.

v. Any likely aftermath of the use of volunteers on industrial relations when normal working is resumed.

vi. Management handling of the dispute (eg state of negotiations).

5. In the case of work normally done by hospital ancillaries, Health Authorities have already been given directions by Ministers to decide for themselves on whether or not to call for volunteers in an emergency. In all other cases, we recommend that the decision be retained in the hands of Central Government and taken by Ministers on a case by case basis. An important factor in reaching that decision will be whether a state of emergency has been proclaimed. If it has, the case against calling for volunteers will probably be weaker.

AREAS OF USE

6. We have examined the whole spectrum of employments concerned with essential supplies and services against common headings, namely the prospects of industrial action, the scope for volunteer effort and special factors for some types of employment which militate against the use of volunteers.

Our findings are summarised at Annex A. Subject to Ministerial judgments on the basic issues referred to in paragraphs 2-5 above, we conclude that there are several areas where there is scope for volunteers to maintain essential supplies and services; and that, while the decision on whether to call for them should whenever possible be taken by Central Government, the arrangements for organising them will have to be made locally. The most promising areas are -

- i. Driving road vehicles.
- ii. Hospital ancillary tasks.
- iii. Personal social service tasks.
- iv. 'Good neighbour' schemes to cover services affected by strikes to water supply, refuse disposal, clearance of ice/snow from residential streets and pavements.
- v. Safety tasks when gas supplies are threatened.
- vi. Grave digging.

Some other areas require more detailed study - see Note 2 to Annex A.

7. We have noted that, in Scotland, where the Police have provided emergency services as part of their role in safeguarding life (eg providing an emergency ambulance service) they have been opposed to working alongside volunteers on the grounds that their impartiality would be prejudiced. We have also noted that, though the police in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are equally concerned about maintaining impartiality, they have been content in the past to work in harness with voluntary organisations such as St John's Ambulance, if not with individual volunteers. The subject of police impartiality is therefore one which may inhibit the use of volunteers in some areas. The decision is for the Chief Constable concerned and Ministers have no power of direction.

SOURCES OF VOLUNTEER EFFORT

8. We were asked to examine the possibility of employing formed bodies of people as volunteers who are already serving in voluntary organisations such as the Territorial Army (TA), the Royal Observer Corps, the Auxiliary Coastguard, the Special Constabulary, the Civil Defence Organisation and social service organisations such as the Womens Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS).

9. In the case of the TA, our advice is that we would be precluded on legal grounds from calling out Reservists to deal with an emergency arising from an industrial dispute unless Ministers decided to amend the Reserve Forces Act 1966. In that event the following factors should be noted -

- i. A large number of TA members are trade unionists. The Government should avoid acting in such a way as to cause them to put their loyalty to their Union or to the Army in conflict.
- ii. The TA is a voluntary organisation which depends upon the good will of its individual members and their employers. Legal enforcement of the call out for military assistance to civil ministries (MACM) could prove difficult if Reservists or their employers refused to co-operate.
- iii. The adverse effects on TA recruitment and retention if a liability existed for MACM tasks should not be underestimated.

We are examining the possibility of a middle course which does not require legislation. Bearing in mind the contribution that members of the TA could make because of their keenness, discipline, motivation and speed of mobilisation, reservists might be asked whether they would like to volunteer for additional work with some of their TA colleagues on MACM tasks or for military duties which would relieve Regular Servicemen for these tasks. But it would have to be made clear that there was no compulsion or stigma attached, if they chose not to do so. Would Ministers wish this option to be examined further?

10. The Royal Observer Corps is trained for specific and very technical wartime duties in connection with the monitoring and reporting of radio active fall-out. Its geographical dispersal to man posts located mostly in rural areas throughout the country makes it unsuitable for use as a cohesive body in peace time emergency situations. Its members are not subject to any code of military discipline and it might be unwise to jeopardise their commitment to the tasks for which they had volunteered by tempting to use them for other unrelated purposes.

11. The Auxiliary Coastguard numbers about 8,800 men and women and is trained for specific watchkeeping, rescue and reporting duties. Members are attached to the coastguard station nearest to their homes and work regular rosters of duty on a previously agreed basis. About 75 per cent earn their living in other full-time employment. Their potential availability for work as volunteers during industrial action is very limited and would be to the detriment of their auxiliary duties.

12. Special Constables are appointed by Chief Officers of Police and have normal powers of a police constable, but lack the degree of training of regular police. They provide in each police area a small reserve of personnel which may be called upon on special occasions to carry out routine police work. At the present time there is a 'book' strength of 17,000 (or about 8 per cent of the regular force) which is 60 per cent below target. The Home Office is already examining ways in which recruitment of Specials might be improved. As a matter of policy, they are not deployed on sensitive policing duties or on non-police work; but if, for example, regular police have to be withdrawn from their normal duties to maintain public order at the time of industrial troubles, the Chief Officer would call on his Specials to assist in carrying out routine tasks that would otherwise not be done. They are not obliged to respond to the call since there is no contractual obligation. In Scotland, there are statutory limitations on the use of special constables which do not apply in England and Wales. Scottish Special Constables may not exercise police powers except in an emergency (which is not defined), in riot or tumult situations or with their own consent to gain practical experience of police work. Bearing in mind the lack of contractual obligation and the fact that more recruitment may be both difficult and costly, it would be helpful to know

how far Ministers would wish to pursue the possibility of reinforcing regular police force capabilities for law and order tasks by encouraging a more widespread transfer of routine tasks to special constables in an emergency to relieve the regular force for more sensitive police duties, such as at picket lines.

13. There is no longer any specific Civil Defence organisation or general stock of material which could provide manpower or resources in the event of industrial disputes. The organisation was disbanded in 1968. Since then, the basis of local planning by county councils, for home defence and for peacetime emergencies alike, has been to adapt local facilities and resources to the particular needs of the situation. Operational accommodation and communications earmarked for war needs could be used in peace if appropriate, and each authority would be best placed to assess the scope for volunteer assistance in any given emergency.

14. Particular care would be needed in relation to the use of any formal voluntary bodies in the range of community services (eg WRVS, St John's Ambulance, Age Concern etc). At the present time, many community service bodies consider themselves bound by Guidelines first produced in 1975 and revised in 1977 by the Volunteer Centre Working Group chaired by Mr Geoffrey Drain. The Guidelines recommend that any departure during an industrial dispute from the normal work done by volunteers should only take place with the agreement of management and staff organisations involved in the dispute. The Volunteer Centre Working Group has been reconvened to reconsider existing Guidelines and is expected to produce a new edition in due course. The Guidelines are unofficial and should not be accorded a status they do not have, but they have provided a valuable basis for many local agreements and they have secured the support of many voluntary organisations some of whom signed a joint letter to Members of Parliament at the height of last winter's industrial troubles (see Annex B). We seek Ministerial guidance on the desirability of observing the Guidelines as far as possible, bearing in mind that the acceptability of volunteers in these services long after the dispute itself is at an end, could be put at risk by a confrontation with the unions in defiance of the Guidelines.

15. Subject to Ministerial guidance on the points requested above, officials conclude that there would be only limited scope for the employment of voluntary organisations as formed bodies. But individual members of the organisation might well offer to assist in essential work, although this would of course be at the expense of usefulness in their primary voluntary role.

MOBILISATION PROCEDURES

16. We have concluded that there is scope for volunteer effort in a number of activities which provide essential supplies and services, but the nature of the work is such that it can best be organised on a local basis. Most uses will not be directly under the control of central Government as employer, but will require the agreement, and then action, usually of a public sector employer. The next step in contingency planning would be for sponsor Departments to consult local authorities, nationalised industries and other organisations operating in areas which we have identified as suitable for volunteers, to clarify types of employment, points of assembly, local methods of appeal, registration and placing of volunteers. Some local authorities would probably be keen to use volunteers as early and as much as possible, but others would be reluctant, or might refuse outright, according to their estimate of the effects of using volunteers on industrial relations and union attitudes locally, or, in some cases, according to their political complexion. We seek Ministerial guidance on whether consultations on the use of volunteers should now go ahead. The publicity aspects will need consideration and we recommend these should be considered by the Central Press Unit.

17. When the time comes for a decision to mobilise volunteer effort the Government Information Services might provide facilities for Ministerial appeals to encourage volunteers to come forward to the area where it is considered they would be usefully employed. The statement should include encouragement, where appropriate, to form 'street groups' and to organise 'good neighbour' schemes to support the sick, elderly and immobile. We recommend that the Government Information Services on a Departmental basis should prepare contingency plans for the launching of such appeals,

including outline draft statements and announcements, appropriate to situations described in Annex A, the details of which can be filled in at the time. Any central government statements encouraging the use of volunteers generally will need to take account of the variety of circumstances within local government described in paragraph 16 above. We suggest that the Central Press Unit will have an important role in the co-ordination of Government publicity in these circumstances.

18. We have considered whether Government, public, commercial or other premises should be used as recruitment centres or assembly points for volunteers in an emergency. Our conclusions are -

- i. Government Jobcentres. Apart from limitations in size, these are staffed by members of the Civil and Public Services Association and Society of Civil and Public Servants who, we believe, would take sympathetic industrial action if the premises were used for that purpose thus rendering them ineffective. Furthermore, Jobcentres are operated by the Manpower Services Commission which comprises representatives of the Trade Union Congress, Confederation of British Industries and local authority and educational interests. We conclude that any attempt to use Jobcentres for this purpose could place the future operation of the Manpower Services Commission in difficulty and could spread industrial action to the Jobcentres themselves.
- ii. TA drill halls. Many of these are owned by TA Associations. In all cases prior permission would be required to use the premises. Special precautions would have to be taken to protect unit armouries and to separate the activities of volunteers from TA training.
- iii. Police Stations. The use of these premises would almost certainly be opposed by the police on grounds of prejudicing their impartiality.
- iv. Local authority premises (including schools) and
- v. commercial premises. No plans to use either of these types of premises could be made without consultation. (see paragraph 16 above.)

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SUMMARY OF MINISTERIAL DECISIONS REQUIRED

19. Do Ministers agree -

i. that the balance of advantage and disadvantage expressed in the terms of paragraph 4 must be struck in each case in order to determine whether volunteers are to be encouraged to offer their services during industrial action?

ii. the possible areas of use described in paragraph 6?

iii. that policy decisions on whether to use volunteers should wherever possible be taken by central government, in the light of the precise circumstances, but that organisation of volunteer effort should be on a local basis? (paragraph 6)

iv. that further consideration should be given to the possibility of inviting TA reservists to volunteer, as an addition to their normal TA duties, for MACM tasks or military duties to relieve regular Servicemen?
(paragraph 9)

v. that Chief Officers of Police should be encouraged to plan more widespread transfer of routine police duties to special constables in an emergency to relieve regular constables for more sensitive duties? (paragraph 12)

vi. that the Volunteer Centre Guidelines are to be observed?
(paragraph 14)

vii. that consultations with local authorities, the British Gas Corporation and other organisations about contingency planning are authorised?

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viii. the roles envisaged for the Government Information Services and Central Press Unit? (paragraphs 16 and 17)

ix. that there is no scope for using Jobcentres or police stations as assembly points for volunteers and that the possibility of using other premises depends on the views of employers who we consult? (paragraph 18)

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Type of Employment a.	Prospects of Industrial Action b.	Scope for Volunteer effort c.	Factors against using Volunteers d.
1. Farm Workers and Nurserymen	Widely fragmented industry, hence serious disruption unlikely	Harvesting (especially fruit and veg) but already well covered by casual labour	Increased specialisation and mechanisation
2. Food Industry Workers	Many alternative foods available; action not likely to affect food generally. Even when key commodities (eg bread) are hit, direct Government involvement unlikely	Best left to individual firms to organise locally. Perhaps more scope in distribution system (see Serial 15)	Complexity of food processing technology
3. Fishing Industry Workers	As for Serial 1	None	Impracticable to make more than a token impact
4. Prison Officers and Prison Administrative Staff	At risk	None	Previous experience essential. Retired staff likely to be in sympathy with former colleagues and not up to physical fitness requirements. Contractors more suitable for tasks such as catering
5. Firemen	At risk	Industrial brigades - Street and village "fire watchers"	As for Serial 4. See also Note 1
6. Broadcasting	Marginal risk	See Note 2 below	Highly specialised
7. Teaching	At risk	Retired staff or others with necessary qualifications at LEA discretion, organised locally	Concerted action unlikely to be feasible since Local Education Authorities would take widely differing views
8. School Caretakers, Catering Staff etc	At risk	Organise locally through Parent/Teacher Associations	LEA likely to oppose for fear Unions would retaliate eg by withdrawing concessions at special schools
9. Civil Service	At risk	See Note 2	CS unions would vigorously oppose. Could have severely damaging, long term effects on labour relations
10. Hospital Workers, eg cleaners, caterers, laundry, portering, kitchen staff, drivers	At risk	Plenty, Health Authorities already authorised to prepare volunteer contingency plans. Public opinion certain to be in favour of compassionate care; could overcome risk of union militancy	Unions could retaliate by withdrawing concessions eg where life and limb at risk, but see column c.
11. Personal Social Services Workers, eg residential homes and day centres, home helps, meals-on-wheels service	At risk - not only from action by Social Service Staff but also by other local government workers, (drivers especially) and interruptions in other essential services (electricity etc)	Plenty, for simple caring tasks (though not for skilled social work). Careful supervision of volunteers necessary. Best organised by individual local authorities, with informal advice as necessary through the Regional Social Work Service of the DRESS	As for Serial 10

Type of Employment a.	Prospects of Industrial Action b.	Scope for Volunteer Effort c.	Factors against using Volunteers d.
12. Water Industry Manuals	At risk	Distribution from standpipes in streets to sick and elderly, organised locally	Water services might be maintained for about 2 weeks without help. Thereafter tasks likely to be beyond volunteer skills, dangerous and carry risks of damage to expensive equipment
13. Refuse Collectors	At risk	Self help for domestic refuse to temporary dumping sites. 'Good-neighbour' help for sick, elderly and immobile	As for Serial 10 eg where health hazard exists. But experience shows temporary dumps can be tolerated for 6-8 weeks. Contractors and mechanical handling equipment more suitable for clearing temporary dumps
14. Grave diggers	At risk	Plenty, but under supervision	A more skilled task than generally appreciated. Risk of desecration of adjoining graves
15. Driving eg i. road haulage	At risk. Small fleet road haulage operators probably willing to work through official industrial action if picket or "blacking" hazard can be avoided	Plenty, subject to licence holding and insurance cover; 11,000 HGV licence holders known to be unemployed as at November 1979. Department of Transport is investigating scope for immunity from accident liability	HGV licence required for vehicles over 7½ tons; Minister reluctant to waive requirements by emergency powers except in specific cases. Fleet owners likely to be reluctant to offer vehicles voluntarily, thus requisition powers required under emergency legislation. Corresponding loading/unloading effort probably required. Serial 10 reservation applies eg movement of goods for humanitarian reasons
ii. buses	At risk	Some, subject to qualification	Public service vehicle licence required; requirement unlikely to be waived
iii. trains	At risk	See Note 2	Probably impracticable
16. Dockers	At risk	See Note 2	Most traffic through ports now handled in containers which require specialist handlers and equipment
17. Road maintenance in snow/ice	At risk	Some especially on local, non-trunk routes (ie shopping streets) and on pavements	As for Serial 10 eg on motorways. Haphazard gritting likely to be extremely dangerous, both to gritters and traffic
18. Industrial workers eg i. in factories	Varies	Plenty on movement of non hazardous materials, clerical and warehouse work, lightweight truck driving. But none on process work or skilled maintenance	Management might refuse to permit use of volunteers for commercial and long term industrial relations reasons
ii. in chemical and industrial gases industries	At risk	Some scope for monitoring tasks subject to strict supervision of safety procedures. But none on repairs, production or shut down work	As for Serial 18

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Type of Employment a.	Prospects of Industrial Action b.	Scope for Volunteer Effort c.	Factors against using Volunteers d.
19. Postal Workers	At risk	Plenty for alternative carriers, subject to licence	Terms of monopoly would have to be lifted but experience shows, given adequate telephone system, the country can manage without postal service
20. Telecommunications	At risk	Limited. See also Note 2	Selective action aimed at installations of high technology. See also Serial 10 eg the 999 emergency service. Automation should allow telephone and telex services to be maintained for several weeks without operators
21. Civil Aviation			
i. Air Traffic Control	At risk but alternative means of travel would allow Government not to become involved	None	Highly specialised
ii. Airport operations	At risk	Plenty for cleaning tasks	Not likely to be regarded as essential to life of community
22. Oil Industry Workers, eg			
i. Refinery workers	At risk	Some, but restricted to senior grades not on strike and would be organised within the industry	Generally, too specialized. Some non-skilled jobs, but such workers unlikely to be taking unilateral strike action
ii. Oil tanker drivers		Plenty, but see Serial 15	Task requires HGV licence and short specialised training. Some accident insurance problems but see Serial 15
23. Gas Industry	At risk	Plenty on safety duties to supplement MACM plan. Best organised locally	Technical tasks too skilled for volunteers. Ex-employees probably too old, too few and likely to be in sympathy with former colleagues
24. Coal Industry eg			
i. Miners	At risk	None	Impracticable in pits and open-cast
ii. Distribution from pits	At risk	Some scope for distribution by road but only 10 per cent normally transported that way	Strong solidarity with NUM to be expected. Loading and weighbridge problems at pithead. If railwaymen strike, NUM would allow only non-rail coal to be moved (78 per cent normally supplied by rail). NUM likely to authorize "humanitarian" deliveries when road hauliers on strike
25. Electricity Industry	At risk	Some, but on labouring jobs only	As for serial 23

Note 1

The Home Office is investigating further the account of picket action against a group of volunteer firemen in Nottingham in the 1977 dispute which effectively prevented emergency fire cover being provided.

Note 2

Further investigations are in hand by Departments shown to establish the practicability of experienced volunteers operating the following services -

Serial	By	Service
6	Department of Industry	Broadcasting eg by manning transmitter networks to enable minimal news and recorded programmes to be broadcast
9	Civil Service Department	Civil Service
15	Department of Transport	Rail Service eg by operating automatic passenger and freight trains and signal systems
16	Department of Transport	Docks eg by operating cranes and other specialised equipment
20	Department of Industry	Telecommunications eg by manning telephone and telex exchanges

JOINT LETTER

As representatives of a range of community services we are deeply concerned about the most vulnerable members of society who have fundamental rights to service, whether they are in hospital, residential care or in their own homes.

We believe that the Guidelines provided by The Volunteer Centre, which commanded the support of both trade union representatives and those from the voluntary sector, for industrial disputes, provide a workable method of resolving current difficulties and we are recommending those organisations associated with us to follow them.

We would also advise those people who are not associated with an existing voluntary organisation and who want to give service to do so through the mechanism of appropriate existing local agencies whose organisers will be sensitive to arrangements being made between management and unions on a day to day basis.

However, we recognise that relatives, friends and neighbours may feel moved to act independently. If they do so, we would simply urge them to consider how the needs of those they care for and the wider implications of what they do can best be reconciled.

David Hobman

Baroness Pike

G H Neal

Nicholas Hinton

Derek Lowman

F H M Rushmore

Iris Griffin

T W C Fazan

Ian Bruce

Tony Smythe

- David Hobman, Director, AGE CONCERN England
- Baroness Pike, Chairman, Women's Royal Voluntary Service.
- G H Neal, Director of Residential Services, National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children.
- Nicholas Hinton, Director, National Council of Social Service.
- Derek Lowman, Secretary, Standing Conference of Councils for Voluntary Service.
- F H M Rushmore, Director, National Association of Leagues of Hospital Friends
- Iris Griffin, Chairman, National Association of Voluntary Help Organisers.
- T W C Fazan, Chief Staff Officer, St John Ambulance.
- Ian Bruce, Director, The Volunteer Centre.
- Tony Smythe, Director, MIND