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cc Mr. Hoskyns
Mr. Duguid

MR. SCHOLAR

MUS p.a.

note I have made
these points in Mr Lawson's
letter.

MUS 23/10

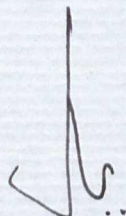
Not ind

Presentation of the Miners' Pay Offer

I think the Prime Minister should see Mr. Lawson's letter of 22 October to the Chancellor. You will recall that you wrote on 12 October warning the Department of Energy about our doubts on presenting a settlement as higher than it really is. Mr. Lawson's latest letter strongly re-inforces these doubts, because he is now telling us that there will be difficulties in presenting the true picture even after a ballot. This is exactly what happened last year, when the prospect of pit closures was adduced as a reason for not provoking the miners. Now it is said that there would be a danger of the negotiations having to be re-opened. And Mr. Lawson does not seem to have taken on board the almost overwhelming importance of public presentation of the miners' settlement for other pay negotiations.

I think, however, that it would be wrong to intervene again in the correspondence, because

- (i) Mr. Lawson does undertake to consult the Prime Minister about the presentation of the outcome of the negotiations; and,
- (ii) Presentation of the NCB's detailed offer made on 19 October did seem to me to be fair: of the major national newspapers, only the Sun failed to put a figure on the offer, the majority correctly described it as 6½%, two (the Guardian and the Times) as 7% and one (the FT) as 6-8%. If the media starts off on the right footing in this way, it is likely to interpret any increased offer reasonably accurately.



23 October 1981

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