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Prime Minister



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THE PRIME MINISTER

Following our discussion at Misc 101 yesterday, I spoke to Tom Legg who is a Deputy Secretary in the Lord Chancellor's Department. I told him that it was essential that the Lord Chancellor should be asked to approve the following steps:

To remind, and if necessary enforce, Magistrates' Courts dealing with miners strike cases that he is ready and able immediately to provide stipendiaries to assist in the work. The Lord Chancellor was contacted in Italy last night and he has agreed to this. Today the ring round of all the Clerks to the Justices has started and it is hoped to complete it either by this evening or first thing Monday morning. The message that ~~is~~^{is} being given is that they should look carefully at the progress of business and that the Lord Chancellor is ready to provide immediate assistance under Section 15 if the delays are mounting. ~~At~~^{At these are} particular courts where there is a belief of lack of co-operation (but not in courts who appear to be very co-operative) ~~the clerk was also told that the~~^{he clerk will be told that he.} Lord Chancellor would use his powers to appoint a stipendiary if he felt it was necessary regardless of whether there had been a request.

I understand the last time that the Lord Chancellor's Department got in touch with the courts was some weeks ago.

So far as publicity is concerned, there would be no objection to any statement on the lines that all the courts with this extra work had been reminded that the Lord Chancellor

/is ready



is ready to provide judicial assistance if they feel that the backlog is mounting up.

I think this is a considerable improvement not only because nothing has been done for so long but also because the unco-operative courts have now been warned that a stipendiary will be appointed if the backlog justifies whether they request it or not.

M.H.

31 August 1984