



Mr Howe

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 November 1981

Dear Marie,

Prime Minister's Meeting with a delegation from the
Jobs for Youth Campaign

Thank you for your letter of 27 November and the enclosed briefing for the Prime Minister's meeting with a delegation from the 'Jobs Express' Lobby on 30 November.

The delegation was led by Mr. John Collins of the British Youth Council who brought with him six young people. The Prime Minister began by inviting each of the people to say where they were from, how long they had been unemployed, and to make whatever points they wished to her.

Brendan Heaney, from Belfast, said that he had qualified in teacher training four years ago but had been unable to find permanent work since then. His efforts to get alternative work had met with the objection either that he was too old (at 25) or over qualified. He said that he thought that Northern Ireland's economic development was a low priority for the present Government, and not a matter of sufficient concern in the House of Commons.

Mike Carr (from Middlesbrough) had been unemployed for four months. He had 10 O-levels and 2 A-levels and a business diploma. He had been taken on for a degree course, but no grant, and since he had no sources of finance himself he would be unable to proceed.

Gayle Meyer, aged 19 and from Dagenham had applied for seven jobs and had interviews for six. She had 5 O-levels and 1 A-level.

Elizabeth Thomas from Edinburgh had been on a Youth Opportunities programme since August when she left school. She felt that she was getting no training from the YOP, and she said that she thought that the YOP's allowance was quite inadequate given general rising costs and in particular increased costs of travelling from home.

Theresa Short (aged 24, from Cambridge - 7 CSEs and 3 O-levels) had been unemployed for six months after being sacked by Trust Houses Forte. She had now been found to be wrongfully dismissed and had received some compensation for this, but was unable to get a reference from THF.

/ Wayne Daniels

Wayne Daniels (aged 19, from Sheffield) had worked for 2½ years after leaving school driving a fork-lift truck in a small company in the construction industry. All 250 people in the business had been made redundant, and he saw no prospects of getting a job again in Sheffield.

The Prime Minister sketched the macro economic background against which we were experiencing current levels of unemployment in Europe generally. She said that she believed that new, genuine, jobs would be most likely to be generated by small businesses, and the Government was doing all it could to create the right climate for a healthy small business sector. The Government was also doing what it could to improve education and training opportunities. It would be announcing improvements in the Youth Opportunities Programme with more training and higher allowances. The Prime Minister also mentioned that the new young workers' scheme would shortly come into effect.

Mike Carr argued that both in Middlesbrough and in Newcastle he had direct experience that the Government's small business start-up scheme was little understood by banks and others to whom he and his brother, both of whom had attempted to start small businesses, had turned. The Prime Minister undertook to look into the arrangements in these two places. A number of the young people criticised the YOP on the grounds that it provided inadequate training, and provided labour for companies at the expense of existing jobs. Mr. Alison commented that there was careful monitoring to prevent this happening, but that, no doubt, a number of fish got through the net from time to time.

In further discussion, the Prime Minister outlined the scale of the Government's expenditure on specific job subsidy schemes, on education, and on subsidies for industry (the latter with particular reference to points made by Brendan Heaney about the industrial situation in Northern Ireland). The Prime Minister acknowledged that the Government's efforts were not as effective as had been hoped, but underlined the burden on the taxpayer - or to put it differently, on those in work - of additional help to those out of work.

The meeting ended at 1645 hours (ie half an hour later than planned). The representatives of the British Youth Council indicated that they had not received any positive help or hope from their talk with the Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Scholar

Miss Marie Fahey,
Department of Employment