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5 August 1980

*Dear Willie*

## CODE OF PRACTICE ON PICKETING

Thank you for your letter of 30 July. I am grateful to you for seeking the views of the police organisations on the draft Code of Practice on Picketing. You will see from the attached consultative draft (which I am publishing on 5 August) that I have accepted your suggested amendments.

I hope very much that these changes will avoid any risk of the police organisations voicing criticisms of the draft Code which can be exploited by those in the trade union movement who are opposed in principle to a statutory code of practice on this subject. I must add that I am rather surprised that the police should now express unhappiness at the proposal for a specific limit of 6 pickets, after the Police Federation's earlier pressure for legislation on mass picketing.

The attached draft also takes account of the suggestions by Cabinet Office about which your private secretary wrote on 18 July.

As you will see from my private Secretary's letter of today to Keith Joseph's private secretary, I am concerned that a "child's guide" on the law on picketing might detract from the authority of the Code and even be confused with it. I am afraid that I have the same reservations about the police suggestion of a simpler, shorter document for local use if it is envisaged that this might be given anything wider than an internal police circulation.

The draft Code already provides a crisp and clear explanation of the law and I am not sure what purpose a simplified version would serve. Nevertheless I would be happy for our officials to explore this idea later in the year when the Codes themselves have been approved and published.

I am copying this to recipients of your letter.

*William Whitelaw*

- 5 AUG 1950

