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### DRAFT CODES PUBLISHED ON PICKETING AND CLOSED SHOP

The Secretary of State for Employment, Mr James Prior, has today published draft Codes of Practice on the Closed Shop and Picketing for consultation under the powers provided by Section 3 of the Employment Act 1980.

The period for consultation will extend until October 10, 1980. Mr Prior intends to seek Parliamentary approval for the Codes of Practice, revised as necessary in the light of the consultations, as soon as Parliament reassembles in the autumn.

Commenting today Mr Prior said:

"I believe these Codes will make an important contribution to good industrial relations in this country. They will reinforce and underline the increased protection which the Employment Act has provided to individual employees and employers against abuses of the closed shop and picketing.

"Through the Act Parliament has performed the very important task of setting a more reasonable framework of legal rights and obligations for the conduct of human relations within industry. It now lies with managements and unions to develop within that framework the voluntary procedures and accepted standards of behaviour at the workplace on which the improvement in our industrial relations ultimately depends.

"These Codes are intended to help management and unions develop those procedures. They explain the law and set out commonsense and practical guidelines for the conduct of industrial relations.

"The Code on the closed shop explains the relevant provisions of the Employment Act and gives guidance on good practice to employers and unions who operate

closed shop agreements. It emphasises that existing closed shops should be operated tolerantly and flexibly with proper regard to the views of those who do not want to join a trade union and provision for periodic review, and that new closed shops should only be set up if there is overwhelming support for them amongst those who would be affected. It also sets out the matters which industrial tribunals will be expected to take into account in deciding cases of unreasonable exclusion or expulsion from a trade union.

"The Code on picketing explains the law - both civil and criminal - as it affects pickets themselves and those who are affected by picketing. It also gives guidance on the conduct and organisation of pickets, with a view to ensuring that picketing remains peaceful and orderly at all times and is not carried out in excessive numbers. It makes it clear that everyone in this country has a right to cross a picket line if that is what he wishes to do, free from any interference by others.

"If these guidelines are followed by everyone concerned, we should see the end of the abuses of the closed shop and picketing which have caused so much public concern in recent years. That will not happen overnight. But everyone stands to gain - trade unions and their members most of all - from the observance of standards of tolerance and flexibility in the conduct of industrial relations.

"These Codes are at this stage published for consultation. I hope everyone who is interested in improving industrial relations in this country, not least line managers and shop stewards, on whom the main responsibility for industrial relations rests, will read them and let us know of any suggestions for improvement."