



The Rt Hon William Whitelaw
Home Secretary
House of Commons
LONDON SW1

13 June 1979

Prime Minister

*Are you content with
the attached draft statement?*

Yes

*(Other papers on the tube
strike are in your
question briefs)*

Dear Willie,

We agreed at yesterday's CCU meeting that I would make a statement to the House tomorrow afternoon about the Government's contingency arrangements for the underground strike, and would follow this up with a press conference. Arrangements for this are now in hand.

13/6

I enclose a draft of my proposed statement together with supplementary notes on 3 points where I thought we needed to be all agreed on the wording - fuel supplies, our status in the negotiations and the advice Government employees have been given. It would be most helpful if I could know by 10.30 tomorrow if at all possible whether you have any comments on these drafts.

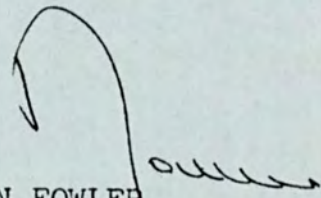
Meanwhile you may also like to know the position on publicity for car sharing. We have discussed this with the AA and RAC who will be putting out advice to the public together with appropriate car stickers and so forth on Friday. I propose in my Press Conference to make clear the basic facts about car sharing and to include this in my press statement so that people are not inhibited by fears about their insurance arrangements. Horace Cutler, who came to see me

CONFIDENTIAL

and Angus Maude this morning, attached considerable importance to this being explained clearly to the public. The attached note indicates the points I shall be getting across on this.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Secretary of State for Defence, Employment, Environment and Energy, the Paymaster General, the Minister of State, Civil Service Department, and to the Chief Whip. I am also sending copies to Sir John Hunt and Sir Clive Rose.

Yours truly



NORMAN FOWLER

CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR LONDON UNDERGROUND STRIKE

(Opening sentence on latest state of negotiations - to be drafted Thursday morning.)

I very much hope that Londoners will not be subjected to the widespread inconvenience that such a strike would undoubtedly cause. But by way of contingency planning the Government have been reviewing with the GLC, the Metropolitan Police and the groups of interest likely to be affected how best to ensure that Londoners can continue to go about their daily business.

We estimate that half a million people use the underground daily on their way to work in central London. Clearly the strike will impose great pressure on bus services and if too many people try to bring their cars into the centre there will be serious congestion and delay.

The Government therefore propose to take the following steps.

As far as central London is concerned, 8,000 extra car parking spaces will be made available in the Royal and other London parks. On the advice of the Metropolitan Commissioner of Police we shall not at this stage be lifting waiting restrictions or suspending meter charges. This is to reduce the risk of congestion bringing traffic to a standstill.

As far as outer London is concerned, where there is additional demand for extra parking spaces near suburban British Rail stations, the Commissioner has told me that

CONFIDENTIAL

enforcement of waiting restrictions will be relaxed in certain roads where this will not impede traffic movement. In addition the police are taking steps to operate clearways on key routes between 7 and 10 am and between 4 and 7 pm.

The police will be issuing detailed advice on this over the weekend.

The motoring and freight industry organisations are urging all their members to keep out of central London if they possibly can. Congestion will be minimised if employers adopt the maximum flexibility in hours of work to enable people to travel outside the rush hours and if people who have to use their cars take other people with them.

I am advised that fuel supplies for public transport in London are unlikely to present a special problem, but the Government will watch this aspect closely.

I shall be keeping in close contact with the police on the effectiveness of these arrangements and will consider, as the situation develops, whether any changes are needed.

CONFIDENTIAL

enforcement of waiting restrictions will be relaxed in certain
roads where this will not impede traffic movement. In
addition the police are taking steps to open up
on key routes between 7 and 10 am and between 4 and 7 pm.

The police will be issuing detailed advice on the
weekend.

The motoring and freight industry organisations are
urging all their members to keep out of central London if they
possibly can. Congestion will be minimised if employers adopt
the maximum flexibility in hours of work to enable people to
travel outside the rush hours and if people who have to use
their cars take other people with them.

I am advised that fuel supplies for public transport in
London are unlikely to present a special problem, but the
Government will watch this aspect closely.

I shall be keeping in close contact with the police on
the effectiveness of these arrangements and will consider
as the situation develops, whether any changes are needed.

52



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3LF

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw MP
Home Secretary
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1

13 June 1979

ew Willie,

LONDON UNDERGROUND STRIKE

Angus Maude and I saw Horace Cutler this morning to get his latest assessment of the strike prospects and to ensure that the GLC were clear about and agreed the limits of their own responsibility and that of the Government. We also discussed the line I would take in the statement which CCU agreed I should make to the House tomorrow afternoon.

Mr Cutler confirmed the view we took yesterday at CCU that there was little prospect of averting the strike. He is determined that any settlement with the underground men should produce real improvements in productivity and he believes there is no case for going beyond the offer already made on this basis. He is prepared to stand firm, even if, as seems likely to him, the strike drags on for some time. His present estimate is ten weeks. This will be very costly in lost revenue and may well permanently lose London Transport some passengers.

CONFIDENTIAL

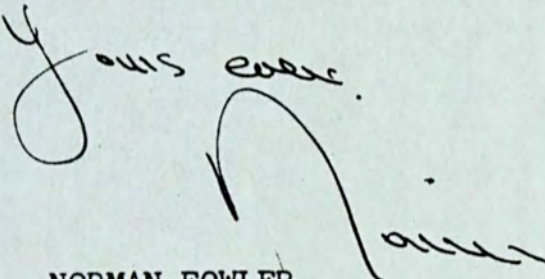
He accepts that responsibility for the handling of the dispute and presentation of the employer's case is for the GLC and the London Transport Executive. But he has promised to keep me in close touch with developments on this front. Subject to your and colleagues' views, I have undertaken to be the immediate point of contact on this and will aim to report day to day developments direct to the Prime Minister. Mr Cutler has also given me the enclosed text of the press Statement he is issuing today on the implications of the wages settlement for fares. This, as you will see, covers only the implications of the settlement offered and not the NUR claim. But Mr Cutler will be building up his case on this. He has undertaken to see that the employers' case is presented forcefully through the media and will be appearing on the BBC Nationwide programme this evening. The London Transport Executive are proposing to place advertisements in the press setting out the rates of pay which have been offered.

Mr Cutler felt very strongly that the Government should be seen to take primary responsibility for contingency planning for the effects of the strike. But he will obviously want to keep in very close touch and I have arranged that he and I can be in 24 hourly contact from now on and arranged for similar arrangements at official level. I have outlined to him the main points of our plan, and he was in agreement with them. He promised us his full support. He has undertaken to see that the GLC takes action to stagger working hours to ease the effects of the strike and to ask the London boroughs to do the same. He will also co-operate in the search for suitable additional parking sites near British Rail Suburban stations.

Finally, Angus Maude and I discussed with Mr Cutler the statement which I am planning to make in the House tomorrow. He was very much in favour of the general line I proposed and suggested only that more might be made of the advice that might be given to motorists on car sharing. He suggested paid advertisements in the main and suburban London papers. He also undertook to display stocks of the proposed leaflet on car-sharing in the GLC bookshop.

CONFIDENTIAL

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister,
The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Secretary of
State for Defence, Employment, Environment and Energy,
the Paymaster General, the Minister of State, Civil Service
Department, and to the Chief Whip. I am also sending
copies to Sir John Hunt and Sir Clive Rose.

Yours ever


NORMAN FOWLER

CONFIDENTIAL