

MR SCHOLAR

cc:- Mr Ingham
Mr Mount

THE RAILWAYS


7 P.M.
Prime Minister (2)

Clive and I were concerned that the
board's immediate, tactical, position was being
made to look weak by aslef. This is
reassuring. Mus 2/7

We had a word this morning about the way in which Mr Buckton had succeeded in appearing to put BR on the defensive, by being reported as having offered to try out BR's earlier proposal for a compromise on flexible rostering, while BR were now refusing to accept that.

The position is, of course, that Buckton has done no more than offer to reconvene a special delegate conference - and the last conference voted (I think unanimously) against any form of flexible rostering.

BR are clearly also sensitive to the weakness in their position, and you may be reassured to see the attached text of a press notice issued at mid-day today, which makes it clear that BR are not prepared to continue with the status quo in the face of indefinite prevarication on the part of ASLEF.


2 July, 1982

FOLLOWING TEXT ISSUED BY BRITISH RAIL AT APPROXIMATELY 12.00 HOURS TODAY (FRIDAY)

BR Board said this morning that if ASLEF is serious in its intention, at long last, to come to terms with flexible rostering that first it should remove the threat of strike action and second its executive committee must accept the RSNT recommendations that "flexible rostering can be introduced in a way which safeguards the legislative concerns of ASLEF and its members". It should take steps to recommend this to the recalled conference immediately and reach agreement with BR on the first stage of introducing flexible rosters.

U The country and our customers have a right to see this matter settled without any doubt and without further delay.

The proposal for the phased introduction of flexible rosters which ASLEF now give the impression that they are accepting, were first put to ASLEF by BR negotiators on 22 June and confirmed in writing on 23 June.

All ASLEF is now saying that the union will recall its Annual Conference "as quickly as possible" - no date is mentioned - and will "seek authority to co-operate with productivity improvements and flexible rostering", there is no certainty that when this process is complete the situation will have changed in any way.