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PRIME MINISTER

Parliamentary Affairs: The Political Levy

At Cabinet tomorrow the Secretary of State for Employment wishes to bring colleagues up to date on his discussions with the Trades Union Congress (TUC) about the trade unions' political levy.

2. It was agreed last year to have discussions with the TUC to see if agreement could be reached on a satisfactory way of giving individual members of unions genuine freedom of choice whether or not to pay the political levy. These have been going on between Mr King and Mr Murray, and Mr Murray is to put proposals to the TUC's Employment Policy Committee next Wednesday (which will in turn go before the General Council the following week). The state of play will then become public knowledge. The expectation is that following next Wednesday's meeting the Employment Policy Committee will offer proposals that could form the basis of a voluntary agreement (in addition to the periodic balloting requirement in Part III of the Trade Union Bill). They are likely to take the form of a TUC commitment to persuade its member unions to circulate to all their members a document explaining their rights and how to contract out.
3. The Cabinet may wish to consider briefly whether the proposals likely to emerge are satisfactory, though a final view must wait on the TUC's actual proposals.

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ROBERT ARMSTRONG

8 February 1984

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