

29th April 1980

Thank you very much for your letter of 24th April.

I am grateful to you for having written about this, and for having explained the reasons why you voted as you did last week.

Vivian Bendall Esq MP

From: Vivian W. H. Bendall, MP

R25



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

24th April, 1980.

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,  
Prime Minister,  
10, Downing Street,  
London SW1A

Dear Prime Minister,

In view of the fact that I was one of those who voted against the Government in respect of several clauses of the Employment Bill, I thought it my duty to explain my position to you.

It was only after a lot of heart searching that I reached my decision to vote against the Government.

I have been very concerned that certain parts of the Employment Bill were not strong enough and did not match our Manifesto. This view is held by a great number of Conservative Trade Unionists and I refer to the fact that our Trade Unionist National Council has endorsed, at three conferences the mandatory right of a worker to demand the secret ballot.

It is because I feel that this area of industrial relations is crucial to our economic position and indeed our democracy, I think it vital that we get it completely right.

My experience 'on the door step' recently amongst voters of no particular political allegiance is that they expected fairly strong legislation from our Government in this field. Indeed, I found much praise for you personally and the Government for keeping out of the steel strike.

I do understand that there is to be a discussion paper coming forward regarding future Trade Union legislation. I am, however, concerned that we shall be well into this Parliament before further legislation concerning Trade Unions can be placed on the Statute. Having lived through the times between 1970 and 1974 as a Parliamentary candidate in a Labour-held seat, I believe that legislation on Trade Unions should be dealt with early in a Parliament, giving greater individual power to the Trade Unionist and reducing the dictatorial powers of the leadership. Indeed, I believe, given the opportunity, the ordinary Trade Unionist will use this power as he did in voting for a Conservative Government in May last year.

I am sorry to have to worry you with my views, but I felt that as our Leader and Prime Minister I owed you an explanation and I wish to place on record my complete confidence and loyalty in you.

Kindest regards.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Vivian', with a long, sweeping underline.