

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

ans

010



*Papers are in CF
under
Bennion. sub*

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

*(pps marked out
to CF 9/11) 7/11*

4 January 1985

Dear Mr Bennion

will request, if required

The Home Secretary has asked me to thank you very much for sending him a copy of your letter of 5 November to the Attorney General, and of your article about mass picketing and the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875, which he found of great interest.

As you will have seen, the number of prosecutions for offences under section 7 of the 1875 Act has in fact grown considerably during the current miners dispute. It is not of course for the Home Secretary to direct the police in the exercise of their powers of arrest and prosecution. He does agree, however, that there is a case for creating a greater public awareness of the existence of the effect of section 7 and has it in mind to seek an opportunity of drawing attention to this.

The fact that offences under section 7 are not at present arrestable and that they carry relatively low penalties is of course a drawback to their use; and that is one of the issues that the Home Secretary has under consideration in his review of the public order law.

Copies of this letter go to John Ringguth in the Law Officers' Department and to David Barclay at No 10.

Yours sincerely

N A PANTLING

Francis Bennion, Esq