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Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

Clive Whitmore Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

10 April 1980

Dear Clive

You wrote to Garth Waters on 27 March enclosing a letter from the Town Clerk of Hull in which he asks directly for funds to be made available to maintain the fish landing facilities in the city. It would clearly be right to take account of this in replying to the Lord Mayor's letter of 14 March. This means revising the draft which was sent to you by Garth Waters on 26 March. This I have done and I enclose a new text.

Nothing that has happened in the last two weeks would in any way lead my Minister to qualify his view, which was set out in the letter of 26 March, that there is no case for giving special assistance to Hull. If anything, it is more than ever evident that to do so would cause dismay in the rest of the fishing industry who would be only too ready to point out that there are better ways of using any Government money that might be available for this sector. And they would be right. My Minister's view is quite clearly that commercial considerations must be allowed to determine Hull's future role as a fishing port whether in respect of landings by UK vessels or by foreign vessels, but I assume that it would be premature to expose this position before the Prime Minister meets Mr Cairns on 24 April.

My Minister has also asked me to say that placing the emphasis in our dealings with Hull on the commercial logic of the situation only serves to underline the importance of safeguarding the whole competitive base of the UK fishing industry and the importance he attaches, therefore, to the ideas set out in the paper on energy prices and competition which he sent to the Prime Minister on 21 March.

You also said that the Prime Minister had asked whether the various statistics set out in the letter of 20 March which she received from Mr T W Boyd are correct. We have prepared a separate note on this which is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

David Jones

D E JONES
Assistant Private Secretary

THIRD COUNTRY FISHING

1. Mr Boyd's figures for cod and haddock apparently relate only to quotas at North Norway and ignore other UK distant-water quotas available elsewhere (eg in Canadian waters) which we estimate could total over 20,000 tonnes in 1980, albeit of mixed species.
2. The decline in North Norway quotas for cod and haddock reflects the decline in fish stocks. The United Kingdom has maintained **its** relative share of these quotas. Mr Boyd does not (understandably) draw attention to the fact that HMG had succeeded in negotiating distant water quotas for other species, which the industry has not caught. In this aspect, the UK industry's reaction has been different from that of the German distant water industry. The latter, having also experienced large losses of demersal fishing opportunities in distant waters (calculated by the EC Commission as being larger in relative (but not absolute) terms than UK losses), has successfully exploited other species such as redfish, catfish, etc, which are more prolific and abundant. In this way the German industry has been able to maintain the level of distant-water fishing to which Mr Boyd refers.
3. Mr Boyd appears to allege that a major part of the German distant-water catch is of Greenland cod, for which a ban on fishing is in force. German catch statistics do not support this assertion. A number of German vessels have been prosecuted successfully for illegal cod fishing off Greenland, but the German authorities have taken a responsible attitude towards enforcing the prohibition and have acted on information from the industry transmitted via United Kingdom Fisheries Departments.

FRENCH HERRING FISHING

4. Legal proceedings have been instituted against a number of French vessels for alleged illegal landings of herring in Boulogne at the end of last year. While the exact quantity of herring involved is not known, French authorities have indicated that it does not approach the figure of 30,000 tonnes mentioned. British fishery limits are regularly patrolled by fishery protection vessels but no evidence was found of illegal fishing for herring within our limits.

DUTCH MACKEREL FISHING

5. Whilst there do not ^{yet} appear to be quantitative restrictions operating on individual Dutch vessels in the mackerel fishery, the Dutch authorities have published, by statute, an overall quantitative limit on Dutch landings of Western and North Sea mackerel in 1980.

CONTRIBUTION TO RESOURCES

6. Estimates based on official studies (which have not been officially released) give a United Kingdom overall "contribution to resource" of 60%. In 1978, the Commission proposed quotas for the United Kingdom totalling some 30% of the demersal species under quota and 38% of the pelagic species.

7. Estimates of long-term maximum sustainable yields made by Fisheries Laboratory, Lowestoft, suggest that for important North Sea stocks a total yield of 5.9 million tonnes per annum might be expected, assuming all stocks could be maintained simultaneously at their maxima. However, if stocks found in waters not under EC Member States' sovereignty or jurisdiction

are excluded, the total yield falls to 4.1 million tonnes. In view of the uncertainties over future supply/price relationships, MAFF have not, as stated, estimated the value of this resource - this has been done by the industry using average 1978 quay-side prices calculated by MAFF.

8. It would appear, therefore, that the industry have somewhat misrepresented the source of some of their statistics and have possibly overstated their case in financial terms. Nevertheless, the underlying basis of their case is not unreasonable.

SAINT PIERRE/MIQUELON/SKAGERRAK/KATTEGAT

9. In principle, these waters are regarded as "internal" waters, and therefore subject to the common access provisions of the existing Common Fisheries Policy. In the case of Saint Pierre and Miquelon - two islands off Newfoundland - uncertainties over median lines and the attitude of Canada who disputes the ability of these islands to generate a 200 mile fishing limit have in practice resulted in fishing being conducted only by those fishermen who have experience of the waters concerned. In the case of the Skagerrak and Kattegat, fishing is mainly conducted by Danish and German vessels. Quota allocations for stocks in these waters have yet to be agreed within the Community. The United Kingdom has not received notification that special access arrangements apply in these waters.

IMPORTS

10. The figures of imports are based on a selection made by Mr Boyd from the whole range of published statistics. The basis he has used is not clear but he is right to point to a

substantial growth in imports over the last three years.

There is, however, not much credence to be attached to an estimate for 1980 based on figures for January alone.

Within the total, imports from other EEC countries have been rising faster than imports generally: they increased by 55% between 1977 and 1978 and by 26% between 1978 and 1979. Most of this fish will have been taken in the EEC pond but we cannot make any real assessment of precisely where, within that area, catches sold here would have been taken.

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