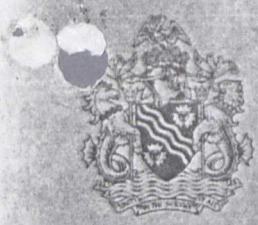


C/F PPS KS



# Merseyside County Council

County Councillor Neville C Goldrein MA (Cantab)  
Leader of the Council Conservative Party.

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24th June, 1981 R26/6

*Dear Prime Minister,*

I must refer to your answer to a question in the House of Commons on Tuesday, 23rd June. In your statement you say that "you begin to wonder whether we are getting the best value or whether it is properly applied in the interests of those who work in Merseyside". I am naturally concerned about these words because for a period of four years, until some six weeks ago, the County Council was Conservative controlled. I know that your remarks may well be directed at Liverpool City who have in many instances been obstructive to our efforts, particularly concerning the Ring Road, but the reaction in Merseyside is that the finger of condemnation is pointed at us. W

So far as the County is concerned - and generally in all fairness probably so far as the City is concerned - all monies, whether from Government or from Commerce and Industry, are applied in this County the best way possible to minimise unemployment and to assist in our future prosperity. The trouble is, that Merseyside has particular historical problems arising from the run down of the docks and the replacement of the old local industries by the large - and internationally strike prone - motor industry.

Our greatest problem, however, is our image. I am reliably assured, and all statistics show this, that Merseyside is by no means at the top of the strike league and that in the major industrial conurbations we come about half way down. Nevertheless the general public's view is that, at the drop of a hat, Merseyside will be militantly out on strike.

This false image causes us tremendous problems. When the kings of industry are invited to Merseyside, they are reluctant to come because of our reputation. Once they establish themselves here they do not move away. Over the years, and particularly during the Conservative administration we have fought hard and long to improve this unfair picture of Merseyside.

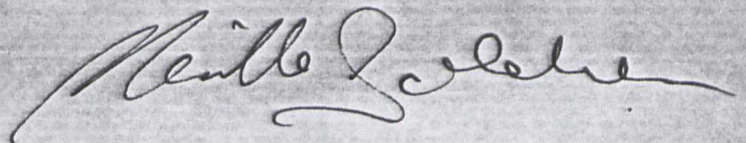
Now unfortunately, and at National level, you as Prime Minister have in effect given a seal of approval to the words of criticism. Those who were considering coming may well now conclude that in view of your strictures they should stay away. Those who were balanced on a knife edge as to whether or not to come, may be similarly affected. In fact I am sorry to put it this way, but your remarks - which I am sure did not in any way have this intention - will be interpreted as being confirmation that Merseyside is not a place to which to come, and that if the County fails properly to deal with £300 million of Government money each year then who is going to risk his private money in such a County?

I accordingly ask you if you will make a public statement which would receive at least as much publicity as that under discussion, to the effect that Merseyside's adverse image is incorrect, that the County has a great deal to offer, that tremendous efforts have been made and opportunities exist here for commerce and industry, and that the Government will continue to support us in the sure knowledge that the long term investment is a good one - as is indeed the case.

The £300 million a year can go to waste without such a statement whereas it can be worth double that sum if it has direct Prime Ministerial support.

If you can find time to visit this County it will be a tremendous boost not only locally but nationally and I naturally join the present Labour Leader of the County Council in his invitation to you.

*Yours sincerely,*



The Prime Minister,  
(The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP.),  
10 Downing Street,  
London, SW1.