

PRIME MINISTER

The Hull Fishing Industry

When you saw the draft letter which MAFF suggested you should send to the Lord Mayor of Hull in response to his letter at Flag A, your reaction was that it was very cursory, bearing in mind the statistics which the Lord Mayor sent with his letter, and you asked whether the reply could not go into more detail.

I took this up with Mr. Walker's office, and they have now responded with some suggestions for slightly expanding the letter to the Lord Mayor. But they make the point that we cannot go very far in reply if we want to save the news that Hull can be given no specific aid until next week's meeting with the deputation which is being led by Mr. Cairns of the TGWU. I think that MAFF are right about this and I attach the revised letter for your signature. We ought to get this on its way tomorrow so that the Lord Mayor sees it reasonably well in advance of your meeting with the deputation on 24 April.

MW.

17 April 1980



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

From the Minister's Private Office

Clive Whitmore Esq
Principal Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

17 April 1980

Dear Clive

You rang me today about the draft letter for the Prime Minister to send to the Lord Mayor of Hull which I sent to you on 10 April. You said that the Prime Minister wished to flesh out the draft reply we provided to the letter she had received from the Lord Mayor about the future of Hull as a fishing port to take account of the figures he had sent her.

Garth Waters' letter to you of 26 March explained why we thought the Council's assumptions about throughput to be over-optimistic, drew attention to the fact that the fish dock could continue to operate only with the support of a continuing subsidy, and recorded the Minister's view that such a subsidy would not be justified. The British Transport Docks Board have temporarily reduced the landing charge for wet fish at Hull to the levels which prevail at Grimsby, but this has failed to attract traffic on anything like the scale the Council envisage in their figures.

If the Prime Minister agrees that we do not finally tell Hull that no specific aid is available before next week's meeting of the TGWU then there is little that constructively can be said about the Lord Mayor's figures without giving the game away. I would suggest, therefore, that the most we can do to take the Lord Mayor's figures into account in the draft reply is to alter it as follows:

- (a) after the first sentence insert:

X / ^{omit} "... ~~with which~~ you enclosed ^{with your letter} figures showing the net cost of operating the dock and an estimate of income made on certain assumptions. These figures showed that there would be a significant shortfall between income and costs."

and

(b) after the last sentence of the letter insert:

y | "No doubt any proposals which ~~they~~ may put to me will be based on up-dated estimates of the cost of maintaining the fish handling facilities and likely levels of activity and income."

I hope that the Prime Minister will find these amendments satisfactory.

Yours sincerely
David Jones

D E JONES
Assistant Private Secretary

17 APR 1980

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