

fishing

PRIME MINISTER'S TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH THE MINISTER OF  
AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD ON SATURDAY 14 JUNE 1980

Mr. Walker: ... so he said "What do you mean parallelism". To which he said the CAP has been settled, the Budget has been settled and the fish must be settled almost<sup>at</sup> the same time. So Gunderlach said "That's absolute rubbish. The Foreign Ministers agreed to December 31 as the date by which an attempt should be made to settle <sup>on</sup> and I can assure that this is a matter which cannot be settled in a few weeks." I thought I would have a word with you because I didn't know whether you had picked up anything in Venice about this.

PM: Nothing at all. I understood that they are a bit wounded about the way the French papers played it because they reckon the French papers picked up from the British papers. Certainly they are a little wounded. And I said What are you feeling wounded about? France did extremely well. She got her agricultural prices and her sheepmeat which provides for intervention for her. But undoubtedly they were sort of wounded. But even so, they can have a settlement if they give us anything we want.

PW: But Gunderlach told the French there was no way it could be done, it was impossible and so forth. But I mean I think if the French try a very high profile on all this on Monday I have to knock them down rather sharply. But I mean I thought I would check with you. I mean there is no way we should accept the French bludgeoning on. And of course to some extent the Germans had taken this very high line on fish. But I had a good meeting on Friday with the German Ambassador who, as you know, was Schmidt's head of Private Office ...

PM: Rufhus?

PW: And he came in to see me specifically on fish with a message from the Chancellor. The Germans wanted a speedy settlement and the basic principles of free access and all that sort of thing. And so I said to him: Look, you know full well that I have had meetings with your side, and there is nothing conflicting between what Germany wants and what Britain wants. But if you want to go

/on this

PW: on this basic principle of fishing up to the beaches for any country in Europe anywhere I can / <sup>tell you</sup> there is no possibility of any description of a settlement. And I said that you have got to realise that as far as this country is concerned the Prime Minister is totally committed to the retention of a good strong fishing industry but the political problems of Scottish nationalism are highly connected with it, that emotionally this country has always supported its fishing industry and the position of this Government and Parliament as a whole could not be clearer. But you must realise that there is a position where both Germany and Britain can have a perfectly good fishing policy which none of us conflict on. So he said: Well our concern of course is, as you know, is not fishing up to your coast but it is fishing within the 12 mile limit of Denmark. So I said: Well there is nothing stopping negotiation on historic rights between you and Denmark but if you push this line of free access everywhere in Europe, not only Denmark and Britain but several other countries too <sup>would be</sup> passionately opposed to it, and you just won't get a settlement. So he said that he agreed with that but we have to make these noises at home at the present time and so I said: Well look, as far as I am concerned, I am happy to meet with the Germans before every Fishing Council meeting. I know for a fact that there is nothing conflicting between us and we really should be able to get a sensible agreement. He said he thought that was absolutely right and he would be reporting that to Schmidt. And he would very much welcome very close British/German co-operation to get an agreement. So that might be a useful meeting viz a viz the Germans. But I just think the French seemingly are going to play a much more high domestic political profile than has been indicated today. I am in fact lunching with the French Minister on Monday before the Fishing Council so obviously I will get a greater impression from him directly on that. But Gunderlach said that he was taking on the 'phone very much the line that the British have got their Budget settlement and now we demand our fishing settlement.

/PM:

PM: Well they have had their sheepmeat settlement.

PW: But I mean the fact is we are still contributing more to the Budget than France.

PM: That's right. And more fish.

PW: More fish. More money to the Budget. But I just wanted to check with you on that.

PM: Well, you can't be hassled. You know how much fish means to us.

PW: Well, of course I won't be. But I just wanted to check in case you picked up anything at Venice.

PM: No, nothing. I did have breakfast with Giscard. I must say that the atmosphere was reasonable. He did indicate that the farmers felt deeply wounded, etc., etc., and they were the sort of people who wouldn't forget. And I said well they had a very good agricultural prices settlement. And I thought France did very well because, as you say, France pays less than we do. We are having trouble with them in the New Hebrides, as you know. It might just be a little bit of back-lash resentment.

PW: I think it is. I am sure at the moment Giscard has had a bad press at the moment in France and I think here he is out to look for issues in which he shows French independence here and so on.

PM: Yes. Well if they want a settlement quickly than all they have got to do is give us what we want.

PW: Yes sure, Fine. I thought I would just report to you because Gunderlach came on the 'phone last night to say that he decided that at Tuesday's Agricultural Ministers meeting he was going to have a private session with Ministers only on the question of New Zealand to get a mandate that when he goes out to New Zealand

/to negotiate

PW: to negotiate with Muldoon he can negotiate the diary products as well as the sheepmeat. He said to me that it would be quite impossible to go to New Zealand and settle the sheepmeat and we will look at the diary products later. So I said that was absolutely right and he is therefore going to raise it on Tuesday. I 'phoned the New Zealand High Commissioner and asked him to report it to Muldoon and to tell Muldoon to give me any briefing he wants before Tuesday and tell them that I will report back to them as soon as the private session is over and that if, between now and Tuesday, they can put any more pressure on Giscard or France to act reasonably within the negotiations when that discussion comes up all well and good. So that is the current state on that.

PM: I am dining with him tonight, and with Holyoak, and the New Zealand High Commissioner.

PW: Oh fine. I had a conversation with him earlier this afternoon and I have always felt that they are going to get a much better dairy settlement by doing the two together.

PM: Yes, I know. When is Gunderlach thinking of going out?

PW: I think as soon as possible.

PM: As soon after that meeting.

PW: I think for once Gunderlach is very genuine in wanting to bring back a good New Zealand agreement. That has all gone through to the New Zealand Government and they know about it.

PM: All right Peter, thank you for 'phoning. It is an unexpected aberration isn't it. Very childish. All right. Thank you. Goodbye.