

1

Dr Wolfson

You might like to see these papers - for the new

MEC(79)P3

MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON ENERGY CONSERVATION

ENERGY CONSERVATION:
THE SCOPE FOR MANDATORY MEASURES

Ministerial

Committee

which I

mentioned.

Note by the Secretariat

The attached report was prepared by officials at the request of Ministers of the previous Administration and completed immediately before the General Election.

R

2 The Interdepartmental Official Committee on Energy Conservation (IOCEC) submits it to MEC for information and comment.

24/7

MEC Secretariat
Energy Conservation Division
Department of Energy

19 July 1979

ENERGY CONSERVATION: THE SCOPE FOR MANDATORY MEASURES

A report by a Sub-Group of the Interdepartmental Official Committee on
Energy Conservation

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1 This report examines the scope for mandatory measures in support of long-term energy conservation policy with particular reference to energy saving regulations and efficiency standards.

2 So far the UK has had little recourse to compulsion in support of energy conservation and IOCEC's earlier report* published on 6 March 1979, on the scope for new energy conservation measures and a long-term strategy, concluded that regulation was unlikely to be acceptable in this area unless the danger of energy scarcity was widely recognised as being imminent or certain.

3 The UK's fortunate position as an oil producer approaching self-sufficiency creates a climate of public opinion unsympathetic to the idea of mandatory restrictions on the use of energy - in much the same way as it adds to the difficulty of raising energy prices to their proper economic levels. The cut-back in world oil supplies as a result of the Iranian crisis has however sharply underlined the need to save energy. Although public acceptance will not be easily secured there may well be a case for carefully selected mandatory measures to bring home the need for conservation. However, we believe that this would be second best to action on energy prices, re-inforced as necessary by publicity and information and a Research, Development and Demonstration programme.

4 As was noted in Energy Paper No.33, there are powerful objections to measures which interfere with the liberty of the individual to lead his own life in his own home, and which are any way difficult to enforce. The imposition of mandatory measures on industry might be easier to enforce, and measures which served to enhance the position of UK companies against foreign competition might be generally welcomed. We have attached considerable importance however to the need to ensure that mandatory measures should not create burdens which damage the competitiveness or reduce the profitability of UK industry.

5 The Department of Energy is currently developing proposals for legislation to take powers, among other things, to implement EEC directives on

*Energy Paper No 33 - Energy Conservation: scope for new measures and long-term strategy. An inter-Departmental report by officials. HMSO £2

performance standards for heating appliances and energy labelling. The proposed legislation - which is the subject of separate Ministerial consideration - would enable performance standards to be set and enforced and progressively raised for the vast bulk of new heating appliances sold in this country.

6 Beyond these proposals we recommend at the present time only two relatively minor mandatory measures to re-inforce existing policy:

- the specification as soon as possible in domestic Building Regulations of a minimum level of controls on new or replacement heating systems possibly including separate controls on hot water and space heating systems as recommended by the Advisory Council on Energy Conservation;
- the incorporation in consumer protection legislation of protection against misleading information in advertisements about home insulation and controls.

7 We recommend further work to prepare for possible mandatory measures in two areas:

- the drawing up of codes of practice which might be incorporated in Building Regulations to guide local installers of domestic heating systems and systems and appliances in general use in non-domestic buildings; and
- the identification of specific sectors of industry which feel their trade might benefit from mandatory energy efficiency standards.

8 In addition we have identified a number of further studies which would be required before the appropriateness of particular mandatory measures could be judged. These studies would examine:

- the means of raising the proficiency of boiler operators;
- the desirability and feasibility of requiring regular maintenance of a specific range of energy-using appliances;
- possible extension of the car fuel consumption testing scheme to light commercial vehicles;
- possible incorporation in the MOT of fuel efficiency testing to establish in the first instance the cost benefit of such a measure;
- the effects elsewhere of a ban on direct promotional advertising of fuels by utilities; in the meantime we recommend that the Department of Energy should intensify its efforts to persuade the fuel industries to promote the efficient use of energy more vigorously;
- the introduction of a statutory minimum limit on cooling for air-conditioned non-domestic buildings to complement the existing limit on heating levels; while this would be difficult to enforce it would give energy managers an objective and would tend to discourage air-conditioning in new buildings.

9 Finally, we have identified a number of ideas for strengthening energy conservation on a voluntary basis, through action by the appropriate Departments:

- the inclusion by estate agents of the conservation features of properties when they are offered for sale;
- the inclusion of insulation in the checklists of property surveyors and in solicitors' search procedures;
- the setting of targets for energy saving by individual sectors of industry; and
- the annual reporting by companies, possibly through trade associations, of energy conservation measures and energy use.