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Transport

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

25 April 1980

Dear Sir Humphrey,

Thank you for writing to me on 18 April about the Hull fish docks, providing me with some information in preparation for my meeting with a deputation from Hull.

As you will probably know, I met the Hull deputation yesterday. I was impressed by the unity of purpose demonstrated by the various interests represented on the deputation. They made it clear to me that their short term priority is to secure the continued operation of their landing facility until the end of June, by which time they hope that the negotiations for a Common Fisheries Policy will have reached a stage which will allow some realistic longer term planning to be undertaken.

I know that all concerned in Hull have appreciated the assistance which the British Transport Docks Board have been able to give, with the adjustment of charges as a result of increased estimates of landings. The deputation expressed anxiety over the present arrangements for a monthly review of charges, which they see as a limiting factor as they negotiate with third country fishermen about possible landings. I told them that you had confirmed to me that the Board had no intention of closing the dock if there are enough fish to provide a sound basis for keeping it in operation. The deputation explained that the landings in April are on target to meet the revised estimates presented to the Board, and that the forecasts for May suggest that there will be a basis for continuing to operate the dock in June.

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I know that the interests represented on the deputation will also be working hard to ensure that they derive maximum assistance from the funds which the Government has already made available for our fishing industry as a whole. I was encouraged to hear the deputation's view that the prospects for continuing fish landings at Hull through the next two months are quite good. I am sure that your Board will be as impressed as I was by the determination of the City to keep going in this interim period until they are in a position to make realistic judgements about the longer term future.

Yours sincerely,

MT

Sir Humphrey Browne, C.B.E.