

*cc Mr. Holt
Mr. Hodgins*

Prime Minister

*Agree that this
Committee should
continue?*

See report 12

PRIME MINISTER
COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS ON ENERGY CONSERVATION

You agreed in July to my proposal to keep in being a Committee of Ministers to promote the efficient use of energy, but said that you wished to review the position at the end of three months. *26/10*

We are agreed that energy conservation together with nuclear power and coal must form the basis of our long term energy policy. We are also committed internationally to reducing the energy co-efficient of economic output and giving increased impetus to energy conservation.

In achieving this aim, market forces have an important part to play. The public sector must also set and be seen to be setting a good example. A good start has been made - the Property Services Agency has already achieved savings of 30% of energy consumption since 1972. But there is still a long way to go, particularly among local authorities.

All our experience suggests that constant pressure is needed to bring other Departments, nationalised industries and local authorities up to the mark and keep them there. Our initial experience of the committee has clearly shown what a major and uphill task lies ahead. There is a limit to what officials can do. They need clear Ministerial support and backing. I believe it important that there should be a Minister in each Department with responsibility for energy conservation in his Department's field of activities and that the Ministers concerned should meet regularly under John Moore's chairmanship. The essential purpose of the group is to monitor our conservation effort, to keep everyone on their toes and to see what more we need to do. Otherwise, I fear that, given public expenditure and manpower constraints, energy conservation will slip down the list of Departmental priorities.

I very much hope therefore that you can agree that the Committee under John Moore should continue. If you do, I would also hope that you would be prepared to write to our colleagues explaining the importance you

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personally attach to energy conservation and your wish to see early and substantial progress in this area.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Sir John Hunt.

MA.
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Secretary of State for Energy
25 October 1979

I see no reason in
the note for the
committee to continue.
What has it achieved?
It looks like a time-wasting
talkshop.
MB.