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Energy 2
cc A. Dugard -

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY

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in the Lyham

MS

Prime Minister

*To note choice of
Sizewell for first
PWR - subject to*

*26 September 1980
public inquiry of course.
To be announced
next Wednesday.*

Dear David,

The CEBG have told the Department that they intend to announce on 1 October that they have chosen Sizewell in Suffolk as the site for the first PWR nuclear power station in this country. They are doing this in order to enable them to carry out open consultations with local people in advance of making their formal application for consent for the station. (This is expected to come at the beginning of the new year).

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The Board's announcement may be expected to generate much interest, and in particular to raise questions about the public inquiry which my Secretary of State intends to hold into the proposal. It will be important to have the report of the Select Committee on Energy following the inquiry into the nuclear programme earlier this year before decisions are taken about the form and scope of the inquiry.

The Government is thus not yet in a position to take final decisions about the inquiry, much less to announce them immediately. I attach for your information material on which our Press Office will draw in answer to questions.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, and to those of Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr Ibbs.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Hunt

G S DART
Private Secretary



GENERAL LINE

1 We note the announcement made by the Generating Board today about their choice of Sizewell, Suffolk, as the proposed site for the first British PWR nuclear power station, and that formal application for the consent of the Secretary of State for Energy under the Electricity Acts is expected to be made early next year.

2 The Secretary of State has made it clear that it is his intention to hold a full and thorough public inquiry into any proposal to build a PWR nuclear power station in this country, and that the intention to do is subject to all necessary consents and safety clearances.

3 The Government is giving careful consideration to all matters relevant to the holding of the inquiry. Depending on the timing of the application and progress with subsequent work by the parties it is hoped that the inquiry may be able to begin in mid 1982.

4 Decisions will be announced in due course.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1 Q WILL THE INQUIRY HAVE ONE STAGE OR MORE?

A The form of the inquiry will be announced in due course. No formal application has yet been received. But, as the Secretary of State told the Select Committee in July, the inquiry will take place under the Electricity Acts.

2 Q WHY HAS NO DECISION BEEN TAKEN YET?

A No formal application has been received, and it would be premature to make firm decisions now about an event which appears to be at least 18 months off.

3 Q IS THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERING INTRODUCING SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR THIS INQUIRY?

A There are no plans to do so. The inquiry will take place under the Electricity Acts.

4 Q WHAT SUBJECT MATTER WILL BE COVERED BY THE INQUIRY?
WILL IT BE SITE SPECIFIC OR GENERIC?

A The Secretary of State for Energy has made it clear that the inquiry is to full and thorough.

5 Q WILL THE VIEWS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES/LOCAL PEOPLE BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT?

A Yes, certainly.

Q 6 WILL THE GOVERNMENT HOLD A REFERENDUM ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PWR?

A No.

7 Q WILL THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDE FUNDS FOR OBJECTORS AT THE INQUIRY?

A There are no plans to do so.

8 Q WILL NOT THE INQUIRY BE A CHARADE? THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY MADE UP ITS MIND.

A The Secretary of State has made it amply clear that the Government's policy of ^{it} furthering the development of nuclear power does not commit ^{it} to agreeing to any particular project in any particular location, and that great weight will be attached to the report of the Inspector at the Inquiry.

9 Q HAS THE GOVERNMENT EVER DECIDED AGAINST A NUCLEAR POWER STATION FOLLOWING A PUBLIC INQUIRY?

A Yes, in respect of an application for an AGR station in Connah's Quay. The inquiry took place in 1971.

10 Q WILL NOT THE SECRETARY OF STATE BE JUDGE AND JURY IN HIS OWN CAUSE?

A The Secretary of State is not the promoter of the development. He will attach great weight to the report of the Inspector, and will consult the Secretary of State for the Environment.

11 Q WHY IS AN ISSUE OF SUCH FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE BEING CONSIDERED AT AN INQUIRY UNDER THE ELECTRICITY ACTS?

A The application will be for consent to build a power station. Statutorily, this means that Electricity Act procedures apply. The form of the inquiry is being considered.

12 Q WHY WILL THE INQUIRY NOT BE HELD UNDER THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACTS BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

A The application is made under the Electricity Acts to the Secretary of State for Energy. Any consent carries deemed planning permission with it. There will of course be full consultation with DOE.

13 Q WHAT WILL BE THE ROLE OF THE NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS INSPECTORATE?

A The Secretary of State has made clear his view that safety is of paramount importance. The principal safety documentation relevant to the initial licensing is a separate procedure under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965.

14 Q WHERE WILL THE INQUIRY BE HELD?

A No decision has been taken. In the past such inquiries have been held at a convenient place in the vicinity of the proposed site.