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Copied to Fishing Industry, May 1979

Ref. A09526

MR. CARTLEDGE

~~Prime Minister~~
Jm
1979

Fisheries

For her talks with Chancellor Schmidt, the Prime Minister may wish to have a little more background to the brief exchange which took place in Cabinet this morning.

2. The original Six undoubtedly pulled a fast one in 1971 by agreeing to the principle of free access just before our accession. But it is now generally recognised that the extension of fishery limits to 200 miles has totally changed the situation. While the Treaty of Rome provides for the preferential arrangements inside 12 miles to be reviewed in 1982, everyone assumes that they will continue and the only argument is about the maintenance of historic rights within 12 miles and the nature of any preferential arrangements outside 12 miles.

3. The French will fight for historic rights for Breton fishermen off the South West coast. The Germans support them because their inshore fishermen have similar interests in the Baltic. This will be a difficult negotiation.

4. Any form of preferential access beyond 12 miles is even more difficult for the other Eight to accept. A 50-mile exclusive zone has so far proved unnegotiable and, as the Secretary of State for Scotland said, the fishing industry are now privately reconciled to this. The last Government was going for preferential access between 12 and 50 miles. Moreover, it would not suit Lowestoft which, as Mr. Prior explained, gets 80 per cent of its catch within 50 miles of other countries' coast. But preferential access for local fishermen (not for the coastal state) in some areas is negotiable and would suit Scottish interests reasonably well. It would not however suit Humberside (or Aberdeen) whose larger boats would, like those of other Community countries, be excluded; they might prefer little or no preferential access but preference in the allocation of quotas. This is a conflict which the Minister of Agriculture and the Secretary of State for Scotland will have to resolve before we can effectively negotiate a settlement in Brussels.

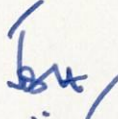
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5. Whatever the arrangements for preferential quotas and access, control and enforcement will remain the responsibility of the coastal state. So we shall be able to police what goes on throughout the 200 miles under our jurisdiction.

6. The Germans have been in the forefront of the opposition to our claims, although during their Presidency at the end of last year they made an abortive attempt to make progress. They take a rigid doctrinal attitude towards the Treaty. Their interest is primarily in distant water fishing and, like us, they have lost grounds e.g. off Iceland for which they are trying to get compensation at our expense in the North Sea. In fishing terms, the Danes and the French have a bigger stake.

7. The key points for the Prime Minister to make to Chancellor Schmidt are:

- (a) The Government's determination to have the fisheries issue settled on terms consonant with her statement during the Election (copy attached).
- (b) Our wish to make speedy progress (a Fisheries Council is scheduled for June but it may be more realistic to think of the autumn for a break-through).
- (c) The Minister of Agriculture will be consulting the Commission soon and then talking to his Community partners.


JOHN HUNT

10th May, 1979

NEWS SERVICE

(No Pardon's copy)

Release time: Immediate/Thursday, 26th April, 1979. GE725/79

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher
Leader of the Conservative Party

STATEMENT ON FISHING POLICY

The fishing industry is an essential part of the British economy, particularly in Scotland. It is a vital source of food and provides jobs for thousands of people both at sea and on shore, often in small communities that rely totally on fishing for their livelihood. The Conservative Party is committed to defending to the full the interests of British fishermen, and restoring stability and optimism to its future.

Despite this Government's boasts, they did not renegotiate the fisheries policy at all before recommending a 'Yes' vote in the 1975 European Referendum.

This matter is now urgent because of the time limit of 1982 set down for reaching agreements. However, in spite of that time limit we should not be prepared to agree to terms which were disadvantageous to our fishing industries.

✓ We shall make fishing top priority in our EEC negotiations.

The proposals we have so far received from the EEC have been totally unacceptable. Our European partners must accept three fundamental facts.

- That the move to 200 miles limit since we joined the Community has changed both the entire international situation and our own circumstances.
- that our waters contain more fish than the rest of the Community put together

/ - we must have

- we must have an agreement to a comprehensive policy on conservation. This should include:- (i) a limit on the total allowable catch. (ii) a clear set of rules to control the amount of fishing and the methods used. (iii) recognition that the coastal state must have sole responsibility for control over their waters, since they alone have the knowledge, the capability and will to enforce conservation rules. (iv) conservation rules which are enforced against fishermen from all nations and not just against British fishermen alone. (v) measures which are specially designed to protect the rights of in-shore fishermen.

✓ In addition our negotiating aims will be for:-

- ✓ 1. an adequate exclusive zone.
- ✓ 2. a further considerable area of preferential access.
- ✓ 3. a control system which enables us to police our own waters.
- ✓ 4. Britain must have a very substantial share of the total allowable catch which takes account of the fact that we are contributing most of the water and most of the fish.

Further conservation measures will be taken by Britain acting on her own if we cannot get agreement upon these points.

Fishermen will find a true and determined friend in the next Conservative Government.

END