

Ref: A02257

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

Select Committee on Energy: AGRs

The Select Committee on Energy have asked Mr. Ibbes to provide them with a copy of "the recent CPRS Note or Report, which reviewed and recommended the building of the AGRs at Heysham II and Torness". I think that we must refuse to meet this request, on the grounds that the Report is a Cabinet Committee document, and that it contains advice to Ministers and commercially confidential information, both of which are accepted grounds for refusal. Mr. Ibbes agrees with this view.

2. We do not need at this stage to consider how to deal with any subsequent request from the Committee for attendance of members of the CPRS as witnesses before them. Were that to arise, however, my advice would be that Ministerial permission for their attendance should be refused. It is very difficult to see how they could give evidence without indicating the advice they had given to Ministers. Nor is it possible to believe that their evidence would provide a necessary input to the Committee's work. They can get all the main facts from the Department of Energy, the Electricity Authorities, the AEA and industrial witnesses.

3. I attach a copy of the letter which, if you agree, Mr. Ibbes would send to the Clerk to the Committee.

Agreed


RA

(Robert Armstrong)

3rd June 1980

CONFIDENTIAL

1, Prime Minister
Content for Mr Ibbes
to write as proposed?
RA
3rd


DRAFT LETTER FOR MR. IBBS TO SEND TO
THE CLERK TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENERGY

Thank you for your letter of 21st May, which arrived here on 28th May, requesting "a copy of the recent CPRS Note or Report, which reviewed and recommended the building of AGRs at Heysham II and Torness".

The CPRS have published no Report on this matter. We were asked to give advice to Ministers; but that advice, like other internal advice to Ministers, is by accepted convention confidential. Our advice on this matter also contained information obtained in strict confidence from commercial concerns. For these reasons I am afraid that I cannot comply with the Committee's request.

