



From Mr. Peter Fry M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

15th May, 1981.

Dear Prime Minister

You recently intimated that if a colleague had a serious factory closure in his constituency you would be prepared to have a word with him. I would very much like to speak to you regarding the situation in my constituency.

Very briefly the two traditional industries in the area, footwear and clothing, have both been in decline for some time, mainly due to the effect of foreign imports, although partly due to the previous high value of the pound and high interest rates. The recession has of course also been a contributory factor. None-the-less this has raised problems, and for the first time in living memory unemployment is above the national average.

This week we have heard of the closure of the B.L Foundry at Wellingborough and I think I can do no better than to send you a copy of a letter sent by the Shop Stewards which outlines why my constituents feel so aggrieved. I can confirm that these are moderate, hard working people who for long were paid below the level given elsewhere in the B.L empire. They feel they have been badly treated, and their work given to another Foundry whose workforce is considerably more troublesome, and has not been so profitable. All of this would be bad enough in the light of the fact that male unemployment could rise up to 15%. However, the situation is much worse for the future as Northamptonshire has been the fastest growing County in the Country. This means that thousands of school leavers will be coming onto the labour market over the next 5 years, and it has been estimated that the County will need something like 40,000 extra jobs just to stand still, and there is no hope whatsoever of achieving anything like this target.

Many of my constituents feel that because they have been moderate in relation to their wage demands, and their attitude towards their employers, they are suffering, where more vociferous workers have had more notice taken of them and more help given to them.

Quite bluntly I need a message to take to many of these people, who have supported me loyally in the past, and this is why I am asking would you be kind enough to spare me a few minutes.

Yours ever
Peter

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London. SW1.