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From the  
Minister of State  
for Consumer Affairs  
The Rt Hon Sally Oppenheim MP

Prime Minister

The policy issue is discussed in  
the minutes at Flag A. For  
reasons set out in Flag B, Dept  
of Energy are strongly opposed  
to Mrs Oppenheim speaking on the  
lines of x 12 June 1981  
below. Shall I tell the two Depts  
to sort this out between themselves  
(i.e. her statement) on Monday?

William Ricketts Esq  
Private Secretary  
Prime Minister's Office  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

Dear William,

SUPPLY DAY DEBATE ON THE MONOPOLIES & MERGERS REPORT ON GAS APPLIANCES:  
17 JUNE

As you will know, it has been agreed that my Minister will open for the Government in this debate.

In speaking, Mrs Oppenheim will of course be guided by the discussion in E(DL) on 10 June, on which the Secretary of State for Industry is (I understand) minuting the Prime Minister. In setting a keynote for her statement, however, she wishes to make clear that the Government sees no alternative to disposal of the British Gas Corporation's present retail network, whatever form disposal might take, whether total, partial or via privatisation, and whatever period were decided upon for it. She would then refer to the recommendations in the MMC's report and variants on them such as those discussed in E(DL).

Mrs Oppenheim feels that it would be right to make a statement on these lines, the more so since disposal was a common theme of the three papers discussed at E(DL) on 10 June, at which no counter proposal for any other form of action was mooted.

I am therefore writing to seek agreement to a statement being made on these lines.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of the Secretaries of State for Energy, Industry and Employment and of the Financial Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Mrs Oppenheim  
cannot go as far as she  
wishes because the policy  
has not been agreed.  
We can

Yours sincerely,  
Peter McCarthy

PETER MCCARTHY  
Private Secretary

justifying the  
MMC but it  
is not yet possible to  
say how we shall proceed  
next