

From Mr. Peter Fry MP.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

16th November, 1981.

*Dear Margaret.*

Perhaps you will recall the letter you kindly wrote to me regarding the BL Foundry at Wellingborough. You did ask Norman Tebbit who was then Minister of State for Industry to see what he could do to assist in a purchase of the site, and I have been in negotiation with him, and lately with Norman Lamont who has succeeded him. I want to put very firmly on record my extreme disappointment of what I regard as the lack of assistance given. The line seems to have been taken that the Government has to lean over backwards not to offend BL Management. Why on earth this should be so, when BL would not be in existence if it were not for the hundreds of millions of pounds of the taxpayers' money, is rather beyond me.

You may be interested to know that over 150 of the former workforce were prepared to invest their own money, in excess of £100,000, in the venture, and this is something I would have thought the Government would have welcomed. However, unfortunately we have discovered that there is very little help forthcoming. This combined with the decline of my constituents' traditional industry, footwear, leather and clothing, means that the unemployment rate is soaring, with the number of school-leavers increasing. Together with representatives of the local Council we have tried to get further Government assistance, again without success. On the other hand we see other areas being showered with gifts, not only from Westminster, but from the EEC as well. It is getting to the stage where I have to ask myself, how long can I watch my constituency become an industrial desert without taking some kind of action.

You have always personally been concerned and interested, but quite honestly I have not had the kind of assistance from the lower echelons of your Government that I might have expected. I am only writing to you now to express my very grave concern, my personal uncertainty, and disappointment at what I regard as the ambivalent attitude of the Department of Industry, which apparently intends to go on showering out money to BL to assemble Japanese cars, but not assist home based industries, which unlike BL are likely to be profitable.

*Yours ever  
Peter*

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP,  
Prime Minister,  
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