



From the Minister

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH

CONFIDENTIAL

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

24 October 1979

DISPERSAL OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

I have seen a copy of the Lord President's minute to 19 October on this subject.

If this Department had to disperse 500 posts to Bootle as the Lord President suggests, I see no alternative to sending either our Lands Group or the Animal Health Group of Divisions. Both of these blocks of work are concerned with central policy issues which are sensitive politically, and from the viewpoint of Parliament and our relations with the Community. I have no doubt at all that it would be seriously damaging to the overall efficiency of the Ministry and to its links with other Whitehall Departments, as well as difficult for me and my Ministerial colleagues, to have the senior administrative and professional staff involved away from London.

If you decide that the Cabinet decision has to be reopened, I hope that we will be able to look again at the possible options. While I accept that the uncertainties need to be removed as soon as possible it seems to me more important to ensure that the decision taken will do the minimum long term damage. I am not convinced that there are no other blocks of work in London which are better candidates than the policy areas of this Ministry.

I am copying this minute to the Members of the Cabinet including the Minister of Transport and Sir John Hunt.

PETER WALKER

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN



POSTAGE

24 OCT 1979



GOVERNMENT OF THE NETHERLANDS