

Energy  
[Stamp]

cf Mr Cow

PRIME MINISTER

Sizewell Inquiry

Mr. Lawson gave an effective and convincing performance in the House this afternoon.

Leading for the Opposition, Merlyn Rees wanted to know why, 12 months after the Select Committee's report on the new nuclear power programme, and six months after the Government's reply, this announcement was still coming before there had been a Debate in the House. Mr. Lawson replied that he knew that the Leader of the House was anxious to find time (in practice next Monday), but that the Debate might be all the better for this announcement.

Peter Hardy and Dickson Mabon echoed Mr. Rees' concern about a Debate. On the Government's side, Michael Ancram welcomed the announcement, John Hannam pressed for faster progress on nuclear power, adding that it is clear that the French were taking advantage of their headstart, and Nigel Forman wanted reassurance that the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate now had the necessary staff levels.

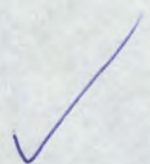
For the Liberals, David Penhaligon wanted to know whether objectors would get financial assistance to help present their case.

There were predictable interventions from Arthur Lewis, Dennis Skinner and Tony Benn. Mr. Benn asked that, before the Inquiry, the Secretary of State should make available all the information available to him - some of which had been available to Mr. Benn as Secretary of State - which threw light on the very serious risks involved in PWR technology. He suggested that the money could be better devoted to a job creating home insulation programme.

In general, the House took the announcement in a relaxed way, with Mr. Lawson well on top.

MAP





ORAL STATEMENT

PWR INQUIRY

With permission, Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the public inquiry into the application by the Central Electricity Generating Board to build a Pressurised Water Reactor at Sizewell in Suffolk.

As the House will know, the Government are committed to holding a full and wide-ranging inquiry into the Sizewell application.

In a Written Answer on 22 July last year, my predecessor set out the issues which the Government regard as relevant to consideration of this application. My Rt Hon Friend also announced the appointment of Sir Frank Layfield QC as Inspector to the Inquiry.

I wish to give interested parties the earliest notice of the date of the inquiry. I also wish members of the public and their representatives to have adequate opportunity to study the extensive information and documentation which will be provided. I therefore propose that the main hearing of the public inquiry should begin early in January 1983.

I have reached this view following recent consultations with those on whom the burden of preparing the principal documentation rests. The Chairman of <sup>the</sup>CEGB has told me that the Board expect to publish their Pre-Construction Safety Report at the end of April.

Dr Walter Marshall, as Chairman of the PWR Task Force, will continue to co-ordinate the efforts of all the parties involved in the preparation of this Report and will keep me informed of progress. The CEGB also intend to issue at the end of April a full statement in support of their application.

The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive have told me that they expect to publish a report on





safety issues by the end of June.

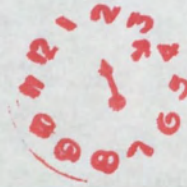
There will therefore be an extended period for the study of both CEGB documentation and the NII Report.

Earlier preliminary hearings will be held by the Inspector at which those parties that wish to put their views before him on the general arrangements for the conduct of the Inquiry and the scope of the evidence can do so at a time well before the main Inquiry begins. The main hearing (and at least one of the preliminary hearings) will take place in Suffolk. I hope that arrangements can be made for the main hearing to be held within easy reach of the Sizewell area; an announcement on this will be made soon.

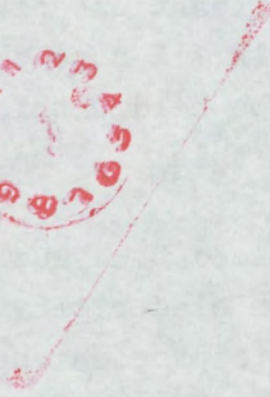
The Government are convinced that nuclear power has an increasingly important role to play in electricity generation in Britain. Nevertheless, any specific proposal has to be judged on its own merits. The arrangements for the Sizewell inquiry which I have just described will ensure that the CEGB's application is thoroughly and properly examined.



20 JAN 1982



20 JAN 1982







*Energy Policy*

*Jpm*

*AD*  
*JV*

2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

*Overtaken*

*PLS 21/1*

My ref: H/PSO/10389/82

Your ref:

*20* January 1982

*Dear David*

PWR ANNOUNCEMENT

*Energy to MLS 19/1/82*

You copied to me your letter of yesterday's date enclosing a copy of the proposed statement on the PWR Inquiry together with background notes.

My Secretary of State has two points to make - one on the statement itself and the other on the background. He thinks that the first sentence of the last paragraph of the statement is liable to be seen as indicating a Government bias in favour of the proposal and that it would be better to conclude with a simple statement on the lines of 'I believe that the arrangements which I have described will ensure that this highly important proposal by the CEGB is thoroughly and properly examined before a decision is taken on it'.

So far as background is concerned, my Secretary of State thinks that the issue of grant aid for objectors is likely to be raised. He understands that this issue has been under further examination in the Department of Energy following representations from the CEGB themselves but he thinks that if pressed at this stage on the point it would be necessary to make clear that the Government have no present proposal for such aid.

I am copying this to Michael Scholar.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*Helen Ghosh*

MRS H F GHOSH  
Private Secretary



21 JAN 1982







✓ c AD  
Per Office  
HQF (1)

Prime Minister

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY  
THAMES HOUSE SOUTH  
MILLBANK LONDON SW1P 4QJ  
01 211 6402

Content with  
the statement?

Michael Scholar Esq  
Private Secretary to the  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

Yes not MCS 19/1

19 January 1982

Dear Michael

MCS  
I have told O/En.

PWR ANNOUNCEMENT

MAD

As you know the Prime Minister agreed last Wednesday that the timing of the Public Inquiry into the proposed Sizewell PWR should be announced by means of an oral statement on Wednesday 20 January. Accordingly I am enclosing the planned statement, together with background notes identifying the likely main lines of attack, and outlining how such attacks will be handled.

I am sending copies of this letter to Nick Huxtable in the Lord President's Office and Helen Gsoosh in the Secretary of State for the Environment's Office.

Yours ever

David Lumley

DAVID LUMLEY  
Private Secretary



ORAL STATEMENT

PWR INQUIRY

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As the House will know, the Government are committed to holding a full and wide-ranging inquiry into the Sizewell application.


On 22 July last year, my predecessor published a statement of the issues which the Government regard as relevant to consideration of this application. My Rt Hon Friend also announced the appointment of Sir Frank Layfield QC as Inspector to the Inquiry.

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I have reached this view following recent consultations with those on whom the burden of preparing the principal documentation rests. The Chairman of the CEGB has told me that the Board expect to publish their Pre-Construction Safety Report at the end of April.

Dr Walter Marshall, as Chairman of the PWR Task Force, will continue to co-ordinate the efforts of all the parties involved in the preparation of this Report and will keep me informed of progress. The CEGB also intend to issue at the end of April a full statement in support of their application.





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There will therefore be an extended period for the study of both the CEGB documentation and the NII Report.

Earlier preliminary hearings will be held by the Inspector at which those parties that wish to put their views before him on the general arrangements for the conduct of the Inquiry and the scope of the evidence can do so at a time well before the main Inquiry begins. I hope that the main hearings (and at least one of the preliminary hearings) will take place in Suffolk, but in any case there will be local sessions in the Sizewell area.

The Government are convinced that nuclear power <sup>is playing</sup> has an increasingly important <sup>and in other countries</sup> role <sup>part</sup> to play in electricity generation in Britain. Nevertheless, any specific proposals <sup>then</sup> has to be judged on ~~its own~~ merits. The arrangements for the Sizewell inquiry which I have just described will ensure that the CEGB's applications is thoroughly and properly examined.



## BACKGROUND NOTE

### NUCLEAR POWER STRATEGY

1. The Government's nuclear power strategy recognises the need to develop the option of an alternative to the Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor (AGR). The recent White Paper (Cmnd 8317 published in July 1981) re-affirmed the Government's belief that, subject to necessary consents and safety clearances the next nuclear power station ordered should be a PWR.

### Sizewell public inquiry

2. It does not, however, follow that the Government is committed to allowing a PWR to be built at Sizewell in Suffolk at the present time. Ministers have consistently stated that they wish the Public Inquiry into the CEGB's application to be full and wide-ranging; and to deal with safety issues, while preserving the statutory responsibility of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) for licensing under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965.

### Proposed statement by Secretary of State for Energy

3. This will:
- a. Announce the intended date for the inquiry - January 1983;
  - b. announce the timetable for publication of key safety documents i.e. CEGB's Pre-Construction Safety Report and NII's report for the Inquiry;
  - c. stress that objectors will have ample time to study the safety documentation before the start of the Inquiry.

### Main lines of attack

4. a. With electricity demand falling why do we need a new power station?
- New stations needed to replace those reaching the end of their economic life; nuclear offers the prospect of cheaper electricity; strategic case for nuclear to lessen dependence on expensive imported oil - and coal. For CEGB to make the specific case for Sizewell.
- b. Hasn't CEGB's approach to nuclear power already been discredited? (i.e. the recent MMC and Select Committee criticism about the Boards forecasting/investment appraisal techniques).
- We have made it clear to the Board that we expect to see improvements. I believe the lessons have been learned.



- c. Is the PWR safe?

More PWRs operating safely in the World than any other type of nuclear reactor. Need to establish whether feasible and economic to build a version here which meets our own high safety standards.

- d. Friends of the Earth claim that safety will not be thoroughly considered at the inquiry. Is this true?

No. Thorough examination of safety promised: will be based on CEGB's Pre-Construction Safety Report and the NII's commentary on it; more safety documentation than for any previous public inquiry of this type.

- e. Will the NII report for the inquiry clear the station for safety licensing?

NII an independent agency; cannot, and have no wish to, dictate to it how it will report; NII's scrutiny of the station and licensing role does not stop when the consent to start construction is given; they continue through construction to operation. Clearance for the plant to operate could not be given unless NII was completely satisfied with all aspects of safety.

- f. In fixing the date of the inquiry are you giving NII enough time to assess safety?

Yes. The timetable has been arranged in the light of their advice. They are confident of their ability to produce their safety report for the inquiry by the end of June.

- g. Why not an AGR?

Need to develop option of alternative to AGR.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

18 January 1982



