



10 DOWNING STREET

File 30/7
Donald Stewart
(Cllr. Young) ^{PIP}

BIC

From the Private Secretary

28 July 1982

I told your office recently that the Prime Minister was not happy with the draft replies provided for her to send to Mr. Donald Stewart, MP, and Councillor Young about custom facilities at Wick Airport. I explained that the Prime Minister had raised her concerns directly with the Economic Secretary, and you agreed to consider these and provide revised drafts, if appropriate.

I now enclose a further telex which the Prime Minister has received from Councillor Young. You will wish to take it into account in revising your draft reply to his earlier telex. It would be helpful if you could let me have your revised draft replies before the end of this week.

W. F. S. RICKETT

C.D. Harrison, Esq.,
HM Treasury

Handwritten initials

TX NO 312/82

1420HRS

27.7.82

THE RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER, M.P.,
PRIME MINISTER,
10 DOWNING STREET,
LONDON. SW1A 0AA.

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

WICK AIRPORT - CUSTOMS SERVICE

I REFER TO MY TELEXES OF 25TH JUNE AND 1ST JULY REGARDING THE ABOVE. YOU WILL RECALL THAT I SOUGHT YOUR INTERVENTION TO ENSURE THAT CUSTOMS FACILITIES WERE NOT DENIED TO AIR ECOSSE AT WICK AIRPORT IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR ABERDEEN-WICK-FAROES SERVICE.

I WAS MOST DISAPPOINTED TO RECEIVE A LETTER OF 14TH JULY FROM MR. BRUCE GARDYNE IN WHICH HE CONTINUES TO REFUSE THE PROVISION OF THIS SERVICE AT WICK AIRPORT. IT HAS AGAIN BEEN MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT IT IS NOT THE MERITS OF OUR CASE WHICH HAVE FAILED TO IMPRESS MR. BRUCE-GARDYNE, BUT THAT OUR EFFORTS HAVE FOUNDERED ON THE QUESTION OF PRECEDENT. MAY I AGAIN BRIEFLY UNDERLINE THE SALIENT POINTS IN OUR CASE:-

1. THE SERVICE BETWEEN ABERDEEN AND THE FAROES NEEDS THE WICK LINE TO MAKE IT VIABLE.
2. THE SERVICE HAS BEEN WHOLE-HEARTEDLY WELCOMED BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE FAROES AND BY THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN THE FAROES WHO WILL REGARD IT AS A BREACH OF FAITH IF THE SERVICE IS WITHDRAWN.
3. THE CONTACTS FOSTERED BY THE SERVICE WOULD BE OF MATERIAL HELP IN REDRESSING THE ADVERSE TRADE BALANCE BETWEEN THE U.K. AND THE FAROES AS DETAILED IN MY TELEX OF 1ST JULY.
4. THERE ARE CUSTOMS STAFF ALREADY LOCATED IN WICK, WITHIN A FEW MINUTES OF THE AIRPORT. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THESE STAFF COULD COPE WITH THE VERY MODEST REQUIREMENTS OF THE AIR ECOSSE SERVICE WITHOUT ADDITIONAL MANPOWER OR COST IMPLICATIONS.

WE IN THE HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL, TOGETHER WITH AIR ECOSSE, ARE QUITE CERTAIN THAT THIS SERVICE COULD BE PROVIDED WITHOUT THE DIRE IMPLICATIONS WHICH MR. BRUCE-GARDYNE MENTIONS IN HIS LETTER. AGAIN I URGE YOU TO INTERVENE PERSONALLY IN THIS MATTER AND REVERSE A DECISION WHICH IS GROSSLY UNFAIR TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN THE NORTH OF SCOTLAND. WE FIND IT INCREDIBLE THAT A CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT IS BEING SEEN TO REBUFF, PURELY ON BUREAUCRATIC GROUNDS OF PRECEDENT, A PROPOSAL WHICH REPRESENTS A FIRST CLASS PIECE OF ENTERPRISE BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND WHICH IS STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY THE BUSINESS COMMUNITIES IN BOTH THE NORTH OF SCOTLAND AND THE FAROES.

YOURS SINCERELY,

JOHN M. YOUNG,
CHAIRMAN, ROADS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE,
HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL,
INVERNESS.



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

W Rickett Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

M. G. J. 12 July 1982

WW
14/7

Dear Mr Rickett

I enclose draft replies for the Prime Minister to send to Mr Donald Stewart MP and Councillor Young about Customs facilities at Wick Airport. I also enclose a copy of the Economic Secretary's proposed reply to Councillor Young.

Yours sincerely

MISS T A M POLLOCK
Asst Private Secretary



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Councillor J M Young
Highland Regional Council
Regional Buildings
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness
IV3 5NX

Dear Councillor Young,

Following our meeting on 24 June about the provision of customs facilities at Wick Airport I have very carefully considered all the points which you and your colleagues raised. As I said at the time, you put forward a formidable presentation of your case to which I was and am basically sympathetic.

I am therefore sorry to say that I have concluded that to provide customs facilities for the proposed scheduled service between Wick and the Faroes would not be justified. It is true that at present the existing Customs staff at Wick are able to cope with ad hoc concessionary flights, mostly of helicopters connected with the oil industry. But this is not analogous with the provision of permanent facilities for a scheduled air service. The proposed Wick/Faroes service would at least treble the number of flights to be attended by Customs staff who also have to carry out immigration services.

However my main concern is that it would not be possible to provide facilities at Wick while continuing to refuse them elsewhere. Indeed we are at this moment facing an analogous application for customs facilities at a small regional airport which we feel we must also resist. I have to take account of the overall deployment of customs and excise resources. The Department is reducing its manpower in line with the Government's policy of reducing the size of the Civil Service. It cannot at the same time provide additional facilities on a nation-wide basis.

At our meeting you drew my attention to the new ferry service between Torquay and the Channel Islands. The situations at Wick

and Torquay are completely different. Unlike Wick, the port of Torquay has been approved for customs purposes for many years. No new facility has been approved. Customs staff have to be regularly available to attend at the port specifically to deal with vessels as they arrive to clear both freight and passengers. The new ferry service merely absorbs part of their normal working commitment.

I recognise that my decision will come as a great disappointment to you. I have carefully considered whether I could find some way to help you but I am forced to conclude that there is no way round the major stumbling block, that the provision of facilities at Wick would run counter to the Government's determination to ensure that public sector resources, particularly manpower, are deployed in the most efficient and economic way.

Yours truly

Jock Bruce-Gardyne

JOCK BRUCE-GARDYNE



13 JUL 1982

Treasury 5/7

Kay/ M chase Monday

Accounting draft for PM from Treasury.

W
y

Donald STEWART, MP
handed in 2/7

13/7

①5/7

8814563CONPAR G
75313 HRCINS G

TX NO X 241/82 17/7/82 1603HRS

RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER, M.P.
PRIME MINISTER,
10 DOWNING STREET,
LONDON.

Spoke to Customs. The papers are
with Anne Gartyne. who's
BF 13/7.
Treasury have been in touch with
Customs who say that this is
going to take some time to
unravel & perhaps you ought to
speak to Customs in view of this.
2nd Telex which has not yet been ack.
Kay
5/7

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,
WICK AIRPORT

attached

I REFER TO MY TELEX OF 25TH JUNE REGARDING THE MATTER OF CUSTOMS
FACILITIES AT WICK AIRPORT TO SERVICE A NEW AIR LINK BETWEEN WICK
AND THE FAROES. I WOULD LIKE TO ADD TO MY PREVIOUS TELEX SOME IMPORTANT
INFORMATION REGARDING TRADE FIGURES WHICH UNDERLINE THE DESIRABILITY
OF INCREASING OUR LINKS WITH THE FAROES AND IN THE MANNER PROPOSED BY
AIR ECOSSE.

THE FAROES EXPORT TO THE U.K. BROADLY SPEAKING AS MUCH AS THEY DO
TO DENMARK. IN 1981 THE VALUE OF EXPORTS TO THE U.K. WAS 197.5M.
DANISH KRONE AS AGAINST 204.5M. TO DENMARK. THE HIGH LEVEL OF
EXPORTS TO U.K. IS STRIKING WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THAT DENMARK IS
THE COUNTRY WITH WHICH THE FAROES HAS HISTORIC AND CONSTITUTIONAL
RELATIONSHIPS.

THE CONVERSE IS HOWEVER, THAT DENMARK EXPORTS 950.7M. VALUE DANISH
KRONE OF GOODS TO THE FAROES WHILE BRITAIN SENDS ONLY 31.5M. THIS
MUST CLEARLY REFLECT THE FACT THAT THEIR IS A DIRECT AIR SERVICE
BETWEEN THE FAROES AND COPENHAGEN.

THESE FIGURES, I AM SURE, UNDERLINE THE POINT ALREADY MADE NAMELY
THAT AIR ECOSSE ARE MAKING A MODEST BUT IMPORTANT EFFORT TO IMPROVE
THE VERY ADVERSE TRADE BALANCE. CLEARLY THEY AND THE REGIONAL
COUNCIL REQUIRE AND DESERVE YOUR SUPPORT.

YOURS SINCERELY,
JOHN M. YOUNG,

CHAIRMAN, ROADS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE,
HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL,
INVERNESS

+++
75313 HRCINS G
8814563CONPAR G



10 DOWNING STREET

FILE SW

Donald STEWART MP

John Young

Wick Airport

7/7

From the Private Secretary

28 June, 1982

On 9 June, Mr. Donald Stewart, M.P. wrote to the Prime Minister about the issue of customs facilities at Wick Airport. Your Parliamentary Unit provided a holding reply, which the Prime Minister sent to Mr. Stewart on 28 June. This said that your Minister would be seeing the Highland Regional Council, and that the Prime Minister would be better able to reply to Mr. Stewart after that meeting.

I now enclose a telex that the Prime Minister has received from Mr. John Young, Chairman of the Roads and Transport Committee of the Highland Regional Council. He reports on the meeting between your Minister and the Council on 24 June. He appeals for the Prime Minister's support. I imagine you will be shortly sending us a full draft reply for the Prime Minister to send to Mr. Donald Stewart, and I should be grateful if you could also provide a reply for her to send to Mr. Young. The letter to Mr. Young could, with advantage, refer to her reply to Mr. Stewart.

W. F. S. RICKETT

C. D. Harrison, Esq.,
H.M. Treasury



FILE SW

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 June, 1982

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your telex of 25 June.

This is receiving attention, and a reply will be sent to you as soon as possible.

W. F. S. RICKETT

John Young, Esq.



ee:SO
C+E

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

28 June 1982

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Thank you for your letter dated 9 June about customs clearance facilities at Wick aerodrome. As you probably know by now, Jock Bruce-Gardyne has agreed to see the Highland Regional Council in order to hear their point of view and I will be better able to reply to you following their meeting.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

The Rt. Hon. Donald J. Stewart, P.C., M.P.

28/6

8814563 CONPAR G
75313 HRC INS G

LOLOLO THIS HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL INVERNESS I HAVE TELEX
FOR P.M. CAN YOU HANDLE OR SUPPLY TX NO FOR 10 DOWNING ST PSE

YES

WAIT ONE SENDING NOW

TX NO 232/82

25/6/82

1225HRS

RT.HON.MARGARET THATCHER, M.P.
PRIME MINISTER,
10 DOWNING STREET,
LONDON.

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

WICK AIRPORT

I AM SENDING YOU THIS TELEX TO DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEM
CONFRONTING US ABOUT THE PROVISION OF CUSTOMS FACILITIES AT WICK
AIRPORT. THE PROBLEM, AS YOU WELL KNOW, IS BASICALLY THAT AIR
ECOSSE HAVE, WITH STRONG SUPPORT FROM THE FAROES GOVERNMENT AND
THIS COUNCIL, SET UP A SCHEDULED SERVICE BETWEEN WICK AND THE FAROES,
BUT THE CUSTOMS HAVE REFUSED TO PROVIDE A SERVICE FOR THIS MOST
MODEST PROPOSAL ALBEIT THAT THE CUSTOMS STEFF ARE ALREADY IN
WICK. THE RT.HON. GEORGE YOUNGER, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND,
SUPPORTS OUR CASE AND NO DOUBT WILL SUPPLY YOU WITH DETAILS,
BUT THE FINAL DECISION RESTS WITH THE TRESUARY.

YESTERDAY WE MET MR. JOCK BRUCE-GARDYNE, FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO
THE TRESUARY. HE GAVE US AN EXCELLENT HEARING STATING THAT WE HAD
PRESENTED A VERY STRONG CASE BUT WE WERE TOLD 'THE PROBLEM IS NOT MONEY
OR STAFF, BUT THAT TO PROVIDE CUSTOMS AT WICK AIRPORT WOULD CREATE
A PRECEDENT WHICH OTHER AIRPORTS WOULD DEMAND'. IT DOES NOT MATTER
HOW GOOD OUR CASE IS OR HOW ESSENTIAL THE FACILITY IS, THE ONLY
POINT WHICH MATTERS IS THAT OF PREX

THE CUSTOMS FACILITY IS REQUIRED TO DEVELOP SCOTTISH - FAROESE
TRADE PROMOTED BY SMALL FIRMS WHICH YOUR GOVERNMENT IS PLEDGED
TO HELP. OUR SMALL FIRMS DO NOT WANT HANDOUTS, THEY WANT YOUR
INTERVENTION TO PREVENT PRIVATE ENTERPRISE BEING STIFLED. THE
CASE SHOULD BE JUDGED ON MERIT AND NEED, NOT ON PRECEDENT.
MR. BRUCE-GARDYNE IS TO EXAMINE OUR CASE FURTHER BEFORE A FINAL
DECISION AND WE APPEAL TO YOU TO CUT THROUGH THE RED TAPE WITH
THE GUTS YOU HAVE DISPLAYED ONLY RECENTLY. LIKE YOURSELF, WE
WONT TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER AND APPEAL FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

YOURS SINCERELY,

JOHN YOUNG,

CHAIRMAN, ROADS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE,
HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL
INVERNESS.
IV3 5NX

+++