



Content with the
proposed procedural arrangements?

PRIME MINISTER

Yes and. R.
21/3

STANSTED AIRPORT PROPOSALS - PROCEDURES

Flay A

1. When Cabinet discussed airports policy last December, it was decided that we should defer taking final decisions on the procedures for implementing the Stansted proposals (announced by John Nott on 17 December) until after the Parliamentary debate. Following the debate on Airports Policy in both Houses last month, John Nott and I have now reached agreement on the way we should proceed.
2. Our main conclusion is that we do not need any special procedural measure to deal with the Stansted proposals. Despite the expected local opposition, the statement was well received in the national press, and the Parliamentary debates were fairly quiet. There was general support in both Houses for the idea of a wide-ranging inquiry, but almost no pressure for the adoption of any special procedures. Only one Member suggested the untried device of a Planning Inquiry Commission, but without support. Nobody pressed for a Special Development Order (which would need Parliamentary approval) or suggested that the final decision should be reserved to Parliament.
3. We can therefore proceed in a straightforward manner along well-tried lines. We envisage that the BAA will apply to the local authority, probably next July, for planning permission for new terminal facilities at Stansted: this application will be



called-in for decision, following a public local inquiry, by John Nott and myself. This was the procedure followed for the Heathrow 4th Terminal and the Gatwick 2nd Terminal. The procedure at the inquiry itself would be, within limits, under the control of the Inspector, but I envisage that it would be sufficiently flexible to give an opportunity to those concerned not only to raise objections to the Stansted proposal, particularly on environmental, regional planning and agricultural grounds, but also to question the need for major airport expansion at all and to discuss alternative sites. In view of the local feeling on the matter, it is clearly important that objectors as well as supporters should be allowed their full say.

4. The BAA would at the same time publish compulsory purchase orders for the first 1,500 acres of land needed for the first phase of development, together with further plans indicating, so far as possible at this stage, the implications of further stages of development, covering the additional 2,500 acres, if they should eventually be needed. So far as practicable, we will aim to deal with the related highway proposals at the same inquiry. The rail link will, however, have to be the subject of a Private Bill.

5. Adequate relief for planning blight comes high on our list of priorities. For the first 1,500 acres of land there is no great problem as the statutory blight relief provisions will apply when the compulsory purchase orders are published in the



summer, and urgent individual problems can be dealt with sympathetically in the meantime. For the additional 2,500 acres, however, the statutory provisions will not apply and a discretionary blight relief scheme is necessary. We understand that the BAA's current powers are inadequate for this purpose, and John Nott therefore intends to table an amendment to the Civil Aviation Bill at present in Committee, to enable the BAA to purchase by agreement land which they may need for future expansion. We do not intend, however, to go beyond the normal rules and practices for compensation and blight relief by Government Departments.

6. Subject to your views and those of colleagues, we propose to seek the agreement of the BAA and local authorities concerned to the procedural arrangements outlined above. I will assume there is no objection from colleagues if I do not hear to the contrary within one week from the date of this minute.

7. I am sending copies of this minute to Cabinet colleagues and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

MH

MH

19 March 1980

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