

9C DV  
 B/H for meeting please.  
 Dms  
 18/7

Prime Minister<sup>(2)</sup>

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PRIME MINISTER

H Committee will consider this tomorrow, and the Lead President will be able to report their conclusions at your meeting on 24 July.

I am concerned that publication of the Black report on leukaemia in the vicinity of Sellafield, to be discussed at H Committee on Wednesday, could provide a propoganda success for opponents of nuclear power.

Dms  
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Black has found nothing to connect the childhood leukaemia in Seascale with Sellafield. Indeed all the evidence in his report suggests that there is no connection (radiation levels are 40 times too low) and that the Seascale statistics are part of a nationwide pattern of variations in local leukaemia levels that are unrelated to nuclear installations.

It is therefore unfortunate that Black's conclusions imply the possibility of some kind of link for which there is no evidence (an unplanned emission which was undetected by the monitors and affected the population by an unsuspected route) and that his recommendations are largely devoted to further examination of this hypothesis.

This outcome underlines the anxiety that I expressed in connection with the Bonnybridge inquiry that in the present state of our knowledge of leukaemia further local inquiries are not likely to reach any useful conclusion.

I believe that it is essential that the Government should now set up a comprehensive national scheme to plot local variations in leukaemia rates throughout the UK and to analyse the pattern that emerges and that a commitment in principle to such a scheme should be the main element in our response to Black. Black's recommendations do not, in my view, go nearly wide enough in this respect.

CONFIDENTIAL



I am copying this minute to members of H Committee, the  
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and to  
Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be "Peter Hall", written in a cursive style.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY

17 July 1984

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Env Affairs 7/80  
Senapfield

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17 JUL 1984

