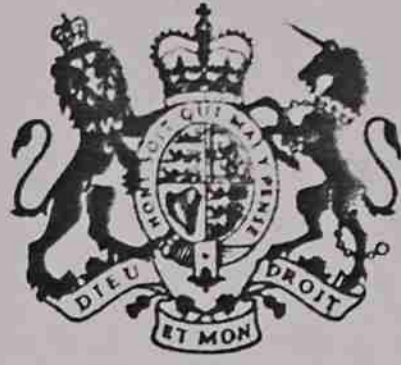


CONFIDENTIAL



3/5 JP  
bc MA

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

19 April 1985

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Sir David Price, inviting her to go to Belfast in the autumn to name as a sponsor one of two refrigerated ships being built by Harland Wolff.

We would, of course, need to consider this invitation in the context of our general consideration about the Prime Minister's visiting Northern Ireland on which I have been in touch with Mr. Andrew.

But we will also have to send at least an interim reply to Sir David Price soon. I should be very grateful if you could let me have your advice, both on the merits of the invitation and on the reply to Sir David Price, as soon as possible.

(F.E.R. BUTLER)

J.A. Daniell, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.



~~Robin Butler~~

Is there a special procedure,  
presumably so, for NI invitations?

MLA 16/4

Private Office

The attached letter from Sir David Price  
is self-explanatory.

I would be very grateful if you could let  
me know how I should respond to him  
about this invitation.

MA

MICHAEL ALISON  
15.4.85



10 DOWNING STREET

15th April 1985

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 3rd April asking if the Prime Minister might be interested in going to Belfast to name one of the refrigerated vessels being built by Harland & Wolff.

We will certainly have a look at this and I will come back to you again as soon as possible.

Yours ever  
Michael

MICHAEL ALISON

Sir David Price DL MP



FROM: SIR DAVID PRICE, D.L., M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

3rd April 1985

Dear Michael,

I looked out for you yesterday and today without any success. I am therefore putting in a letter what I was hoping to approach you about.

As I think you know, I have a connection with the Vestey family, and especially on their shipping side, Blue Star Line. The purpose of my letter is to ask you if the Prime Minister might be interested in going to Belfast to name as a sponsor, one of two refrigerated vessels being built by Harland & Wolff, some time in the autumn. The story is very simple.

We have four refrigerated vessels <sup>being</sup> built by Harland and Wolff. Two of them have been named (English Star and Scottish Star). We are seeking sponsors for the Auckland Star and the Canterbury Star.

Blue Star Line are the only British owner of refrigerated vessels of any size remaining; they are the only British owner to be involved in ordering refrigerated ships at the moment, and they are the only British owner who has ordered refrigerated ships in a British yard. Harland & Wolff were the most competitive Tenderers and after very detailed and somewhat exhausting negotiations, Edmund Vestey placed the order with them about two years ago. The ships are intended for the worldwide reefer operations, in which market, they have carved out for themselves a substantial share within the last ten years. Blue Star Line are perhaps the third or fourth biggest in the world refrigerated shipping market.

The second vessel, the 'Scottish Star' is being delivered on time this week, although unfortunately, the yard had a fire on the first vessel the 'English Star' and she has been delayed. Each vessel costs about £17.5m, and all are financed by British leasing institutions.

Security arrangements at Harland and Wolff can be extremely good and were quite watertight for the naming of the 'English Star' by the Duchess of Kent. There is, of course, plenty of room to land by helicopter and Shorts runway is just adjacent. If the idea appeals to the Prime Minister, perhaps we could have a word together after the Easter recess.

The Hon Michael Allison, MP,  
House of Commons,

Yours ever  
David