

APPOINTMENTS IN CONFIDENCE

PRIME MINISTER

You agreed to the proposal in my minute of 15 May that I should go ahead with an independent inquiry into the heavy lorry and the environment. I have now further considered the form the inquiry should take, and possible membership; and consulted Ministers primarily concerned.

As I indicated in my earlier minute, I see advantage in a single "wise man" to conduct the inquiry, with expert assessors to advise him on technical matters. He would in effect act as a tribunal, hearing and assessing evidence. I think this the best way to keep the inquiry reasonably short.

A one man inquiry would also avoid argument about the balance of a conventional committee. A distinguished figure unconnected with any of the interests will be seen to be impartial: the views and judgements he arrives at should carry the necessary weight as a basis for Government's decisions. By this means we should also be more likely to get a clear outcome, without the risk of issues being masked - even of having no recommendations at all - if the search for a consensus on a committee did not succeed.

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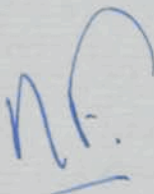
The right person needs also to be able to deal firmly and incisively with those submitting evidence - and to analyse it; and sufficiently distinguished to attract high quality assessors. A lawyer or academic versed in public affairs would fit the bill. I should like to approach Sir Arthur Armitage, currently Vice Chancellor of the University of Manchester and Professor of Common Law there, who meets this criteria.

I should want to discuss the question of assessors with Sir Arthur before coming to final decisions. But three subject areas will certainly call for expert assessors: economics/statistics, environmental matters (by which I mean essentially planning matters), and science and technology. I list in the annex the names I am considering.

Michael Heseltine and George Younger agree with these proposals and names. None of the other Ministers to whom I am copying this minute has raised any objections and Sir Ian Bancroft is content.

I would be grateful for your agreement to the form of the inquiry and to my asking Sir Arthur Armitage to take it on: I have not, of course, yet approached him.

I am copying this minute to Michael Heseltine, Humphrey Atkins, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards and Michael Jopling, and also to Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir John Hunt.



NORMAN FOWLER
2 July 1979

APPOINTMENTS IN CONFIDENCEASSESSORS

For the economics/statistics area, the names I am considering include Professor Douglas Hague, Professor of Managerial Economics at Manchester Business School; and Professor Ray Rees, Professor of Economics at Cardiff University.

I think Miss Audrey Lees, County Planning Officer of Merseyside County Council would be an excellent environmental assessor (it is particularly important to avoid here anyone who would be regarded as representing an environmental pressure group since that would open up the arguments about balance which a one man inquiry is intended to avoid).

The outstanding candidate as science and technology assessor would, in my view, be Sir Henry Chilver, Vice Chancellor of the Cranfield Institute of Technology.

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Transport- DS

APPOINTMENTS IN CONFIDENCE



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

3 July 1979

Dear Sir

The Prime Minister has seen your Minister's minute of 2 July, setting out the procedure he proposes for the independent inquiry into the heavy lorry and the environment, and nominating those he wishes to use for the inquiry.

The Prime Minister is content with the proposed format and with the choice of Sir Arthur Armitage. She is also content with those nominated as expert assessors. In the case of the economics/statistics role she would have a strong preference for Douglas Hague from the two names submitted.

I am sending copies of this letter to David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Mike Hopkins (Northern Ireland Office), Kenneth MacKenzie (Scottish Office), George Craig (Welsh Office), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office), David Laughrin (Civil Service Department) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

Mike Pattison

Mrs. E.C. Flanagan,
Department of Transport.

M

1. MR. LANKESTER ✓
2. PRIME MINISTER
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Mr. Fowler has now selected Sir Arthur Armitage to undertake the independent inquiry into the heavy lorry and the environment which you approved in May. His attached minute explains why he believes that a single "wise man" is the best procedure, and asks your approval of the format and choice.

He intends to use expert assessors in three subjects areas: he has in mind the following -

Economics/statistics

✓
Douglas Hague or ~~Ray Rees~~
(Professor of Economics at
Cardiff University)

Environment

Miss Audrey Lees (County Planning
Officer of Merseyside County
Council)

Science and technology

✓
Sir Henry Chilver (Vice
Chancellor of the Cranfield
Institute of Technology)

Are you content with these proposals?

2 July 1979

MS
Yes - please use Douglas
Hague if possible
MS