

Await Mr Fowler's minute

Transport 14/29/2



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary to
the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

25 February 1980

Dear Mike

You asked in your letter of 14 February whether the bridge options for a fixed channel link had been entirely dismissed.

The short answer is 'no'. But they look pretty unlikely runners. They are likely to be three or four times the cost of the railways scheme and there could be considerable political problems because of interference with shipping. We understand one or two bridge schemes are in preparation by private interests and the Cooper and Lybrand study for the EEC Commission (whose report has been received but not yet released) has also considered bridge options.

Now that Mr Fowler has received Sir Alec Cairncross' preliminary views on the British Rail proposal for a tunnel, he will be writing to the Prime Minister very shortly about the Statement he is committed to making to the House. This is bound to be a holding statement because there are some questions still to be answered about the BR scheme as well as the other options and the outstanding question of ~~BR~~^{EEC} money. An important question to be decided over the next year or so will be what alternatives, if any, are worth looking at and how this should be done. The availability of private risk capital will obviously be a major factor. But Mr Fowler will be covering all these points in his minute to the Prime Minister.

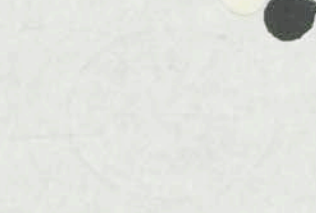
Yours

Gene

MRS E C FLANAGAN
Private Secretary

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Management

14 February 1980

There was some correspondence between our offices in the second half of last year about further study on a Channel tunnel. Sir Alec Cairncross is now preparing advice on a single track scheme.

The subject of a fixed transport link across the Channel has been raised with the Prime Minister once or twice recently. She has now asked me to find out whether the bridge option has been entirely dismissed. She understands that the EEC commissioned a study on a fixed link from Coopers and Lybrand. This presumably considered both bridge and tunnel options.

I would be grateful for any comments you may have on the status of the bridge possibility, and your views as to whether there is likely to be any further research or discussion on this alternative.

M. A. PATTISON

Miss E.C. Flanagan,
Department of Transport