

CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

N/S to see.

NS RA

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Leader of the House of Commons
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
LONDON SW1

21 March 1981

Francis

HEAVIER LORRIES: ARMITAGE REPORT

When I wrote to you on 9 January about the Armitage Report I said that I would be putting a paper to colleagues towards the end of January. But the unforeseen opportunity to have a debate on 27 January has now changed the picture. I have said that I will consider further representations on all this until mid-March. I will then be putting proposals to colleagues. I therefore would hope to be in a position to make a statement between Easter and Whitsun indicating the Government's intentions.

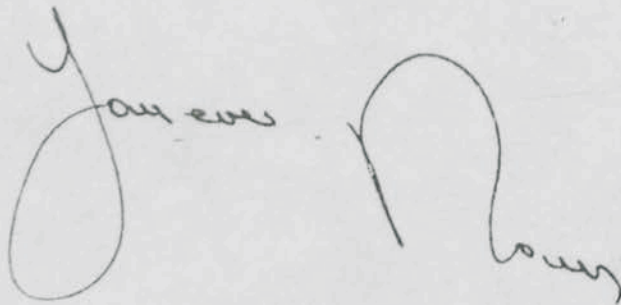
If we do decide to increase lorry weights, then we have two options on the timing of a debate. First, we could have a debate fairly soon after Whitsun, which would clear the way for me to start the statutory processes (negative resolution) for changing the lorry weight regulations. Alternatively, the debate could be set back to the Autumn, when we would need to put through the House the necessary orders for changing the lorry weight regulations. The snag with this option is that it would concentrate the debate on the issue of increased lorry weights and not the wider range of Armitage's environmental and other proposals.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

As you know there is strong feeling in the House on this issue. Michael Foot has asked you at Business Questions to allow a full general debate before there is any question of considering an order. There is no doubt that many of our own side would agree with this. It is a difficult question and perhaps the best solution is to discuss all this when I have been to colleagues on the actual policies the Government will wish to follow.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, Lord Scames, the Chief Whips in both Houses and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Norman Fowler', written in dark ink.

NORMAN FOWLER

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

3 MAR 1981

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
1980



Transport

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

VMS

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MC MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1

9 January 1981

Francis

HEAVIER LORRIES

I wrote to Norman St John Stevas on 5 December about the need for an early debate on this contentious matter. It has once again become the focus of public attention following the publication last month of the report of the inquiry under Sir Arthur Armitage into the whole question of lorries, people and the environment.

Norman St John Stevas told me, in his letter of 15 December, that the best he could do within the next couple of months would be to arrange a short debate after 10.00 p.m. Unfortunately the issues are not of the kind that can be adequately dealt with in that way. The question of heavier lorries has now been at issue for over 10 years and the Armitage report at long last offers a realistic basis on which to settle it. I believe we should grasp the opportunity while it lasts. But I am in no doubt that the House must first be given the chance to express a view in a full debate.

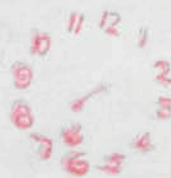
I shall be putting a paper on all this to E(EA)
later this month.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister,
the Chief Whips in both Houses and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

You are
Norman

NORMAN FOWLER

14 JAN 1981





Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Transport
PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

15th December 1980

De An.

VMS

LIMITS OF WEIGHT OF LORRIES

Thank you very much for your letter of 5th December asking that time be found on the Floor of the House for a debate on the findings of the inquiry under Sir Arthur Armitage into the possibility of increasing the limits of weights of lorries allowed into this country. I understand that Sir Arthur has now reported and that his inquiry comes down in favour of substantially increased weight limits.

I appreciate that this a controversial issue and that a debate would be appropriate, and I have instructed my officials to take up this matter with the Chief Whip's office. However, I understand that there is virtually no chance that a debate can be scheduled in January or February during "prime time" on the Floor of the House. It should prove possible to arrange a short debate after 10.00 pm and if this is an acceptable substitute, I shall discuss it with the Chief Whip.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to the Chief Whips in both Houses and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours faithfully
Norman Fowler

Norman Fowler, Esq
Minister of Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 3EB

17 DEC 1980



MAR 20 1980

Transport

Inquiry on Lorries, People and the Environment

OLD ADMIRALTY BUILDING, WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AZ TELEPHONE 01-273-3045

PRESS NOTICE

9 December 1980

ARMITAGE REPORT ON LORRIES PUBLISHED

1. Today the report of the Armitage Inquiry on Lorries, People and the Environment was published. The assessors joined with Sir Arthur Armitage in presenting the report to the Minister of Transport as a jointly agreed report.

2. Sir Arthur Armitage said:

"This is a practical report in which I and highly qualified independent assessors have studied all major aspects of the problem. Our recommendations are necessary on economic grounds. They would bring large cost savings. The recommendations give greatly increased protection to the environment and to the public. I believe that their adoption would serve the public interest. We have the opportunity of making major economic savings and at the same time improving the environment and the effect of lorries on people and we should take it."

*"Report of the Inquiry into Lorries, People and the Environment", HMSO, 1980 (£8.50). Available from HMSO bookshops.

3 The main conclusions and recommendations of the report are as follows:

(1) LORRIES DO TOO MUCH DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT

- Lorries are too intrusive, too noisy and too smelly and people are apprehensive about them
- lorries affect some places particularly badly
- examples include historic and other towns and villages on major routes and some places on major arterial routes eg. Archway Road in London
- matters will get worse unless action is taken.

(2) NO BIGGER LORRIES

- new controls on size to be introduced
- for the first time ever legal limits to be placed on the height of lorries, the size of containers and the length of the trailers of articulated lorries
- extra $\frac{1}{2}$ metre on the length of tractor units of articulated lorries to improve driver comfort, manoeuvrability and safety and make room for more noise insulation
- otherwise, all limits on dimensions of lorries, trailers and containers to be frozen at current sizes.

(3) QUIETER LORRIES

- very large reductions in noise limits proposed, down to 80 dB(A)
- a new control on low frequency noise proposed.

(4) MORE ROAD BUILDING

- more bypassing of historic and other towns and villages on major routes proposed. This is the only way to save some of the worst affected places
- lorry owners to pay their full share of additional costs in extra taxation.

(5) LORRY ACTION AREAS

- lorry action areas to be identified, ie. those in need of special help because of lorry nuisance. Special subsidies to be paid eg. for noise insulation, better road surfaces, and exceptionally relocating badly sited factories and other generators of lorry traffic. Hauliers to pay costs in higher taxation.

(6) OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

- encouragement to further use of rail by improved, higher Section 8 grants
- lorry parking off the streets should be provided at the expense of lorry owners
- control of lorry depots on environmental grounds by extending the powers and duties of licensing authorities.

(7) SAFER AND BETTER LORRIES

- lorries to be fitted with under-run guards at front and rear and lightweight side guards, to save the lives of about 200 motorists, pedestrians and cyclists per year

- lorry brakes to be improved
- ways of reducing spray should be developed
- new limits to control ground-borne vibration
- better enforcement against smoky lorries, with new objective tests
- more enforcement and tougher penalties against overloading.

(8) LORRIES TO PAY THEIR WAY

- the heaviest lorries do not at present pay for all their allocated road track costs
- tax on them to be increased immediately so that they do; for example about £800 increase in annual VED on a 32 ton lorry
- extra costs to be allocated to lorries in respect of the costs of the accidents in which they are involved
- balance of taxation to be shifted away from lightest lorries and on to more damaging heaviest lorries.

(9) EEC PROPOSALS NOT ACCEPTABLE IN PRESENT FORM

- EEC proposals for heavier lorries are unacceptable in their present form

- major changes are desirable on axle spacing and axle weight particularly to protect bridges. The 11 tonne axle and 24 tonne tri-axle proposed by the EEC would be particularly damaging
- many safeguards would be required to protect the environment and road safety.

(10) A BETTER BARGAIN THAN EEC LORRIES

- maximum lorry weights can and should be increased provided that the lorries:
 - (i) are in no respect bigger - in width, length or height - than other lorries
 - (ii) have greater safety factor than existing lorries
 - (iii) create less noise and overall lead to an improvement in the environmental effects of lorries
 - (iv) do no more damage to bridges and roads than existing lorries
- these criteria can be satisfied. Heavier lorries would be subject to all the improvements proposed for existing lorries
- damage to bridges can be avoided by keeping the limit on a single driving axle down to 10.5 tonnes; retaining our present limits on the weights of other individual axles; and limiting tri-axles to 22.5 tonnes, with appropriate spacings

- subject to all the above the following maximum weights are recommended for articulated lorries:

(i) 4 axle lorries, 34 tonnes

(ii) 5 axle lorries with 2 axles on the tractor,
38 tonnes

(iii) 5 axle lorries with 3 axles on the tractor,
40 tonnes

(iv) 6 axle lorries, 44 tonnes

- these lorries would give very large savings in transport costs, possibly of £120 million - £130 million a year now and £170 million - £190 million by 1990
- they give positive improvements in the environmental effects of lorries
- they would help UK lorry manufacturers
- they place no new barriers in the way of any reasonably practicable EEC agreement.

(11) OVERALL IMPACT

- taking the combined effect of the measures there would be improvements for the environment and for the public
- overall there would be great economic savings.

Note to Editors

1. The Minister appointed Professor Sir Arthur Armitage and 4 independent expert assessors to undertake an independent inquiry with terms of reference as follows:

"To consider the causes and consequences of the growth in the movement of freight by road and, in particular, of the impact of the lorry on people and their environment; and to report on how best to ensure that future development serves the public interest."

2. The assessors were:

Sir Henry Chilver, Vice-Chancellor of Cranfield
Institute of Technology

Professor P J Lawther, Professor of Environmental and
Preventive Medicine at St Bartholomew's Hospital
and the London Hospital Medical Schools

Miss Audrey Lees, County Planning Officer of Merseyside
County Council (from 24 November 1980, Controller of
Transportation and Development, Greater London Council)

Professor Ray Rees, Professor of Economics at
University College, Cardiff

3. The inquiry began work in September 1979. It received over 1800 written submissions and also heard oral evidence from 34 organisations.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

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

8 December 1980

Dear Mike,

/ As agreed I attach a copy of the Press Notice being issued tomorrow by Sir Arthur Armitage on his report on lorries. Our officials will be providing the necessary briefing for the Prime Minister's Questions tomorrow morning.

Yours,

Anthony

R A J MAYER
Private Secretary

attachement put to PM

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET
SW1P 3EB



cc. Press office.

*With the Compliments of
the Private Secretary to the
Minister of Transport*

CONFIDENTIAL

2.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

The Rt Hon Norman St John Stevas MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1

Prime Minister

*The main points in
the Armitage Heavy haul
report are brought out
in the attached Press*

5 December 1980

*Notice. Ministers will
not wish to react to*

*the proposals
immediately.*

Dear Chancellor,

MA

*MA
12/11*

One of the more contentious questions I am going to have to deal with in the coming months is whether the present limits on the weights of lorries allowed in this country should be increased. You will recall that there was a good deal of trouble in the House about this matter before the Election. I eventually decided that the right approach was to set up an independent inquiry to look into the whole question of lorries, people and the environment, with particular reference to the question of lorry weights, and I appointed Sir Arthur Armitage in July 1979 to carry out this task. I will be receiving his report next Monday, 8 December, and it will be published the following day.

Because of the unusually contentious background I have been at pains to ensure that this inquiry should be kept genuinely independent of the Department. This has succeeded

CONFIDENTIAL

1

remarkably well. But the result is that neither I nor my officials have any advance knowledge of the conclusions to which Sir Arthur has come or the recommendations which he will make. But whatever he may say it is clear that no change in lorry weights in this country could be achieved unless Parliament was clearly in favour. This is why both Kenneth Clarke and I have given assurances during the course of Sir Arthur's inquiry that no decisions on lorry weights will be taken by the Government until the House has had time to consider the report and to express a view. And if we do not keep the initiative in our own hands I think it is almost inevitable that the opposition would try to force the pace by selecting the subject as an issue for a supply day debate.

It will obviously be a little time before the Government can expect to be in a position to reach a considered view on the report. But I shall be under great pressure from our own industry, the road hauliers, the vehicle manufacturers and shipping interests generally, to move as fast as possible to make the Government's position clear. And this apart, the whole question of lorry weights is again likely to become a live political issue in Brussels during the Dutch Presidency of the community in the first half of 1981. I understand that they will be pressing for a European standard maximum lorry weight.

All this, I fear, points to the probable need for a debate fairly early in the New Year. I shall continue to keep you informed of developments.

CONFIDENTIAL

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, Chief Whips in both Houses and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours Sincerely,
Anthony Mayes

NORMAN FOWLER

(Approved by the Minister
and signed in his absence)

CONFIDENTIAL

- 8 DEC 1980

