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Lonrho
(Fraser)

PRIME MINISTER

Here is a letter from Sir Hugh Fraser about the MMC decision on Lonrho and Mr. Biffen's acceptance of it.

Sir Hugh says that he does not expect a reply. Would you prefer to deal with this by a word next time you see him in the House?

MAF

Consult - message
memo re unit in
another base.

wonder if I could
have a memo for the

11 December, 1981

S/S about this

decision. I believe it is his
that alone - but none of us
were consulted in any way re it.

Fraser

30th December 1981

Lonhro - House of Fraser

You wrote to the Prime Minister on 10th December, and you said that you did not want a reply.

The Prime Minister does, of course, understand the force of all that you write and she is grateful to you for having written.

May we please have a word about this when the House re-assembles? I will seek you out.

IAN GOW

Sir Hugh Fraser MBE MP

file ER

11 December 1981

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 10 December.

I will place this before her at once.

MAP

The Rt. Hon. Sir Hugh Fraser, M.B.E., M.P.

SD

From: The Rt. Hon. Sir Hugh Fraser, MBE, MP.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10th December 1981

John P. Hinton

LONRHO - HOUSE OF FRASER

As a director of one of Lonrho's subsidiaries and one of its employees, I am much surprised by the Secretary of State for Trade's decision to back the Monopolies Commission's Report, whose reasoning seems to be of the flimsiest. But I write to you politically.

You may or may not have noticed that Biffen's decision has been greeted with ridicule by newspapers such as The Times, Financial Times and The Guardian which even leads on it. None of these are normally allies of my company. Without bothering you with the articles concerned, the gist is that the report is knowingly absurd and the Secretary of State's decision for a so-called market orientated Government ludicrous. So much for judgement, which some of your Ministers seem unable to exercise.

More important is the brute, political point. It is not the division bells but the alarm bells which are now beginning to frighten your parliamentary supporters. Surely, it is time you saw to it that the gentle art of making enemies is exercised in less elephantine fashion and, where it is reasonable to do so, attention paid to the interests of our friends.

I do not expect an answer - I only hope the message is taken to heart.

I am copying this letter to Biffen and Oppenheim.

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
10 Downing Street,
London SW1.

John P. Hinton

WJ

CF

RH

PPS