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2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

My ref: B/PSO/19422/85

Your ref:

NBPM

2 JAN 1986

In Lth.

will request if req'd.

Thank you for your letter of 15 November and for the papers which have been prepared by the Nationalised Industries Chairmen's Group on the subject of Major Public Inquiries.

I fully recognise the Group's concern about the adverse economic effects of very long inquiries, and we certainly wish to ensure that such inquiries are conducted as speedily and efficiently as possible. At the same time, the balancing of economic and environmental interests often raises very difficult issues on which there are strong feelings on both sides, and it is essential to provide a satisfactory framework within which these issues can be resolved.

There are things that can be done to improve the speed and efficiency of the process. Promoters for their part can help by explaining the project to the public at the earliest possible stage, by demonstrating that they have done all they can to moderate its environmental impact, and by presenting their case both effectively and succinctly at the inquiry itself.

We have measures in hand which will help to improve procedures and the management of the inquiry, and we shall continue the search for useful changes which will make for quicker decisions without detracting from public confidence in the process. It would be helpful for my officials to meet those who have been closely concerned with drawing up the papers enclosed with your letter, and I am asking them to get in touch with your secretariat to arrange a meeting for this purpose.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

[Handwritten signature]

KENNETH BAKER

Sir Robert Haslam

