



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

12 July 1979

Dear Mr. Harlam.

In your letter of 11 April drawing attention to the Health and Safety Executive's report "Canvey: an investigation of potential hazards from operations in the Canvey Island/Thurrock area", you urged that the Government should review the whole situation on Canvey and the conclusions reached by the HSE. You also expressed the view that the building of the two proposed new refineries should be banned, and that the methane terminal should be closed.

Ministers have now completed their study of the HSE report, and have noted that work is in hand to implement its recommendations some of which have already been carried out. The Government accepts the findings and recommendations of the report, and has decided that none of the existing installations need be required to close down, but endorses the HSE's intention to secure the implementation of the outstanding recommendations as soon as possible.

On the two proposed refineries: of course reconsideration of United Refineries' outline planning permission is before the Secretary of State for the Environment, who intends to re-open the adjourned public exploratory enquiry into its possible revocation, at which account can be taken of the HSE report; and Occidental have decided to withdraw their planning appeal for commercial reasons.

/ On the

cc DM
DOE
DN
Sir B Braine
Dr. O. McDonald
cf noted

On the methane terminal, the British Gas Corporation has already announced its intention to decommission its in-ground storage of liquefied natural gas, although no date has yet been set; and action has already been taken or is well in hand to significantly reduce the risk from operations at the methane terminal.

As you pointed out in your letter, Sir Bernard Braine has long been concerned about this matter. For that reason, I am sending a copy of this letter to him, and to Dr. Oonagh McDonald, who also has an interest.

Yours sincerely
Regent Foster

P. J. Haslam, Esq.

PRIME MINISTER

Castle Point Refineries Resistance Group wrote to you soon after the Election about Canvey Island. Their letter (Flag A) is dated 11 April, but I think that this is supposed to be 11 May.

We acknowledged the letter, and later sent an interim reply. The future of the terminals on Canvey Island has been a point of controversy for some months. The Health and Safety Executive produced a report entitled "Canvey: an investigation of potential hazards from operations in the Canvey Island/Thurrock area". Mr. Prior put a paper on the subject to E(EA). Following agreement in the Committee, Mr. Prior has now approved a draft reply. I attach this, prepared for your signature. Are you content to sign this, or would you prefer me to write on your behalf?

10 July 1979



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

12 July 1979

In your letter of 11 April drawing attention to the Health and Safety Executive's report "Canvey: an investigation of potential hazards from operations in the Canvey Island/Thurrock area", you urged that the Government should review the whole situation on Canvey and the conclusions reached by the HSE. You also expressed the view that the building of the two proposed new refineries should be banned, and that the methane terminal should be closed.

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As you pointed out in your letter, Sir Bernard Braine has long been concerned about this matter. For that reason, I am sending a copy of this letter to him, and to Dr. Oonagh McDonald, who also has an interest.

(signed) M.T.

P. J. Haslam, Esq.



8 ST. JAMES'S SQUARE LONDON SW1Y 4JB

Telephone Direct Line 01-214 6025

Switchboard 01-214 6000

Ref: PO 527/1979
511/1979
388/1979
271/1979

18 April 1979

Sir Bernard Braine DL
House of Commons
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dear Sir Bernard

The Prime Minister has asked me to reply to your letter of 6 April in which you complain about the content of my Statement on Canvey Island of 4 April and the manner in which it was made.

On 15 February the Prime Minister said that he had asked that, in the light of your letter of 1 February, there should be a full investigation and report. He added that the Secretary of State for the Environment and other Ministers were doing this. He indicated that the Government were reviewing the matter and would reach an agreed conclusion.

I can assure you that Ministers did take a fresh look at the many facets of the problem, and particularly took into account developments since the HSE report was published last summer. The position was made quite clear in the course of the adjournment debate on 27 March when John Grant said "Ministers are, at the request of the Prime Minister, re-examining the situation at Canvey". The results of the Government's review were set out in the statement I made by way of Written Answer on 4 April. I do not think there is anything I can usefully add to what is said in the statement. I would only emphasise that I and my colleagues are sure that the right course is to press ahead with outstanding action on the recommendations in the HSE report, and that we will continue to keep the situation at Canvey under close review.

You say that the statement should not have been made on the very last day of a dying Parliament. But it was precisely because I regarded it as an urgent and important matter that I thought it right to make the statement to Parliament on that day, rather than announce it subsequently to the Press.

In your letter of 6 April you also asked about your letter of 21 March with which you enclosed a letter from Professor Rasbash. I was interested to see what he said about hazards arising from



methane which were also the subject of your letter of 18 March to John Grant. Professor Rasbash emphasises that it is not possible to answer a number of the questions raised by you with any precision, that his picture of a fireball forming following the release of methane is based on a theoretical extrapolation of such experiences as he is aware of and that he is not aware of any incident involving liquid methane which has produced this type of fireball occurrence. He says that even if several thousand tons of liquefied gas were released on land, it is unlikely that they would be vaporised with sufficient rapidity and that it is difficult to visualise simultaneous release of all the contents of a tanker. I should emphasise however unlikely such an occurrence may be, the Canvey Island report itself makes clear that, in the opinion of the investigating team, it would be possible for a substantial quantity of flammable gas to be released to form a large cloud of flammable mixture which could ignite and explode. This was one of the risks which was quantified and taken into account in their overall assessment. It was one of the factors which led directly to the team's doubts that the British Gas Corporation should continue to store such large amounts of LNG and LPG at the gas terminal and as my statement explained various steps are being taken to reduce the risk.

Yours sincerely

Albert Booth

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT

MONDAY 2 APRIL 1979

WRITTEN REPLY

WEDNESDAY 4 APRIL 1979

- 51 DR CONAGH MACDONALD (THURROCK): To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, if he will make a statement in response to the conclusions and recommendations of the Health and Safety Executive's Report on Canvey Island/Thurrock.
- 90 SIR BERNARD BRAINE (SOUTH EAST ESSEX): To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, whether conclusions have now been reached concerning the report of the Health and Safety Executive on the Safety of Canvey Island; and whether he will make a statement.

MR ALBERT BOOTH:

Pursuant to his reply (Official Report, 3 April 1979, Vol 965 Col 522) gave the following information.

The Government have reviewed the safety situation on Canvey Island in the light of developments since the report published by the Health and Safety Commission last year.

The report assessed the risks from the existing and proposed installations at Canvey Island and concluded that provided recommended improvements were made to existing plants, HSE did not consider the situation to be such that any plants needed to be closed. The Executive also concluded that changes could be made to the new developments proposed in the area which would eliminate most of the additional risk imposed by them; and that there was no objection to their construction on health and safety grounds. Indeed, the Executive's assessment was that, if all the recommended improvements were made, Canvey would be safer than it was at the time of their report, even if all the proposed developments went ahead.

Many of the report's recommendations have been implemented and others are in hand. The liquid petroleum gas pipeline from the British Gas Corporation's methane terminal has been emptied. Protection against hazards that might arise from spillage of liquefied natural gas has been provided in the shape of additional deck protection on one of the two ships which call at the terminal and the other will soon be similarly protected. Surveys of the Texaco and London Coastal sites will be completed shortly, so that decisions can then be taken on the nature of any further retaining walls needed. Some of the further hazard surveys recommended in the report have been completed and the rest are well in hand. At Fisons the purity of the ammonia is being regularly monitored with a view to ensuring that the impurities are not of such a concentration as to endanger the safety of the storage sphere. The Port of London Authority has issued a notice to mariners stipulating an 8 knot speed limit for vessels in the Thames estuary and take steps to secure compliance.

I have asked the Health and Safety Executive to do all they can, with the firms concerned, to expedite implementation of those recommendations which have not yet been fully carried out in existing plants. In particular, I understand that by mid-April British Gas Corporation expect to have reduced the quantity of LPG stored from over 12,000 tons at the time of the HSE's report to about 3,000 tons; and that about 6,000 has already been transhipped. My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Energy will also be talking to the British Gas Corporation about the LNG storage facility.

The report considered three proposed developments. One of these the extension to the Mobil plant - is under construction, and I am assured that it will not come into operation until the HSE are satisfied as to its safety. In the second case my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment intends to re-open the exploratory inquiry into possible revocation of the planning permission granted to United Refineries Ltd to enable the parties concerned to make representations in the light of the HSE report before he proceeds to a decision. In the third case, Occidental Refineries Ltd have decided for commercial reasons, to defer indefinitely completion of their refinery.

Two aspects of the HSE report concern the local authorities. First I understand that the Essex County Council (the Highway Authority) plan to improve existing road conditions later this year. An all-weather track for emergency purposes will be provided through fields to the West of Waterside Farm roundabout and there will be minor improvements to the B1014 between Waterside Farm and Winter Gardens. The Secretary of State for Transport will be having further discussions immediately with Essex County Councils as to whether other improvements are necessary.

Secondly, the local planning authority has consulted the HSE about restrictions which should be placed on further development in the area, a matter on which HSE has given advice in a number of other areas. In this case, HSE has suggested to the planning authority that it would be prudent to maintain an area of about 1 kilometre radius round each of the potentially hazardous installations within which further housing developments should not be permitted. There is already housing in this area. Since there is no support in the HSE report for seeking its removal, Castle Point district Council, as the planning authority primarily responsible for the formulation and operation of its development control policy, proposes to allow some individual development in the nature of infilling or redevelopment there. HSE do not see any objection to the Council's exercising development control on that basis.

Concern has recently been expressed about the possibility of a Bantry Bay type disaster in the Canvey Island area. The possibility of an incident on an oil tanker was foreseen by the Safety and Reliability Directorate when they carried out their investigations on behalf of HSE for last year's report. Their conclusion was that the effects of such an incident at Canvey would be limited to the area of the jetties and would not affect the general public. Nevertheless, the Executive will take into account any lessons from the enquiry

which the Government of the Republic of Ireland is conducting into the Bantry Bay explosion, particularly in relation to regulations dealing with dangerous goods in port areas. In addition, the safety of tankers themselves is being improved. A requirement to have inert gas systems for safety has been imposed on new large UK registered tankers since 1975, and this requirement will progressively become mandatory for all but the smallest new and existing tankers in the early 1980s. Many UK registered tankers are already so equipped.

Following the bomb attack at the Texaco terminal in January, the Essex Police have met representatives of the main Canvey Island firms to offer advice and see what improvements are necessary. My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Energy has reminded the British Gas Corporation and the principal oil companies of the need to take urgently all reasonable steps to ensure adequate security against terrorist attack. His Department will be reviewing progress with them within the next few days.

The concern about safety of Canvey Island arose not so much from consideration related to one particular installation, but from concern about the number of potentially hazardous installations in a relatively small area and the possible repercussions of an accident at one plant on other plants. For this reason the Government welcomed the HSE report and its detailed and quantified assessment of the risks, both individually and totally. We accept the HSE's assessment and their conclusions relating to existing plants and the Mobil extension. In so far as the United Refineries Limited case is concerned, the Secretary of State for the Environment will, as I have explained, consider what is said about the project in the HSE report and representations on it, as well as other matters, in the context of the reopened inquiry before taking a decision in the matter.

The Government do not consider it necessary to set up any further enquiry. The investigation by the Safety and Reliability Directorate on behalf of HSE was the most thorough and detailed type of assessment relating to industrial operations in a particular location ever carried out in the UK, and probably in the world. Any further enquiry could only duplicate the work already done. The reports of the further hazard surveys by the companies will be appraised by HSE and action will be taken by them to secure any further improvements if the surveys show them to be necessary.

A very significant improvement in safety is being achieved as a result of the recommended measures and the Government are satisfied that the right course in the interests of those who work and live on Canvey, is to press ahead with outstanding action on the recommendations. The HSE report, and the work which went into its production, has highlighted for all the companies concerned the importance of constant vigilance over the safety of their operations and activities, so they can be in no doubt now of their responsibilities in this respect to their workers and to the public, and Government will continue to keep the situation at Canvey under close review.

1st February, 1979

The Rt. Hon. L. James Callaghan, M.P.
10, Downing Street,
London, S.W.1.

I feel that it is my duty to draw your attention to the attached answer given by the Under-Secretary of State for Employment on the 22nd January to a parliamentary question I put. This, in my opinion, indicates an appalling complacency and lack of understanding about the terrifying dangers to which, as all the world knows, my constituents on Canvey Island are exposed. It is illogical and dangerously misleading.

My question arose from a recommendation of the Health and Safety Executive to the Castle Point District Council that no new planning permissions should be granted within a radius of 1 kilometre of the British Gas Methane plant. This effectively served notice on the 8,000 people already living within that distance (there are up to another 5,000 holiday campers in addition in the summer months) and the parents of pupils at four schools that they are living in a danger area.

You will see that Mr. Grant's answer volunteered the information that "experience" shows that the worst effects of a flammable gas explosion would be unlikely to extend beyond the 1 kilometre radius. Whoever drafted that reply must have been totally ignorant that large numbers of people live within this area. Moreover, this admission implies that a methane cloud explosion could have some ill-effects

/...

beyond a distance of 1 km.

However, the answer is even more misleading than that. May I respectfully point out to you that there is no scientific basis for the H.S.E. recommendation. Indeed, the available experience indicates that a methane cloud arising from a spillage of LNG (10,000 tons of which are imported into Canvey every week) could travel from 8 to 10 kilometres before ignition. The worst effects of any such explosion might, therefore, be felt well beyond the 1 km. radius and any responsible government would recognise that the whole of Canvey Island (population 33,000) and heavily populated areas beyond, such as Benfleet, are at risk. The chance of such a major spillage occurring, as given by the H.S.E., is far greater than the H.S.E. considered in their First Report on Major Hazards to be the borderline of acceptability. The risk, therefore, on the H.S.E.'s own estimate, is quite unacceptable.

The Local Authority and I have had the benefit of advice from a distinguished consultant, Dr. H.K. Black, formerly H.M. Chief Inspector of Explosives in the Home Office, and he fully concurs with this view.

Your Ministers, especially in the Departments of the Environment, Employment and Energy, have been told repeatedly that risks are being taken with the lives of my constituents. The H.S.E. Report published last June confirmed the multiplicity of hazards which we face, but regrettably came to conclusions which simply do not equate with the scale and complexity of the dangers involved. Had the Eantry Bay tanker disaster taken place at any one of the jetties in Canvey or Thurrock, as well it might have done, then we would have had a holocaust and, in the face of such well-known catastrophes, the H.S.E. did not even inquire into the procedures for ship-to-shore transfer, or seek to discover what hazards might lie therein. As for the ~~responsibility~~ ^{responsibility} of the information the H.S.E. gives to a worried public, I have had confirmation only today that they have given wrong and misleading information on television about the amount of liquified gas on Canvey. They simply do not know.

You will appreciate, therefore, that we simply will not accept any shuffling off of responsibility by the Departmental Ministers concerned. I beg of you to intervene, to call for a Special Commission of some kind to investigate this appalling situation, which now seems beyond the capacity of the Health and Safety Executive to control or your ministerial colleagues to comprehend.

/...

There is only one safe answer and that is, as I and the Local Authority have repeatedly argued, to remove the main hazard to the islanders, the Methane Gas plant. We had the narrowest of escapes a fortnight ago when a terrorist bomb was placed against a near-empty tank at one of our hazardous installations. How many more warnings does the Government need before it takes effective action?

Encl.

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT

WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 1979

MONDAY 22 JANUARY 1979

WRITTEN REPLY

8000 & 4 others.

34,000.

125 Sir Bernard Braine (South East Essex): To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, if, in the light of the known hazard posed by the Methane Gas Terminal on Canvey Island and the risk of spillages of liquefied gas leading to the release of a gas cloud, he will set out the scientific justification for the decision of the Health and Safety Executive to recommend to the local authority the establishment of a cordon sanitaire around the installation limited to only 1 kilometre.

MR JOHN GRANT REPLIED:

The Chairman of the Health and Safety Commission informs me that the hazard range for many dangerous substances depends on a number of factors eg dispersion characteristics of vapours and gases about which scientific knowledge is limited. Experience shows that the worst effects of a flammable gas cloud explosion would be unlikely to extend beyond a radius of 1 Km. The recommendation made to the Castle Point District Council in response to their request for advice on further housing development was, therefore, based on the view that it would be prudent not to add to the numbers of persons within that distance from the terminal.



8 ST. JAMES'S SQUARE LONDON SW1Y 4JB

Telephone Direct Line 01-214 6025

Switchboard 01-214 6000

M Pattison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

9 July 1979

fg

Dear Mike

CANVEY ISLAND - CORRESPONDENCE FROM CASTLE POINT REFINERIES RESISTANCE GROUP

With reference to the letter to the Prime Minister from the Castle Point Refineries Resistance Group of 11 April, following ministerial consideration in E(EA) Committee I am now in a position to let you have a substantive reply for the Prime Minister's consideration.

The attached draft reply has been approved by my Secretary of State. You will recall that you asked for the draft to take the form of a possible reply from the Prime Minister or from her Private Secretary, and if the Prime Minister wishes to sign the letter personally the sections in square brackets should be deleted.

Yours sincerely,

ANDREW HARDMAN
Private Secretary

DRAFT LETTER TO MR P J HASLAM, HONORARY SECRETARY, CASTLE POINT
REFINERIES RESISTANCE GROUP

In your letter of 11 April [to the Prime Minister] drawing attention to the Health and Safety Executive's report "Canvey: an investigation of potential hazards from operations in the Canvey Island/Thurrock area", you urged that the Government should review the whole situation on Canvey and the conclusions reached by the HSE. You also expressed the view that the building of the two proposed new refineries should be banned, and that the methane terminal should be closed.

[The Prime Minister has asked me to reply on her behalf to say that] Ministers have now completed their study of the HSE report, and have noted that work is in hand to implement its recommendations some of which have already been carried out. The Government accepts the findings and recommendations of the report, and has decided that none of the existing installations need be required to closedown, but endorses the HSE's intention to secure the implementation of the outstanding recommendations as soon as possible.

~~Touching~~ ^{on} Touching the two proposed refineries: of course reconsideration of United Refineries' outline planning permission is ~~therefore~~ ^{before} the Secretary of State for the Environment, who intends to re-open the adjourned public exploratory enquiry into its possible revocation, at which account can be taken of the HSE report; and Occidental have decided to withdraw their planning appeal for commercial reasons.

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As you pointed out in your letter, Sir Bernard Braine has ^{along} been concerned about this matter. For that reason, I am ^{sending a copy of} copying this letter to him, and to Dr Oonagh McDonald, who also has an interest.



8 ST. JAMES'S SQUARE LONDON SW1Y 4JB
 Telephone Direct Line 01-214 6025
 Switchboard 01-214 6000

✓ MAD

Castle Point
 Refineries

M Pattison Esq
 Private Secretary
 10 Downing Street
 LONDON SW1

19 June 1979

Dear Mike

Further to your letter to Ian Fair of 1 June, and our telephone conversation of 18 June, I am writing to advise you that a paper on Canvey Island is being prepared for discussion at the meeting of E(EA) on 28 June.

In view of the need for ministerial consideration of this sensitive issue, it will consequently not be possible to provide a substantive reply to the Castle Point Refineries Resistance Group letter at this point in time. Of course we will make every effort to provide a reply as soon as possible after the E(EA) meeting on 28 June.

Yours Sincerely,

ANDREW HARDMAN
 Private Secretary



CASTLE Point
Refineries

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 June 1979

~~Overdue~~

CHASE on 18/6/79

MAP

Thank you for your letter of 30 May about correspondence with the Castle Point Refineries Resistance Group.

I shall expect a substantive reply by 14 June.

M. A. PATTISON

I.A.W. Fair, Esq.,
Department of Employment.

2590

VLB



8 ST. JAMES'S SQUARE LONDON SW1Y 4JB

Telephone Direct Line 01-214 6025

Switchboard 01-214 6000

M Pattison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

30 May 1979

Dear Mike

We spoke yesterday about the correspondence with the Castle Point Refineries Resistance Group.

Officials here remain concerned that an interim reply of the sort you suggest in your letter of 24 May might raise expectations and be seen as committing Ministers further than would be prudent at this stage. They hope to have a substantive reply ready within a fortnight and in the circumstances would be grateful if we could hold off until then without another interim reply.

Yours sincerely
Ian Fair

I A W FAIR
Private Secretary



Castle Point Refineries

2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref: H/PSO/12333/79

Your ref:

24 May 1979

829

*Await further
offering from
employment.*
MAP

Dear Andrew

Mike Pattison copied to me his letter of 15 May asking for advice on answering a letter to the Prime Minister from the Castle Point Refineries Resistance Group. I understand that you intend to advise your Ministers that only an acknowledgement should be sent at this stage, and that opportunity should be provided for Ministers to consider the issues involved. We would fully support this line. The previous Government's statement on 4 April indicated that, before any approval was given for the new refinery proposed by United Refineries Limited, an opportunity would be given to discuss the HSE conclusions about the project at a re-opened public inquiry. We intend to honour this undertaking.

Copies of this go to Mike Pattison (No 10) and Bill Burroughs (Energy).

Yours sincerely

Paul Bristow

P BRISTOW
Private Secretary

Andrew Hardman Esq



Castle Point
Refineries
Resistance Group

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 May 1979

Thank you for your letter of 24 May about the correspondence with the Castle Point Refineries Resistance Group.

I had already sent a brief acknowledgement, promising a further reply - copy now attached. Whilst I understand that you are not ready to offer advice on a substantive reply, a letter is now required saying that the Government is giving serious attention to the concerns of those at Canvey Island. Could I please have further advice by Friday, 1 June?

M. A. PATTISON

Andrew Hardman, Esq.
Department of Employment.



8 ST. JAMES'S SQUARE LONDON SW1Y 4JB

Telephone Direct Line 01-214 6025

Switchboard 01-214 6000

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

24 May 1979

Dear Mike

You wrote on 15 May asking for advice on the reply to the letter from the Castle Point Refineries Resistance Group to the Prime Minister dated 11 April.

We suggest that it would be best to send a Private Secretary reply along the lines of the attached draft. The Secretary of State has approved this course of action, as have his colleagues at the Departments of Energy and the Environment.

I might add that a neutral form of words is suggested in order neither to pre-empt the source from which the later fuller reply will come, nor to commit Ministers openly to any full-scale review. Any hint that Ministers are considering the whole topic could be misconstrued and might lead to the expectation that Ministers were already minded (or committed) to make changes. This need not pre-empt the ultimate Ministerial conclusion of course. A background note from our officials is also attached.

I am copying this to Bill Burroughs (Energy) and Paul Bristow (Environment).

Your Sincerely,

ANDREW HARDMAN
Private Secretary

DRAFT LETTER FROM MR PATTISON TO MR P J HASLAM, HON
SEC CASTLE POINT REFINERIES RESISTANCE GROUP

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for
your letter of 11 April, which she has read with
interest.

Arrangements will be made to send a fuller reply
as soon as possible.

MISS DURNING

MR HARDMAN

cc

Mr Taylor

Mr Wilson

Mr Hodgkins

Mr Bruce

CANVEY ISLAND

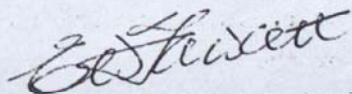
Letter to PM from Castle Point Refineries Resistance Group

1. Mr Hardman asked for advice on the letter of 15 May from Mr Pattison covering a copy of the Resistance Group's letter to the Prime Minister.
2. The HSE report 'CANVEY: an investigation of potential hazards from operations in the Canvey Island/Thurrock area' (published in June 1978) has implications for matters within the spheres of responsibility not only of DE Ministers but also of Ministers responsible for the Environment, Energy, Industry, Trade, Transport, and Home Affairs.
3. Although the letter from the Resistance Group refers specifically to the two proposed new refineries and to the methane gas terminal, its main purpose is to urge the Government to review the whole situation at Canvey: and it seems likely that there will be other, similar pressures whether from MPs or local authorities or others with an interest.
4. However, Ministers have not yet been able to study the implications of the report or the steps taken towards implementing its recommendations, and it seems sensible that they should have the opportunity to consider the whole topic in order to reach a collective view representing all their interests before any attempt is made to reply to individual enquiries.
5. If that view is acceptable to Ministers, then I suggest that we might best proceed by preparing a brief in consultation with officials in HSE and in the other departments concerned, so that the Secretary of State might then discuss the whole situation with his colleagues.
6. Although it makes good sense for us to undertake the task of co-ordinating the preparation of the brief (interest and concern have been focussed by the HSE report, and officials in other GDs are well used to our playing the role of co-ordinator in health and safety matters) it seems unnecessary at this stage to

decide which Minister should ultimately reply to the Resistance Group's letter.

7. Accordingly, if it is decided to take the line outlined in paragraphs 4 and 5 above, then I suggest that Mr Pattison should be advised simply to acknowledge receipt of the letter and to say that a reply will be sent in due course.

8. Last, although we have provided factual background briefs on Canvey both for the Whitsun adjournment and for discussions the PM is having this weekend, we did not include any reference to the course suggested in paragraphs 4 and 5 above because there was too little time to take Ministers' minds before despatch of those briefs and we wished to avoid pre-empting their decision.



HSL

E.W. FAWCETT
18 May 1979



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

to
CANVEY Island
Castle Point
Refineries
Resistance Group
15 May 1979

I enclose a copy of a letter addressed to the Prime Minister by the Castle Point Refineries Resistance Group on Canvey Island.

This has been the subject of Ministerial attention in the past. I would be grateful for your advice as to who should reply and what form the reply should take.

I am sending copies of this letter to Bill Burroughs (Department of Energy) and Paul Bristow (Department of the Environment).

M. A. PATTISON

Andrew Hardman, Esq.,
Department of Employment.

tmw

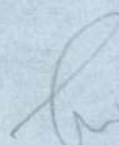
15 May 1979

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to acknowledge your letter of 11 April about Canvey Island.

A reply will be sent to you as soon as possible.

MAP

P.J. Haslam, Esq.



CASTLE POINT REFINERIES RESISTANCE GROUP

Con. Secretary; P.J. Haslam, IIB Malvern Avenue, Canvey Island, Essex.

The Rt Hon. Mrs Margaret Thatcher, MP.

Prime Minister.
10, Downing St.
London S.W.1.

R1575

11th April, 1979.

Dear Mrs Thatcher,

We appreciate that as leader of a new Government you are extremely busy. However we would be most grateful if you could give consideration to our problems.

You will be aware of the campaign conducted by the residents of Canvey and fully supported by our M.P. Sir Bernard Braine over many years, against the build up of oil and gas installations in the area

A report published by the Health and Safety Executive last July detailed the range of hazards faced by residents, yet inexplicably they concluded that two further oil refineries could be built and existing oil and gas plants could continue operating. After long deliberation the previous Government accepted these conclusions.

Our MP, the local authority and the vast majority of residents do not accept the HSE findings nor do they accept that the risk can be reduced to an acceptable level by the introduction of a range of safety measures. This contention is supported by several independent experts who have studied the HSE findings.

We believe that the risks to residents can only be reduced by a ban on the building of the two oil refineries and the closure of the methane gas terminal, which at present poses the major part of the risk. We would urge that the new Government review the situation on Canvey and the conclusions reached by the HSE. Sir Bernard Braine has we feel sure kept you informed and would be only too happy to provide additional information for both you and your Ministers.

Yours sincerely

P. Haslam.