

MR GRAY

MR ADDISON

MR WHITTINGDALE

SCOTTISH DAILY EXPRESS

The Scottish edition of the Daily Express is making a renewed effort to improve its position in Scotland and the Prime Minister has agreed to be interviewed by the editor-designate, George Birrell, on Friday. He is an old hand and intends to be helpful.

His questions are attached.

The Prime Minister does not need a great deal of briefing but it might be helpful if I could incorporate information with my briefing for Thursday's box as follows:-

State of Conservative Party in Scotland - Mr Whittingdale

Economy and Community Charge - Mr Gray

Health & Social Security and Devolution - Mr Addison



BERNARD INGHAM

12 April 1988

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11th April 1988

Mr. Bernard Ingham
Press Secretary
10 Downing Street
London, SW1A 2AA

Dear Bernard,

Further to our telephone conversation, I am now sending to you a copy of the questions George Birrell would like to put to the Prime Minister during his interview on Friday, April 15th at 11:15 am.

I am also asking him to raise with her a couple of national questions on Social Security reform and any other topic of the day, assuming there is time.

We intend to use a story in Saturday mornings paper and then run the full interview in the Scottish Daily Express on the following Monday, April 18th. As you know, George has interviewed the Prime Minister before and is one of our most experienced and best writers. He is responsible for our political coverage in Scotland and has been briefed to lead our drive for circulation North of the border.

Thank you for all your help in arranging the interview, and for all your cooperation during the Prime Minister's trip to Turkey. Is there any progress for me to report to the Editor regarding the lunch?

Once again, thank you for your help.

Paul

Paul Potts
Assistant Editor
News and Politics

PP:py

AREAS OF QUESTIONING FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

The intention is to confine questions, in most part, to issues relating to Scotland and broaden them to UK topics towards the end of the interview.

STATE OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY IN SCOTLAND: What are the lessons to be learned from losing half the Tory MPs at the last election ; Which is the way back for the Conservatives in Scotland; Do the "recalcitrant, ungrateful" Scots pose more headaches than the rest of Britain; How does Prime Minister respond to frequent allegations that she is "uncaring" of the Scots.

ECONOMY: How will the Ford debacle in Dundee affect inward investment to Scotland and is it an example of comfortably off workers in the South turning their backs on the unemployed in the North; Has Scotland to resign itself to perpetually high unemployment; What can be done to liberate the alleged enterprise of the Scots who have the lowest growth rate in self-employment and the service industries; What benefits will there be for Scotland from the single European market in 1992 and the Channel tunnel.

COMMUNITY CHARGE: How concerned is the Prime Minister that many Scots are reportedly disenfranchising themselves to avoid paying the new charge; Will the government encounter increased hostility if there are widespread prosecutions; Does the proposed Mates amendment not pose a bigger threat than Labour's attempted wrecking tactics; If it, or any other amendment, succeeds would it not be acutely embarrassing to introduce it in Scotland.

DEVOLUTION: If Stormont remains a possibility for Ulster why not an Assembly for Scotland; Would a reduction in Scottish Westminster MPs be a fair trade-off for an Assembly; Is there concern about the growth in pro-devolution support within Scottish Conservative ranks.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY: With the NHS being the most emotive of all domestic issues would meeting in full the terms of the nurses pay review not assuage public opinion; Is there scope for further significant hospital services being put out to competitive tender; Does the Prime Minister accept the government's own social security advisers claim that the benefits system lacks flexibility and would leave many claimants, especially the young, worse off.

PERSONAL: After 9 years in government does the Prime Minister feel enough has been achieved and what now are the priorities.



10 DOWNING STREET

BERNARD

Paul Potts 'phoned to say George Birrell, Political Correspondent in Scotland will be conducting the interview on April 15 at 11.15. He will send you a list of questions by Wednesday.

ROSE

31 March 1988



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Press Secretary

29 March 1988

Jim Paul

You asked me to fix up an interview for the Scottish Daily Express at 11.15am on Friday, April 15. I am still trying to get a date for the lunch you mentioned - they are extremely scarce.

Would you please let me know as soon as convenient who will be conducting the interview so that I can get them in through the security screens? As this is an interview with a Scottish flavour, it would help me a great deal if you could let me have the areas of questioning.

Best wishes.

Jim Paul
Bernard Ingham

BERNARD INGHAM

Paul Potts Esq

The Prime Minister: Yes. We all recognise the tremendous courage of the Ulster Defence Regiment and the debt that we owe to it. No matter what the difficulties and the casualties, there are always more people prepared to be recruited to the regiment, and they play a very important part in the security of Northern Ireland.

Mr. John D. Taylor: What is the Prime Minister's present policy towards devolution in Scotland?

The Prime Minister: It is the same as it has always been. I am against further devolution in Scotland.

Mr. Gregory: Will my right hon. Friend find time in her busy day to study the survey report from Liverpool earlier this week that children as young as seven have been supplied with cigarettes? In all the cases surveyed, not one shop stayed within the law. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the maximum penalty of £400 is quite inadequate, when 100,000 people die as a result of smoking in this country?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for pointing out that smoking is indeed a very great danger to health and for bringing up what is undoubtedly a very difficult problem, in that some young children smoke and are supplied with cigarettes. It is absolutely scandalous.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 10 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. McAllion: Has the Prime Minister had the opportunity to read the letter to the British Medical Association from Dr. Mitchell, a consultant physician at Scarborough hospital, in which he points out that the much-vaunted throughput statistics for that hospital are felt by all the consultants to be positively dangerous to the standards of patient care, and in which he comments that it is easy to appear efficient when understaffed and underfunded? Will the Prime Minister for once listen to those who are best qualified to comment on standards of patient care—the doctors—and will she ensure that on Budget day the NHS has a chance to have its version of a super-Tuesday?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Gentleman will have heard me say many times, the resources available to the Health Service are greatly in excess of any that have ever been available before. The numbers of nurses and doctors, and patients being treated are also greatly in excess of any in the past.

With regard to the Tayside health board —
[*Interruption.*]

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Tayside remains the second best funded board in Scotland, and its revenue allocation is £146 million, giving a per capita allocation of £372, compared with the Scottish per capita allocation of £307.

Q5. Mr. Sackville: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 10 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Sackville: Does my right hon. Friend agree that under Mikhail Gorbachev there has been a rapid improvement in the effectiveness of Soviet propaganda presentation, unsupported by any real change in Soviet foreign or defence policy or human rights performance? Does she agree that that is a dangerous situation, about which some of our NATO allies should be constantly reminded?

The Prime Minister: I think that my hon. Friend is essentially right in his premise. Not a great deal has changed in military developments in the Soviet Union: indeed, modernisation continues apace. At the same time, I think that we must welcome the Soviet Union's wish to withdraw from Afghanistan. It is what we have been urging upon the Soviets, and we hope that the withdrawal will very soon be completed. In the meantime, we must make certain that our own defence is sure, and continue to plead on behalf of those in the Soviet Union who do not enjoy the human rights that we take for granted.

Q6. Mr. Ted Garrett: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 10 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Garrett: Will the Prime Minister accept that we have one thing in common, and that is that we both abhor the filth and disgrace of our inner cities? Litter is a massive problem that is now facing the nation and, as a provincial Member, I am distressed beyond belief at Londoners' failure to try to smarten up this capital city of ours. Will the right hon. Lady accept that, with the possible exception of Westminster, the rest of the boroughs of this great metropolitan area are somehow or another losing the battle to keep our streets clean? It must be a source of great distress to foreigners leaving the clean surroundings of Heathrow to see the filth and grime in this city. It is possible for someone from the right hon. Lady's Department to go to our European capitals to see how they tackle the question that we fail to tackle?

The Prime Minister: I agree wholeheartedly with what the hon. Gentleman has said. I also agree that Westminster city council makes tremendous efforts to try to keep the city clean. Litter is a problem not only in our inner cities but often on the sides of major roads and on the central reservations. The problem is tackled in Europe by giving people responsibility for clearing the frontages before their shops, offices and houses. That is a possible change. It would be a major change. If people did not throw down litter and had more pride in their cities and motorways, we should not have the problem.

SCOTTISH ISSUES: BACKGROUND

BULL POINTS

MAJOR CURRENT ISSUES

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19. **School Closures**
20. **Farming Problems in North-East**
21. **Fishing Industry**
22. **Primary Health Care**
23. **AIDS in Scotland**
24. **Industrial Action in the NHS**

SCOTTISH ISSUES: BACKGROUND**BULL POINTS ON THE SCOTTISH ECONOMY**

- * Unemployment trend now firmly downward: down over 42,000 in the year to February 1988 and now at its lowest level since April 1983.
- * Recent business and industrial surveys confirm improving prospects in the Scottish economy.
- * Manufacturing productivity in Scotland increased by 5.6% per annum between 1979 and the first half of 1987, compared with 3.9% per annum in the UK as a whole. (Over this period Scottish manufacturing productivity growth was higher than in any of the 7 major OECD economies.)
- * Service sector employment in Scotland increased by over 63,000 between June 1983 and June 1987.
- * The number of self-employed in Scotland increased by 45,000 between June 1981 and June 1987, compared with virtually no change in the 3 decades to 1981.
- * Average weekly earnings for men and women in Scotland (£214.60 and £139.90 respectively in April 1987) are higher than in any other part of the UK except the South East.
- * Inward investment totalling £2.6 billion, planned to create or safeguard some 50,000 jobs, has been attracted since the formation of Locate in Scotland in 1981.
- * The Scottish electronics industry more than trebled its output in real terms over the decade to 1986.
- * The Scottish Development Agency aims to spend some £136m in the current financial year and some £147m next year (£64.2m in 1978-79), and the Highlands and Islands Development Board some £38m this year and some £43m next year (£15.6m in 1978-79).
- * The Scottish Tourist Board is to receive £9m in Government funding this year, rising to £10m next year (£3.5m in 1978-79).
- * The Government's employment and training measures in Scotland currently cover some 118,000 people. Estimated expenditure on the YTS in Scotland is some £100m in the current year.

MAJOR CURRENT ISSUES

1. Regional Policy

[Changes announced to regional policy on 12 January included an end to Regional Development Grant and have led to questions about future spending on regional assistance.]

Line to take: Changes announced will make regional assistance more cost effective. Automatic grants are wasteful of resources. Funds available for regional assistance are not being reduced. Regional Selective Assistance will continue and 2 new grants for small companies in Development Areas are being introduced. Small and medium sized companies will also benefit from the expansion of Government assisted business advisory services, for which rates of support will be higher in Assisted Areas and in some other areas with urban problems.

2. Steel

[The main Scottish steel works are Ravenscraig (an integrated steel plant), the Dalzell plate mill and the Clydesdale tube works. The future of Ravenscraig is the sensitive issue.]

Line to take: The British Steel Corporation have made clear that, subject to market conditions, there will continue to be a commercial requirement for steel-making at Ravenscraig for at least the next 7 years. The Corporation have also undertaken that the hot strip mill at Ravenscraig will continue until at least 1989.

3. Shipbuilding

[There is widespread concern about the future of the Scottish shipbuilding industry in the face of worldwide over-capacity and shortage of orders.]

Line to take: The Government have helped Scottish yards to win orders against international competition. Last year's order for 2 container ships for China was won by Govan shipbuilders with the assistance of a £300 million aid package. Scottish yards are also benefiting from direct Government orders, including MOD contracts for Yarrow's and the ODA contract for the St Helena ferry placed with Hall Russell of Aberdeen.

4. Coal

[The SSEB's decision to tender for coal suppliers after 31 March has caused concern for the future of the Scottish deep-mining industry.]

Line to take: Negotiations over SSEB's coal uptake and the price it is willing to pay are matters for British Coal and the SSEB. The Government cannot intervene in commercial matters of this kind. But glad that progress now appears to be being made in negotiations.

5. Britoil

[The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on 23 February a number of commitments given by BP in relation to their takeover of Britoil. Britoil's present Glasgow office will have responsibility for BP's Norwegian and Irish interests as well as for those in the UK, and BP will transfer to Glasgow responsibility for a high technology R & D programme and will endow research fellowships in Scottish universities and central institutions. Employment levels at the Britoil offices in Glasgow and Aberdeen will be maintained.]

Line to take: The outcome of these negotiations is very satisfactory for Scotland. The commitments made by BP have gone considerably further than their original proposals, and fully recognise the significance of Britoil within the Scottish economy. The proposals to enhance the responsibilities of Britoil's Glasgow office and to transfer R & D activities to Glasgow are evidence of the benefits Scotland can expect to gain from the advent of a multi-national company of the status of BP.

6. Scottish Development Agency

[The SDA is the Government's main instrument of economic regeneration in Scotland. It builds and manages industrial projects, undertakes land renewal, and plays a leading role in urban regeneration, rural development, and support for small firms. Its gross expenditure in the current year is £136 million, and this is expected to rise to £147 million in 1988/89. The Agency's guidelines were reformed by the present Government in 1981 to place greater emphasis on participation with the private sector, with which the Agency now works closely in its various area initiatives. A review in 1986 confirmed the continuing importance of the Agency to Scotland, and more recently the Agency announced plans for a review of its organisational structure and the creation of a network of regional centres.]

Line to take: The increase in the Agency's resources for next year is firm evidence of the Government's continuing commitment to the Agency and its work for Scotland. The planned changes in the Agency's structure will help to bring the Agency closer to its customers and to improve efficiency in the delivery of its services.

7. European Regional Development Fund

[There is concern that under new proposals advanced by the European Commission the Highlands and Islands may lose their access to the European Regional Development Fund, which has substantially assisted development in the region.]

Line to take: The Government believe that the Highlands and Islands have a strong case for retention of their status. They have made representations to the Commission, and will continue to press the issue.

8. Electricity Privatisation

[Proposals for privatisation of the electricity supply industry in Scotland were announced by the Secretary of State for Scotland on Wednesday 2 March. Details are contained in a White Paper ("Privatisation of the Scottish Electricity Industry" (Cmnd No 327) published on the same day. The Secretary of State proposes to create 2 companies based on the present regionally based utilities. This will build on the existing structure of the industry in Scotland and ensure it maintains its distinctive characteristics. While existing Boards are not suitably attractive candidates for privatisation as independent companies in their present form, the Secretary of State has concluded that 2 strong, well-balanced and commercially sound companies capable of independent operation can be established by means of some reallocation of assets between the existing Boards. Both Boards have been invited to consider, in consultation with Government, detailed proposals for achieving this reorganisation.]

Line to take: Privatisation will lead to greater efficiency and benefit customers by providing downward pressure on costs. Monopoly elements of the privatised industry will be regulated to safeguard interests of consumer: legislation will create strong and effective safeguards for the customer on prices and will establish new rights for the consumer and provide for a new system of guaranteed standards of service. It also means that employees, Scottish institutions and members of the public will have the opportunity to acquire a major stake in the ownership of one of our most important industries.

[Why 2 separate companies?]

Line to take The opinions of both Boards and all other interested parties were taken into account by the Secretary of State in forming the decision. Secretary of State concluded it would not be acceptable to create a single monopoly, whether or not involving a regional sub-structure. This would ignore regional diversity of present industry, and require heavy regulatory oversight. Inconsistent with Government's overall objective to maximise the competitive potential and commercial

pressures within the industry, and contrary to the interests of consumers.

[Sharing of nuclear]

Line to take: One of the central principles underlying restructuring will be a sharing of the benefits and costs associated with nuclear assets between 2 companies. All Scottish consumers have contributed to creation of these assets and they should benefit from that investment. Highest safety standards will be maintained.

9. **Devolution: General Assembly**

Line to take: Devolution was not a major issue in the 1987 General Election campaign; and a MORI opinion poll published on 9 March showed that only 7% of those interviewed considered devolution to be among the most important issues facing Scotland.

10. **Government's Mandate in Scotland**

Line to take: Last year's General Election was fought on a UK basis, and arguments that the Government have no mandate in Scotland are illogical. The main Opposition parties all support the unity of the United Kingdom.

11. **Community Charge**

[New system for Scotland will be introduced on 1 April 1989, one year ahead of England and Wales.]

Line to take: The earlier introduction of the community charge in Scotland reflects the experience of the 1985 revaluation which added to serious dissatisfaction with the domestic rating system. Scotland is not a guinea pig, because the English legislation will be on the Statute Book and well on its way to implementation there before the community charge comes into operation in Scotland. If changes are made to the Local Government Finance Bill during its passage through Parliament, the implications of these for Scotland will be considered.

[Criticism that the new system transfers the burden from the rich to the poor, and that a flat-rate charge is intrinsically unfair, and should instead be related to ability to pay.]

Line to take: You forget the unfairness of rates, under which the amount paid bears little relation to the use made of local services. The community charge spreads the same total burden much more widely, over all the adults who use the services. For those on low incomes there will be the protection of the rebate scheme, and the very poorest will have account taken of the minimum contribution (20%) in the level of the income support which they receive. A draft of the regulations on the community charge rebate scheme is now out to consultation with local authority associations.

[Criticism that the new system will be expensive and difficult to administer, and that time is too short for it to be introduced properly by 1 April 1989.]

Line to take: The community charge is well on track for introduction in Scotland on 1 April 1989. Local authorities are making good progress in installing necessary equipment and in working out registration and collection systems. The Secretary of State has provided additional capital allocations for this purpose.

[Campaigns for non-payment.]

Line to take: It is irresponsible for any political party or group to suggest that people should break the law. It would cause hardship for individuals, deny funds to local authorities (so putting jobs at risk) - and would not actually prevent introduction of the new scheme. Current dissension about non-payment among opponents of the community charge is a clear sign of their disarray.

12. Scottish Homes

[Scottish Homes is a proposed new housing development agency, which will incorporate the Housing Corporation in Scotland and the Scottish Special Housing Association (a public sector landlord owning over 80,000 houses and directly financed by the Secretary of State; not a housing association in the usual sense) but will have a wider remit and powers than either of them. It was the subject of a consultation document issued in May 1987 and of final proposals in the White Paper, "Housing: The Government's Proposals for Scotland", published in November 1987. Legislation to establish it is at present in Committee.]

Line to take: Scottish Homes is central to the Government's policies of creating greater diversity in the provision of housing for rent and greater freedom of choice for tenants. As an enabling and funding body

it will work in partnership with existing public landlords, housing associations and the new revitalised private sector. These new partnerships will be particularly important in large rundown council estates, which are Scotland's most pressing urban regeneration problem.

Rents will not rise as a direct consequence of the establishment of Scottish Homes. The rents of its own tenants (inherited from the SSHA) will be determined in very much the same way as at present. More generally, it will be concerned with making Government subsidy available to housing associations and others to enable rents to be set below market levels.

13. Trunk Road Programme

[Ministers have decided to reduce provision for the trunk road programme in 1988-89 by £7.5 million from baseline. This comes at a time when there was already a much larger number of schemes in the programme, likely to be ready for start within the next few years, than could be accommodated. More realistic start dates for schemes have therefore been advised to Regional Councils and to some MPs, causing considerable dissatisfaction.]

Line to take: A much greater number of worthwhile schemes are likely to be ready to start within the next year or two than could possibly be accommodated. As always, priorities have to be decided in the light of the resources available and the competing claims across the whole network. The cases that have been made for particular schemes are always most carefully considered before the programme of starts is decided each year.

14. Scottish Transport Group - Privatisation

[On 27 January the Secretary of State for Scotland announced that he will seek powers at an early opportunity to privatise the Scottish Bus Group. He will be considering future arrangements for Caledonian MacBrayne, which, together with the Scottish Bus Group, forms the Scottish Transport Group.]

Line to take: The Government are convinced that privatisation of the Scottish Bus Group will be beneficial to the industry and to the travelling public in Scotland. In taking decisions about the future of Caledonian MacBrayne, full account will be taken of the Government's commitment to providing shipping services to the islands.

15. Dounreay Inquiry

[The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority and British Nuclear Fuels Limited propose to build a European Demonstration Reprocessing Plant (EDRP) at Dounreay. The proposal has generated considerable public concern, particularly as regards the environmental implications.]

Line to take: The Secretary of State for Scotland has not yet received the report of the public local inquiry into the application to build the plant and it would be inappropriate to make any comment at this stage. Any representations about reopening the inquiry will be duly considered.

16. Land Use in Caithness and Sutherland

[There has been considerable debate in recent months about the relationship between afforestation and nature conservation in Caithness and Sutherland, particularly in the area of peatland known as the "Flow Country". On 25 January the Secretary of State for Scotland announced his interim view that the conservation needs of the area should be secured while at the same time protecting the local economy by allowing further forestry development.]

Line to take: The Government have accepted that a substantial area of the 2 counties requires to be safeguarded through the notification of additional Sites of Special Scientific Interest, within an overall balance between land uses. There is much cause for satisfaction that the various parties to the debate now agree that the needs of conservation and forestry in the area can and should be met in a mutually compatible way. We look to the work of the Highland Regional Council Working Party and other discussions now taking place to establish a detailed framework for permanent arrangements in the longer term.

17. School Management

[In August 1987 the Government issued a consultation document on proposals to establish school boards in Scotland. Some 8,000 submissions were received and revised proposals were published on 18 January. These provide for a school board for every school, with a majority of elected parent members. Boards will be able to take power to control budgets and to select staff. They will not however be able to seek power to control the curriculum, to dismiss staff or to change the character of the school. The School Boards (Scotland) Bill incorporates the revised policy.]

Line to take: The Government have clearly responded to the genuine concerns expressed during the consultation and built on the wide support for the principle of involving parents in the running of their schools. Our proposals will enable boards to evolve as parents wish and at a pace of their own choosing. The refinements made maintain the Secretary of

State's objectives. Boards will be able to take powers in all the areas originally proposed, including management of the budget and selection of staff.

18. Curriculum and Assessment in Scottish Schools

[On 19 November 1987, the Secretary of State for Scotland announced proposals for the development of the curriculum and the improvement of assessment in Scottish schools in a consultation paper entitled Curriculum and Assessment: A Policy for the 90s. Responses to the consultation paper have been invited by Easter 1988.]

Line to take

a. The National Curriculum The programme of clarification and definition is an essential step in ensuring more consistent interpretation and delivery of the curriculum in Scottish schools, and in bridging the gap between primary and secondary schools.

b. Assessment and Testing The aim is to improve the attainment of each child. The testing in key subjects will allow parents and teachers a realistic and objective view of pupils' progress against a national standard.

19. School Closures

[School closures have recently become a very emotive issue in Strathclyde where the Regional Council are undertaking statutory consultations on proposals to close 12 secondary schools and 20 primary schools. A particularly strong campaign developed in support of Paisley Grammar School (an area comprehensive secondary school, not a Grammar School in the English sense). Ministers have made regulations providing that decisions to close schools - such as Paisley Grammar - operating with rolls in excess of 80% of capacity will in future require the consent of the Secretary of State for Scotland.]

Line to take: The Regulations made recently are not directed against a particular authority nor intended to favour a particular school. Their aim is to ensure that the wishes of parents are properly taken into account whenever it is proposed that a popular school should be closed.

20. Farming Problems in North-East Scotland

[Poor weather during 1987 caused problems for arable farmers in parts of Grampian Region, and a recent report has forecast bankruptcies and a possible reduction of up to 20% in farm employment. Ministers have ruled out direct aid to compensate for the effects of the bad weather but have gained the support of the NFU, the Scottish Agricultural Colleges and the

Scottish clearing banks for the setting up of a special counselling initiative for a limited period (3 months) to offer advice to farmers.]

Line to take: The Government are aware that some cereal farmers in parts of North-East Scotland are facing considerable financial difficulties following the poor harvest of 1987. We are not convinced that any general scheme of compensation would be helpful, but we have supported the setting up, for a limited period, of a joint counselling initiative which will offer farmers in Grampian general advice on how they might tackle their problems.

21. Fishing Industry Difficulties

[Worries about future of the industry or sections of it.]

Line to take: The Government have ensured that the Common Fisheries Policy and measures taken under it to conserve stocks and improve structure have been very beneficial to the Scottish fishing industry. The value of landings by Scottish vessels has increased from £114m in 1979 to an estimated £272m in 1987. Earnings have more than doubled in the same period and are reflected in the considerable investment by fishermen in new vessels.

22. Primary Health Care

[The White Paper "Promoting Better Health" published on 25 November 1987 set out the Government's proposals for the future development of primary care services provided by doctors, dentists, community pharmacists, opticians and community nurses. The main features are a greater emphasis on the need for preventative care, on value for money, and on making the primary care services more responsive to the needs and wishes of the consumer. Substantial resources will be needed to finance these proposals, and the Health and Medicines Bill at present before Parliament gives power to levy charges on those who can afford to pay for sight tests and dental examinations.]

Line to take: Our package of proposals gives an exciting opportunity to make our primary care services better still. The patient will receive better services, practitioners will receive a financial reward more closely related to the quality of services provided, and taxpayers will see the available resources used more effectively.

23. AIDS in Scotland

[The AIDS problem in Scotland differs from that in England in that the number of cases of full AIDS is small at present (only 44 cases reported by the end of January 1988), but there are substantial numbers who have been found to have HIV infection. By the end of December 1987, 1,381 people who had chosen to be tested had been found to be seropositive. 57% of the number were intravenous drug misusers (compared with 7% of the total for the rest of the UK) and 27% were women (6% in the rest of the UK).]

Line to take: The high incidence of HIV infection among drug misusers is a matter of particular concern in Scotland. The most recent phase of the Government's AIDS public education campaign, which concentrated on the risk of infection from injecting drugs through the sharing of needles and syringes, was particularly appropriate in the Scottish context. The present stage of the AIDS public education campaign was launched on 17 February and is aimed at the general population.

24. Industrial Action in the NHS

[In December 1987 SHHD wrote to Health Boards instructing them to expose some of their domestic and catering services to competitive tender. Moves by Boards to implement these requirements have led to sporadic industrial action in the major Health Boards covering urban areas since mid-January. On Wednesday 24 February about 25,000 staff throughout the country participated in a national day of action called by the STUC. Small-scale action has continued in the major Boards since then. Effects on patient care have been minimised by management action, but nonetheless there have been examples of hospitals left without adequate cover for certain services. As at 26 February, 2,447 operations have been cancelled because of industrial action, 901 of which arose on 24 February.]

Line to take: The Government deplore this unnecessary action by the Trade Unions. It is affecting patient care in Scotland, both through inadequate levels of cover for certain services and the loss of almost 2,500 operations. The Government's policy of competitive tendering for ancillary services is already providing in England considerable savings which can be used to improve patient care. Therefore the Unions are putting the patients in double jeopardy.

Industry Department for Scotland
March 1988