

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

cc to write

Prime Minister

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

To note. It is intolerable that  
there is this risk of a leak;  
but the trade union members

7 June 1979

of the Board is suspect.

All the more reason for  
the Board and D/Transport  
deciding quickly what  
they want to do with  
the Port of London.

R.S.

Dear Mike

My Minister thought the Prime Minister ought to know at once  
that there is a risk - at the moment a very slight one -  
of the TGWU calling a national docks strike if the Port of  
London Authority's draft Corporate Plan, which revives the  
idea of closing the Upper Docks, leaks to the Unions. 7/6

As you know, the Port of London Authority has been in financial  
difficulties for some time. The previous Government agreed  
last year to make substantial financial support available for  
a massive run-down of labour, on condition that the unions  
co-operated in this and that the PLA drew up a full corporate  
plan for the future. Pending this the PLA were told not to  
go ahead with closure of the Royal Docks, which they had  
themselves regarded as necessary. The Chairman of the PLA  
has just told us that he has today circulated to his Board  
for consideration early next week the first draft of their  
new Corporate Plan, and that this is likely to revive the  
proposal to close at least one of the two Upper Docks. On  
past form, papers put to the Board may well leak to the unions.

When the PLA first talked of closing the Royal Docks, the  
TGWU threatened an official national dock strike, and indeed  
Moss Evans mentioned the union's strong feelings on this  
when he saw the Minister yesterday. The Chairman thinks that  
the threat could be revived as a result of the PLA's draft

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proposals becoming known. The proposals are not likely to be put formally to the Minister until the end of this month and even then he will need another month or so to consider them and consult colleagues before giving the Government's response. Nevertheless he considers, and Department of Employment advise, that there is a slight risk that an official national strike will be called, though it is difficult to forecast how much support this would get. Matters may well not come to a head until we react to the PLA's proposals in August. In the meanwhile he proposes that he should deprecate any premature action by the Unions, if this seems probable, but not otherwise intervene.

I am sending copies of this letter to Ian Fair and to Martin Vile.

*Yours*

*Genie*

MRS E C FLANAGAN  
Private Secretary

C O N F I D E N T I A L

1-7 JUN 1979

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

Tim Lankester Esq  
Private Secretary to  
the Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

15 June 1979

R  
18/6

Dear Tim

Thank you for your letter of 11 June.

There is a trade union official on the Port of London Authority Board. All the evidence is that he has behaved with exemplary discretion, but we cannot absolutely rely on this continuing at a time when the matters under discussion are ones on which the unions feel very deeply and are under great pressure from their members.

On timing, my Minister expects to receive the PLA's proposals by the end of this month and will put his proposals to his colleagues as soon as he has had expert advice on the financial aspects and weighed up the political implications for the Government.

I am sending copies of this letter to Ian Fair (Department of Employment) and to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours

Genie

MRS E C FLANAGAN  
Private Secretary



MS. 1000



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cc Sir H. Berrill  
Mr. Lechevalier  
~~Mr. Mansfield~~

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

CABINET OFFICE 11
A 1361
11 JUN 1979
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. ....

June 1979

The Prime Minister has read your letter of 7 June about the PLA's plans for closing the Upper Docks and the risk that there could be a national dock strike if knowledge of this leaks. She is, of course, most unhappy that there is a risk that the PLA's plans will leak; this implies that the quicker the PLA Board and your Department can decide what should be done the better.

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I am sending copies of this letter to Ian Fair (Department of Employment) and to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

T. P. LANKESTER

Mrs. E. C. Flanagan,  
Department of the Environment.

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done 15/6.

Mr Lankester?

(CF)

pls copy this correspondence to Tans

1. Mr Vile

I remain worried that this correspondence has not been copied to Tsy & Trade. I still remember the effect of the 1966 ~~figures~~ strike on the trade figs & thus on £. Cd we ask No 10 to copy at least to the Chancellor?

2 Mr Whybrow

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cc T. Ross.  
file 10.  
Industrial  
Policy

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

11 June 1979

The Prime Minister has read your letter of 7 June about the PLA's plans for closing the Upper Docks and the risk that there could be a national dock strike if knowledge of this leaks. She is, of course, most unhappy that there is a risk that the PLA's plans will leak; this implies that the quicker the PLA Board and your Department can decide what should be done the better.

I am sending copies of this letter to Ian Fair (Department of Employment) and to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

J. P. LANKESTER

Mrs. E. C. Flanagan,  
Department of the Environment.

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