

SP



CF
Rpa

Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1H 9NF

Telephone Direct Line 01-213.....6400
Switchboard 01-213 3000

Michael Scholar Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

9 February 1983

Dear Michael

You sent me on 4 February a letter from Mr Cottam of the GMBATU about the Government's refusal to accept a mediator's recommendation in the Royal Dock Yards, comparing that with the position in the water industry. It would not be helpful, and Mr Cottam does not expect, a comment on the water industry. Geoffrey Pattie's office have agreed to reply on the position in the Royal Dock Yards. As a second rank trade union official Mr Cottam will not be surprised to have his letter treated in this way. Could you reply to him by saying that you have asked Geoffrey Pattie to answer his letter?

Yes
1
no need
to reply further
MS 2/2

Yours sincerely
Barabry Shaw

J B SHAW
Principal Private
Secretary

F.W. COTTAM

B



9/2

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 February 1983

I attach a copy of a letter the Prime Minister has received from Mr. F.W. Cottam of the GMWU. Mr. Cottam finds an inconsistency between the Prime Minister's remarks about the mediator in the water industry dispute, and Lord Trenchard's recent letter to Mr. Cottam, in which he rejected a mediator's recommendation in respect of a dispute in the Royal Dockyards.

I would be grateful if you would let me have a draft reply for the Prime Minister's signature by Wednesday 9 February.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Edmonds (DOE) and Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

M. C. SCHOLAR

Barnaby Shaw, Esq.,
Department of Employment.

la



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 February 1983

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 31 January. This is receiving attention and a reply will be sent to you as soon as possible.

M. C. SCHOLAR

F.W. Cottam, Esq.

ds



General and Municipal Workers' Union

Incorporating MATSA

General Secretary: DAVID BASNETT

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister (2)

We will let you have a draft reply



Thorne House Ruxley Ridge Claygate Esher Surrey KT10 0TL
Telex: 27428 Telegrams: Unitude Esher
Telephone: Esher 62081

Your Ref:

Our Ref: FWC/CR..03136

MUS 3/2

B m

The Rt. Hon. Mrs M Thatcher, MP
Prime Minister
No.10 Downing Street
London SW1

31 January 1983

(rec'd 3 Feb)

Dear Prime Minister

I have noted with interest your recent remarks, widely reported in the media, on the acceptance (or rejection) of the Mediator's Report in the current Water Industry dispute.

I would not wish to comment on that particular dispute since it falls into the area of responsibility of other National Union Officials. However, I cannot help but compare your views on the subject of mediators' recommendations with those of your recently departed Minister of State for Defence and I attach a copy of Lord Trenchard's recent letter to me signifying his rejection of a Mediator's recommendation in respect of a dispute in the Royal Dockyards, when the Government insisted on a mediation and agreed the mediator, as a means of bringing industrial action to an end and resolving a dispute.

Is it that the Government applies different standards in its dealings with its own employees than those it expects others to apply? Or, can we take it that Trenchard's departure was the result of a fundamental disagreement with yourself on what you obviously consider to be an important point of principle?

In any case, in view of your recent statement can we now take it that you will reverse the Defence Minister's decision and apply the Mediator's recommendations in respect of our members employed as Qualified Assistant Painters in the Royal Dockyards?

Yours sincerely

F W Cottam
National Industrial Officer

att:



Minister of State
for Defence Procurement

D/MIN/TT/22/2

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB
Telephone 01-218 6621 (Direct Dialling)
01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

5 January 1983

Dear Mr Cottam

QUALIFIED ASSISTANT PAINTERS

Following our meeting on 25th November, I am now in a position to write to you in relation to the above.

I realise that in deciding that we could not accept the recommendation of the mediator in this case we were bound to be criticised by you and your members. However, as I pointed out at our meeting, we are not on a compulsory arbitration basis and mediation is designed to try to bring two parties together. It does not always succeed. Before deciding that we could not accept the mediator's proposals for such large increases in banding we examined the arguments with which the mediator supported the recommendations, and I am afraid we felt that they did not answer the arguments which officials have put to you in the past and which I covered during our meeting.

In our view to raise the banding to the degree that the mediator proposed would produce an unbalanced result and, indeed, an inequitable result in relation both to

/ craft ...

F W Cottam Esq.,

craft grades and to other non-craft areas. Qualified assistant painters have already received significant increases in pay in recent years. I find that they moved from Band 6 to Band 10 in 1975 in order to recognise the added work content up to that time. In the Official Side's proposal they are now being offered Band 12 for work which has remained effectively unchanged since 1975. In addition under the Official Side's proposals, up to 20% of the combined group of qualified assistant painters, metallisers and shotblasters who are able to undertake all three tasks are being offered Band 14, notwithstanding the normal rule that the basic pay of a combined job should not be higher than the highest paid element in it. You will be aware that the flexible aspects, including the use of such aids as mobile platforms, are covered already by the Dockyard Efficiency Scheme.

Returning to our basic point that to concede the mediator's recommendations would be to upset the relationship of qualified assistant painters as compared with other categories; if we look at painting work first, this ranges from simple surface preparation and rough brush work at Band 2, to highly skilled painting carried out by craftsmen. Within this spectrum the non-craft groups associated with painting, with quite limited on-the-job training and a relatively simple proficiency test, are able to progress from Band 2 to Band 10 in a short period of three years, whereas a craftsman painter has to complete a four-year apprenticeship. The mediator's proposals would put some 500 non-craft workers associated with painting at 95% of the craft rate. I really do not believe that you can justify this bearing in mind the different requirements in knowledge and skill between craft and non-craft painters.

To look more broadly at other non-craft grades leads one to find that less than 3% of all non-craft grades are

/ in ...

in pay Bands 16 and above. Looking at the full range of jobs covered I again cannot believe that you can justify moving the qualified assistant painters to this level. It is the view of all of those who are knowledgeable in this area that such a move would put these categories out of relation with many of their colleagues doing work of equal or greater requirements and importance.

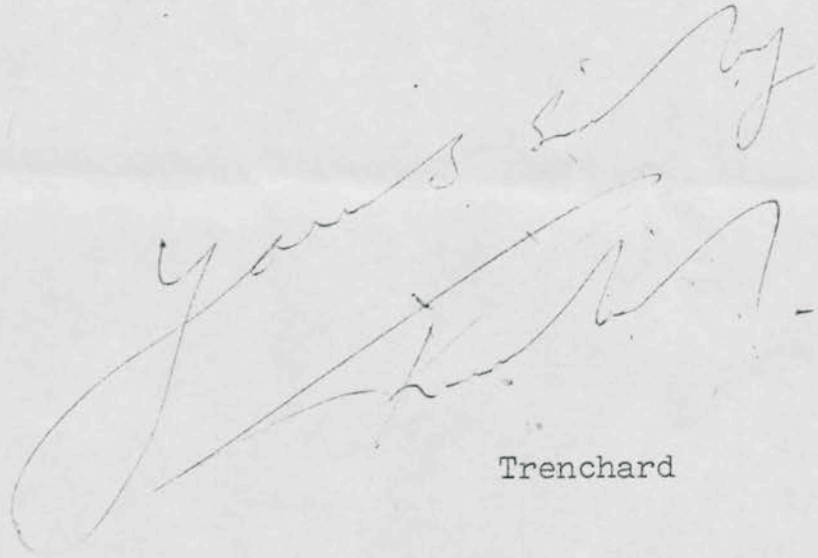
I asked you to consider when we met that it clearly would not be our desire to refuse a mediator's recommendations and we would much rather have not done so, but in view of the position of which I have been advised both before our meeting and since, I believe that the difficult decision we have taken was fully justified. I take the opportunity to confirm that what we are prepared to offer is as follows:

- a. Qualified assistant painters who have achieved the correct level of experience and proficiency to be paid at Band 12.
- b. Metallisers to continue to be paid at Band 12.
- c. Shotblasters to be paid at Band 12.
- d. Qualified assistant painters, shotblasters and metallisers, after appropriate training to undertake work in all these fields, to be paid at Band 14 subject to the numbers not exceeding 20% of the total number in the three groups in any one Dockyard.

I very much hope that you will feel able to accept the offer and end this dispute. As this has been a

/ longstanding ...

longstanding claim on the STJC a copy will be sent to all your colleagues on the Council in accordance with normal practice.

Yours sincerely


Trenchard