



Environmental Affairs: JWP
C. D'Env.
D'Id
D'Enqy.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

12 October 1981

In the absence of the Prime Minister in Blackpool, I am writing on her behalf to acknowledge your letter of 9 October about the publication of the Eighth Report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution.

I will bring this to her attention as soon as she returns, and I know that she will be grateful for this advance notice. I am sure she will agree that this Report prepared by the Commission under your Chairmanship will be of great value to the Government in dealing with the many aspects of marine oil pollution, and would want me to say once again how grateful she is for all the work you have done as Chairman of the Commission.

W. F. S. RICKETT

Professor Sir Hans Kornberg, FRS

W.F.S.



BE a RT 200
cc Press Office

**Royal Commission
on Environmental Pollution**

Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BL

Your reference

Direct line 01-212
Switchboard 01-212 3434

Our reference RC/91/2

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

9 October 1981

Dear Prime Minister,
PA

10/10

I am writing to inform you that the Royal Commission's Eighth Report is to be published on 21 October 1981. The Home Secretary is making arrangements to present the Report to Her Majesty and to lay it before Parliament.

The Report deals with oil pollution of the sea. The Commission investigated this subject at the request of the previous Government; the request reflected concern about the environmental threat posed by tanker accidents off UK coasts (prompted, in particular, by the Amoco Cadiz disaster of March 1978) and about the adequacy of the arrangements made to deal with such emergencies. We recognised at the start that the problem of large accidental spillages must be seen in perspective; while such spills are dramatic in their effects, a much greater total quantity of oil reaches the sea from routine discharges. Accordingly, the terms of reference for our study required us to consider the effects of routine, as well as accidental, discharges and the means available for controlling such discharges.

Our study thus covers a wide field. The main topics we considered, and our main conclusions, are as follows:-

- (i) The effects of marine oil pollution. Although oil has adverse effects on many marine organisms, we conclude that oil spills are unlikely to cause any long-lasting damage to the marine environment; and that oil pollution generally does not constitute a chronic threat to the marine ecosystem or, indirectly, to man. However, major spills can cause serious local damage, especially to amenity, fisheries and seabirds.
- (ii) Discharges from land-based sources. Most oil reaching the sea comes from such sources. We are broadly satisfied with the controls that apply to these discharges although we again stress the importance we attach to implementation of Part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

- (iii) Offshore oil developments. Our chief concern is with the risk of accidental spillages (especially from "blow-outs") at oil installations close to the shore. We consider that there may be areas where oil exploration and production should not be permitted on environmental grounds and we recommend improved arrangements for consultation to identify such areas. We also recommend that licensees should provide environmental impact studies for oil production operations near the coast. The contingency arrangements for dealing with spills at such sites should be reconsidered.
- (iv) Tanker accidents. The prevention of tanker accidents is of first importance; measures to this end call generally for international agreement. However, we consider that in some circumstances regional action would be justified to impose standards in advance of full international agreement. We attach importance to collective action by West European States (especially through the exercise of port state powers) to deal with the problem of sub-standard tankers. We recommend that the Government take immediate action to extend the UK territorial limit to 12 miles. We are concerned about the state of hydrographic survey of waters round the UK in relation to the needs of large tankers and we recommend increased resources for such surveys as a matter of urgency. We are not satisfied about the adequacy of current arrangements for intervention to deal with a casualty at sea that threatens serious pollution and we recommend that these be reconsidered.
- (v) Discharges from vessels during operations. Deliberate and illegal discharges are a major cause of coastal pollution and of seabird mortality; there are great difficulties in the enforcement of the relevant international standards. We stress the importance of adequate port reception facilities for oily wastes. We conclude that round-the-clock aerial surveillance to detect illegal discharges would not be cost effective but that use of this technique should be kept under review, especially in the context of co-operative arrangements between West European States. Further consideration should be given to the possibility of provisions in UK law to facilitate proceedings in respect of offences by foreign ships.
- (vi) Dealing with oil spills. Major oil spillages are bound to occur and contingency arrangements are needed to deal with them. We conclude that the present arrangements will not ensure the rapid and expert action that is essential; the response to a major spill should be conducted as a single co-ordinated operation, embracing action at sea, in in-shore waters, and on the land.

We consider that for such emergencies central Government (acting through a suitably strengthened Marine Pollution Control Unit within the Department of Trade) should assume control of counter-pollution operations as a whole, and that statutory powers would be needed to support the Unit in this role. A corollary of our proposal is that the Government should initially meet the exceptional costs of dealing with such accidents, pending compensation through the established machinery. Policy regarding the use of dispersants to treat oil at sea requires review; there has been a misplaced emphasis on the effectiveness of these chemicals. More attention needs to be given to techniques for dealing with oil on the shore and to the problem of disposal of oily wastes.

As you noted in your very kind letter to me of 29th June, my term of office as Chairman of the Royal Commission has now ended. I trust that this second report prepared by the Commission under my chairmanship will be of value to the Government in dealing with the many aspects of the problem of marine oil pollution.

Sincerely yours

Frank. Komberg

From Professor Sir Hans Kornberg FRS

Environmental Affairs



**Royal Commission
on Environmental Pollution**

Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BL

Your reference

Our reference

RC/91/2

Direct line 01-212 8710
Switchboard 01-212 3434

21 October 1981

Dear Prime Minister,

I wrote to you earlier this month to give you the main findings of the Commission's study of oil pollution of the sea. The Eighth Report, that records these findings, has now been published and I have pleasure in sending you a copy of it.

Kind regards

Sincerely yours

H.S. Kornberg

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1



wn
w/m

**Royal Commission
on Environmental Pollution**

Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BL

Your reference

Our reference RC/91/2

Direct line 01-212 5600

Switchboard 01-212 3434

20 October 1981

Dear Mr Whitmore

... I enclose in advance of publication at 10.00 a.m. tomorrow, Wednesday 21 October, a copy of the "Confidential - Final Revise" of the Commission's Eighth Report, as laid before Parliament today and issued under "embargo" to lobby correspondents.

... Copies of the "Confidential - Final Revise" are also being sent today to those on the attached list.

Yours sincerely

T E RADICE
Secretary

C A Whitmore Esq
Principal Private Secretary
to the Prime Minister
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

C A Whitmore Esq
Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
No 10 Downing Street
London SW1

J Buckley Esq
Principal Private Secretary to the Lord President of the Council
Privy Counsel Office
Whitehall
London SW1A 2AT

S Hampson Esq
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon John Biffen MP
Secretary of State for Trade
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Miss A U Wilcocks
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon Iain Sproat MP
Under Secretary of State for Trade
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

J Phillips Esq
Private Secretary to
Sir Kenneth Clucas KCB
Permanent Secretary
Department of Trade
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

D N Byrne Esq
Under Secretary
Marine Division
Department of Trade
Sunley House
90 - 93 High Holborn
London WC1V 6LP

Rear Admiral M L Stacey CB
Director
Marine Pollution Control Unit
Sunley House
90 - 93 High Holborn
London WC1V 6LP

A C Hutton Esq
Assistant Secretary
Marine Division
Department of Trade
Sunley House
90 - 93 High Holborn
London WC1V 6LP

Dr J Cowley
Surveyor General
Marine Survey Service
Department of Trade
Sunley House
90 - 93 High Holborn
London WC1V 6LP

D A Edmonds Esq
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

P J Cash Esq
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon Tom King MP
Minister for Local Government & Environmental Services
The Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

Miss S Booth
Private Secretary to
G W Moseley Esq CB
Permanent Secretary
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

R Ryder Esq
Private Secretary to
P J Harrop Esq CB
Second Permanent Secretary
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

Dr M W Holdgate
Chief Scientist & Director General of Research
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London SW1 3EB

J P G Rowcliffe Esq
Under Secretary
Central Directorate on Environmental Pollution
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

F Kendall Esq
Assistant Secretary
Central Directorate on Environmental Pollution
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

J D West Esq
Principal Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon Nigel Lawson MP
Secretary of State for Energy
Thames House South
Millbank
London SW1P 4QJ

Miss M E McKinlay
Private Secretary to
Hamish Gray MP
Minister of State for Energy
Thames House South
Millbank
London SW1P 4QJ

C J C Wright Esq
Private Secretary to
Sir Donald Maitland CCMG OBE
Permanent Under Secretary of State
Department of Energy
Thames House South
Millbank
London SW1P 4QJ

Dr F R Heathcote
Assistant Secretary
Petroleum Engineering Division
Department of Energy
Thames House South
Millbank
London SW1P 4QJ

A D Read Esq
Principal Scientific Officer
Petroleum Engineering Division
Department of Energy
Thames House South
Millbank
London SW1P 4QJ

Miss V K Timms
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon Peter Walker MBE MP
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food
Whitehall Place
London SW1A 2HH

Mrs K Brock
Private Secretary to
Sir Brian Hayes KCB
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food
Whitehall Place
London SW1A 2AH

H R Nelson Esq
Fisheries Division T
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food
Great Westminster House
Horseferry Road
London SW1P 2AE

A Preston Esq BSc
Director of Fisheries Research
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food
Great Westminster House
Horseferry Road
London SW1P 2AE

P C Wood Esq BSc
Officer in Charge
Fisheries Laboratory
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food
Remembrance Avenue
Burnham-on-Crouch
Essex CM0 8HA

G Robson Esq
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon George Younger MP
Secretary of State for Scotland
Scottish Office
New St Andrew's House
St James Centre
Edinburgh EH1 3SX

D A Campbell Esq
Assistant Secretary
Scottish Development Department
Pentland House
47 Robbs Loan
Edinburgh EH14 1TY

Mrs J Jones
Private Secretary to
J I Smith Esq CB
Department of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland
London Office
Dover House
Whitehall
London SW1A 2AU

A J Rushworth Esq
Private Secretary to
Sir William Fraser KCB
Permanent Under Secretary of State
Scottish Office
New St Andrew's House
St James Centre
Edinburgh EH1 3SX

J Cormack Esq
Fisheries Secretary
Department of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland
Chesser House
500 Gorgie Road
Edinburgh EH11 3AW

B B Parish Esq CBE
Director
Department of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland
Marine Laboratory
PO Box 101
Victoria Road
Torry
Aberdeen AB9 8DB

J F Craig Esq
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP
Secretary of State for Wales
Welsh Office
Gwydyr House
Whitehall
London SW1A 2ER

S H Martin Esq
Private Secretary to
Trevor P Hughes Esq CB
Permanent Secretary
Welsh Office
Gwydyr House
Whitehall
London SW1A 2ER

J N Sheppard Esq
Assistant Secretary
Welsh Office
Pearl Assurance House
Greyfriars Road
Cardiff CF1 3RT

R A Harrington Esq
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon James Prior
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Office
Great George Street
London SW1P 3AJ

B M Norbury Esq
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon John Nott MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB

R C Mottram Esq
Private Secretary to
Sir Frank Cooper GCB CMG
Permanent Under Secretary of State
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB

R J E Abraham Esq
Head of Defence Secretariat 16
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB

Dr A J Robinson
Director
Department of Industry
Warren Spring Laboratory
Gunnels Wood Road
Stevenage
Herts SG1 2BX

J F Neve Esq
Private Secretary to
Sir Peter Carey KCB
Permanent Secretary
Department of Industry
Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6RB

I K C Ellison Esq
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for Industry
Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6RB