

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Coalite Group Limited

STRICTLY PERSONAL

26th April, 1982

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,  
Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
London SW1.

*Prime Minister*

*I have replied*

*APR 27/82*

*Dear Prime Minister*

Thank you for your letter of 22nd April. It was my pleasure to call on 15th April and I greatly appreciated your time and sympathetic hearing for what I had to say.

I fully understand the indication that messages conveyed to the Islanders, whether referring to our own employees or not, have to rest on private initiative. I have to hope that, as intended, they will prove helpful and be supported if the need arises.

As you say, most of the Stanley population have moved out to Camp, apparently leaving less than one hundred and fifty in Stanley. Recent television interviews have suggested that the whole population is pushing to get out. That has not been the impression I have been receiving and I therefore pursued the subject again in a telex conversation yesterday (Sunday). I am attaching copy of the telex exchange, from which you will see that our (English) Manager in Stanley and his (local born) Secretary expressed the view that "most who are left will stick it out", and that our (English) Manager in Darwin also still holds that opinion. Of course their views might change with circumstances and, as you say, there are no means of getting a wholly free and collective view on this and other issues under present conditions.

I agree that there must be doubts about permission for a general evacuation but the spontaneous replies from Stanley as late as yesterday were still indicating that flights are still available to those who wish to leave and it is to be hoped that door will remain ajar. I was notified on Friday that there would be another flight out on Tuesday.

I was delighted to see and hear the messages on your behalf that anyone wishing to leave should not be deterred by financial considerations. From a public relations point of view, even appreciating reservations about precedents creating problems elsewhere, I would like to suggest that the Foreign

/Office could be



Office could be a little more forthcoming regarding the help they are prepared to give to the people coming out through Montivideo. I feel quite sure that the financial interests of the Islanders will be taken care of in the long run but their short-term anxieties regarding money are illustrated in the attached copy of a telex exchange on Saturday, 24th April, which followed several previous indications given that money considerations should not stand in the way of Islanders wanting to leave temporarily.

With due deference, I would question the advice you have received that most of those who have left have been deported but I mention that only in the interests of factual correctness.

Most of the people who have come out were not indigenous and have homes and close relatives here, so there have probably been no problems of accommodation. Any real exodus would evidently be a different matter. We would certainly wish to play our part in providing and raising help towards their needs and I have no doubt that your indication of full and sympathetic assistance will mean just that if and when the need arises. As indicated earlier, the present signs are that it is unlikely in the immediate future at least.

As far as general conditions on the Islands are concerned, there have been no indications so far regarding any shortage of provisions but internal communications are limited. Supplies to the West Island are now dependent on the Argentines but a message received 23rd April indicated that they had agreed to get supplies to any settlement in need.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to convey to you direct what information we are receiving on the views of the remaining Islanders and the conditions there. Your determination to stand by them is fully understood and greatly appreciated, not only here but also on the Islands. We have every confidence you will get it right.

I must apologise for writing at length when time available is so limited.

Yours Sincerely  
Fred Sedman

P.S. Since dictating the above, I have been able to have a further exchange with the Islands today, which was a great relief. So that you have the flavour of their comments, I am attaching copy of the whole exchange.

F.S.