

PRIME MINISTER

cc: Mr. Gow
Miss Stephens

Jm
~~SM~~
Dr. David Clark seeks a fifth closure meeting. His request is based on the announcement made by F. C. Lowe and Son, a South Shields pet food firm, that they are closing a factory in South Shields, with the loss of 100 jobs.

I know that you have said that you are always willing to see Members on closures, but you have already seen David Clark four times, and I am not sure there is much more you can say to him. In fact, I think he mentioned the possibility of this particular closure at your last meeting.

- Would you like me to commission from the Department of Industry a draft letter, setting out the rationale behind this company's decision, and saying that you are not sure there would be much to be gained by yet another meeting?

Or

- Do you wish to see Dr. Clark again?

| *mark*
mt

LM

Peggy Kone

X 2378
lan word

24 November 1982

CF



AM

10 DOWNING STREET

I am sure Dr. Clark will comply if he can, so please go ahead and request briefing.

With the compliments of

CAROLINE STEPHENS



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

26 November 1982

I tried to contact you on the telephone today to suggest Tuesday 7 December at 1615 for a meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss the closure of F.C. Lowe and Son in your constituency. Mrs. Peggy Fenner will attend the meeting and it will take place in the Prime Minister's room at the House.

Could you kindly ring me on 930-4433 next week to confirm that this time is convenient.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

Dr. David Clark, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

22 November 1982

Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
10 Downing Street
London W1

mt (23)

Dear Prime Minister

I am enclosing a news report from the Shields Gazette of 20 November announcing yet another factory closure in South Shields.

From our previous meetings I think you realise the seriousness of the situation in the town but I would once again like to avail myself of your offer to meet any MP who suffers a factory closure.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Clark".

Dr David Clark MP

Enc.

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Mr Gilbert McMillan at his fireplace that caused the gas alarm

Gas trap as fire falls from a wall

A SOUTH SHIELDS woman arrived home from the shops to find her house full of gas and her pet poodle nearly unconscious from the fumes.

Her husband, shotblaster Gilbert McMillan, said: "We're just lucky the whole place didn't blow up. Someone could have been killed."

He said a gas fire in the living room of his home at Hyde Street "just fell off the wall, snapping the main pipe to the fire" while his wife Miriam was out.

Mr McMillan, 32, said it was a "miracle" there had

not been an explosion "because Miriam turned the fire on low to heat the house while she was out."

When the unit fell forward it scorched a hole in our carpet, and if there had been actual flames anything could have happened.

As it was the gas fumes were so strong that our neighbour next door smelled them, got scared and telephoned the Gas Board. One of the Gas Board workers said the fire fell because it hadn't been fitted to the wall properly."

Returning from the shops and opening her front door, Mrs McMillan was met by "a horrible, strong smell of gas."

"Then our pet poodle, Candy, fell outside. The poor thing was nearly unconscious," she said.

IN YOUR GAZETTE

NEXT WEEK

A star interview with South Shields - born opera singer **Anne-Marie Owens**

the girl who's hooked on Rock - in **MONDAY'S Gazette**

— and don't forget Miss Owens is the star of the **Gazette Concert** at the Marine and Technical College on Tuesday.

House hit by gales

GALE force winds forced a South Shields man and his pregnant wife from their home last night only weeks before she is due to give birth.

Severe gusts caused gaping cracks to split the gable wall of the home belonging to Wayne and Denise Hayes at Roman Road.

Electrician Wayne, 25, told the Gazette today: "I was sitting with the television on while Denise made some supper."

"I was thinking about how heavily the winds were blowing, when I heard a loud scraping sound on the landing."

Rushing out of the room he was "shocked" to see wide cracks around the outside of the wall.

He telephoned the police who contacted a surveyor. And after checking damage the surveyor advised Wayne and his wife, who is seven months pregnant, to stay with friends for the night.

"It would be horrible if we had to move permanently, because I'm in the middle of renovating the place, and we've already spent more than £200 to get it the way we like," he added.

A spokesman for the weather office at Newcastle said gusts of wind last night reached gale force nine in Tyne and Wear.

100 JOBS IN SHOCK CLOSURE

A SOUTH SHIELDS pet food firm — which holds the Royal Warrant — has closed with the loss of about 100 jobs. The mainly female workforce of F. C. Lowe and Son were told of the closure of the Rutland Street factory yesterday afternoon. They were given the shock news at a meeting after they returned from lunch.

South Shields MP, Dr David Clark, and a union official say, they are "shocked" by the suddenness of the decision.

Dr Clark is now to seek a meeting with the Prime Minister over the redundancies at F. C. Lowe and other firms in the area.

The redundancies are the latest to hit South Tyneside where thousands of jobs have been lost this year.

The firm's parent company, Luda Meaties, decided upon the closure of the South Shields factory as part of a rationalisation scheme.

Under the scheme, production is to be switched to the firm's

By JIM COLLINS

plant at Louth, Lincolnshire.

In July, the company announced 25 redundancies at its South Shields plant which manufactured dog biscuits and meal.

A worker at the factory said today they were told of the closure at a meeting at about 2 p.m.

"We didn't expect anything like this. We have been very busy and there was a lot of overtime. All of the girls have been working overtime recently."

"Everybody was very shocked. I feel sorry for the young girls who worked here," she said.

Mr John Allison, area organiser of the main union

at the plant, the Union of Shopworkers, Distributive and Allied Workers, said he was shocked by the decision.

"It was just thrust upon my members. All I know is that the firm has been trying to stay profitable for some time."

"It is a great shock at this time of the year, just before Christmas."

Mr Allison said he would probably be having a meeting with shop stewards from the firm next week.

In a statement the firm said: "The move follows an in-depth survey of the group's operations in terms of production, distribution and administration which highlighted the high cost element of operating two factories undertaking similar functions 200 miles apart."

Referring to the job losses, Mr S. E. H. Brook, group chairman, said: "This is the most regrettable part of the operation, but in a market where to be viable one has to continuously strive for reduced operating costs, we recognise that it is essential for this group to have all the manufacturing operations on one site."

Following the announcement of the redundancies in July, a spokesman for the firm said they had sufficient orders to carry on production and there was

Sea union boss angry

A SOUTH Shields - based National Union of Seamen official has lashed out at the Ministry of Defence for chartering foreign ships to run supplies to the Falklands when there are hundreds of British seamen in the area unemployed.

Mr Jim Woods, Northern area secretary of the NUS said there had been three instances in the past three months of foreign vessels, one Dane, one Norwegian and one Swede, being used

to ferry supplies from the Tees to the Falklands, writes Richard Capstick.

"Now a Swedish vessel has been chartered in a £400,000 deal to take Portacabins to the South Atlantic. I am disgusted at this when there are so many British ships and British seamen laid up."

Mr Woods said news of the Swedish charter came particularly hard in a week when a 26,000 tonne British bulk carrier, the Lord Curzon came to the Tyne

to lay - up, making her crew of 30 idle.

"They will be on the dole for a long time, will those men," said Mr Woods.

Now Mr Woods is advising his members to write to their MPs to protest about foreign ships being used to carry supplies to the Falklands.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence said as a general policy British ships were used.

Turn to Page Two

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