



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

24 December 1982

Dear Mr. Marshall,

Thank you for your letter of 19 December. I quite understand your concern about the possible closure of Thornhills factory at Stainforth. I will look into this, and my Office will be in touch about a meeting after the Recess.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Dr. Edmund Marshall, M.P.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

19 December 1982

Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London, SW1.

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Dear Prime Minister,

I am afraid that proposals have been recently announced for another factory closure in my constituency, this time at the chicken processing factory in Briars Lane, Stainforth, near Doncaster, which is owned by Thornhill Limited, of Great Longstone, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE4 1TD (Tel: 062-987-351). The managing director of Thornhill is Mr. John W. Thornhill, and I understand that the firm is half-owned by the Vesty Organisation.

The main reason given by Thornhills for announcing the Stainforth closure is over-capacity in the chicken processing industry nationally, and indeed throughout Europe. Too many processed whole chickens are now being left in cold storage, and the firm is running into cash flow problems. The position has not been helped by the recent decision in the European Court of Justice that the United Kingdom cannot ban chicken imports from other EEC countries, which has led Peter Walker to announce the lifting of our previous ban on French and Dutch chicken imports.

I am not convinced, however, that over-capacity is the problem facing Stainforth, which concentrates almost entirely on the preparation of chicken portions for retail supermarket counters, rather than whole birds. Indeed, Thornhills plan, as part of their closure proposal, to transfer much of the work now undertaken at Stainforth to their other factory at Great Longstone, which is apparently being extended for this purpose. Great Longstone is too far from Stainforth, and the journey too inconvenient, for employees at Stainforth easily to commute to Great Longstone each day. Most of them are married women who live near the Stainforth factory.

Consequently I think the position of Thornhills at Stainforth needs thorough investigation, particularly to see what help might be given by Government departments or agencies to preserve jobs there. In line with your general undertaking to investigate all factory closure proposals, may I therefore ask that your good offices be used to look into this particular situation, and that we have a meeting during January to discuss your findings.

My home telephone number, at which I shall be able to be contacted for most of the recess, is 0924-378360, and I look forward to hearing from your office about this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Edmund Marshall

Dr. Edmund Marshall MP