



He

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

15 March 1984

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 9 March.

Should you wish, as you suggest, to let the Prime Minister have a further letter about your experience in dealing with matters such as immigration and exploratory and commercial fishing, the Prime Minister will be glad to read your account. In the light of this, perhaps we could look again at your request for a meeting with the Prime Minister.

JC

C.E. Needham, Esq.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'C.E. Needham'.

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Needham of the Coalite Group has written to ask whether you will receive him to talk about the Falkland Islands. I had a good deal of contact with him during the Falklands crisis and do not think he rates the claim on your time. I therefore propose to take up his alternative offer and ask him to write about the problems he says that he has been having in Whitehall when trying to discuss immigration to the Falklands and commercial fishing. Agree?

A. & C.

Yes - but should  
~~not~~  
like to see him  
as well  
not.

14 March 1984

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

CF: PPS POC D

14/3

CF. have papers re FALKLANDS



Coalite Group PLC

PERSONAL

9th March, 1984

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher,  
Prime Minister,  
10, Downing Street,  
London S.W.1.

R12

Dear Prime Minister

Having persuaded Eric Varley to leave politics for industry, I accept my full share of responsibility for the fact that Mr. Benn is now back in the House to represent Chesterfield. I view that with mixed feelings but hope that he will continue true to form and produce a balance of advantage in the right direction for the near future and for the next election.

Before leaving that subject, the people of Bolsover and Chesterfield, where I have spent my whole life, really are very different in temperament and attitudes from nearby South Yorkshire and are therefore particularly unfortunate regarding the images now projected for them at Westminster.

pk.32 | May I now turn briefly to my main concern which is the Falkland Islands. As you suggested in your last reply on this subject, I have worked with Cranley Onslow and the successive F.C.O. and O.D.A. people and have met Janet Young a couple of times since she took over. However, apart from dealing with the Unions in the mid 1970's, I don't think I have ever felt such a degree of exasperation, with so little progress for so much effort. Before the war, my own view of the top three priorities for the Islands were the airfield, an influx of new people and commercial fishing to bolster the fragile economy. That view has not changed. The airfield has made marvellous progress because it has had the advantage of your personal determination and the decision making after that has been with M.O.D. alone. My mental analogy on other significant matters, with so many parties involved, is that of trying to swim through treacle. If you so wish, I will gladly set out my detailed experiences on matters such as immigration and exploratory and commercial fishing, on both of which I have tried to take the initiative. But if you could possibly spare the time, I would appreciate enormously an opportunity for an informal chat with you on so many aspects of the Falkland Islands. May I just say that I was delighted to see your initial approach to Sr. Alfonsin and what appear to have been encouraging responses. It is to be hoped that his administration will survive and flourish.

/As I write to you

As I write to you, I see we have a few miners pickets assembling at the Office entrance in connection with our proposed closure next week of the Randolph Coke-Oven plant in Durham, which we acquired and saved from bankruptcy three years ago. The simple facts of the position are that coke-making in the U.K. is un-competitive in world markets and private production cannot compete at home against loss-making production from the nationalised industry, which itself has much surplus coking capacity and will soon have to close coking plants as well as collieries.

I do hope, as no doubt you will, that Ian McGregor will be able to foil Scargill in his determined attempts to engineer a national miners strike without a ballot but the signs are not particularly encouraging. It is a possibility for which we have all been preparing as best we can but would be a battle which the Government and the Industry could both well do without at this juncture. The long term damage would be incalculable.

It is notable at present that you are receiving even more advice in public than usual, from all sorts of quarters. I hope and feel sure that they will not persuade you to depart from your determined stance on the policies needed to repair the damage of the 1970's, along which road you have already brought us a long way. The lessons take much longer to learn throughout the public sector, however, but the facts of life are gradually getting home and the populace at large has shown that they know you are on the right track and want you to succeed.

With Best Wishes,  
Yours Sincerely  
C. E. Needham

C. E. Needham

ALY  
LEWIS  
PL-36