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NBpm
AT 6/3FCS/84/71SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENTNational Dock Labour Board Scheme

1. I think I mentioned to you that when I visited Fleetwood the other day I received very strong representations about the harmful effects of the NDLB scheme on the fishing industry. I confess that I was a little surprised to find that the scheme applied to the fishing industry as well as to the more general activities of the port.
2. As far as Fleetwood is concerned, I understand that they have secured a degree of temporary relief by appealing the matter through the courts. But they were not very confident of being able to hold the line in this way; and it was pointed out to me that the scheme is in any case applying with full force at Hull and Aberdeen - and other fishing ports too, for all I know - to the very serious detriment of the fishing industry there.
3. This is of course a question for you and for Nicholas Ridley, but I thought it right to record what seemed to me an important point made by the fishing industry. There are of course also wider considerations, including those affecting the PLA, which point towards the abolition of the scheme.
4. I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Transport.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
6 March, 1984

16 MAR 1984





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The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Whitehall
LONDON SW1

22 March 1984

Dear Foreign Secretary,

Thank you for your minute of 6 March about the Dock Labour Scheme and its application to fishing ports.

There have been a number of Industrial Tribunal decisions which have now significantly reduced the involvement of Scheme registered dock workers in the landing of fish. Only in Aberdeen is it true that virtually all fish have to be landed by registered dock workers. In Grimsby in effect it is only fish landed from boats in excess of sixty feet that has to be handled by registered men and Fleetwood now has the right to have fish landed by trawler crews and achieved this through a case before an Industrial Tribunal.

It is certainly anomalous that, as a result of the Dock Labour Scheme, the landing of fish (except perhaps that boxed and frozen at sea) can be regarded as dock work. We are considering the position of the Scheme at the moment, but you will appreciate that both the timing and the handling of any reform in this area need to be considered very carefully.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, Nick Ridley, George Younger and Michael Jopling.

Yours sincerely

Peter Litch

*[Approved by the Secretary of State
& signed in his absence].*

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
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AT 12/3

The Rt Hon Tom King MP
Secretary of State for Employment
Department of Employment
Caxton House
Tothill Street
LONDON SW1H 9NF

12 March 1984

Dear Tom

DOCK LABOUR SCHEME

I was interested to see Geoffrey Howe's minute to you of 6 March about the effect of the dock labour scheme in fishing ports.

I understand that in fact only Aberdeen and Grimsby fall within the scheme in respect of the handling of fish, and that the position at Fleetwood is under appeal. But even if the effect of the scheme on the fishing industry as a whole cannot be said to be great, the local effect may be significant. The differences in the definition of dock work in the various ports seem particularly anomalous.

This certainly adds point to the argument, which we are considering in the PLA context, that the scheme should now be abolished.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister and Geoffrey Howe, and, with a copy of his minute, to George Younger and Michael Jopling.

Yours sincerely

Nicholas Ridley

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

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