

Fisheries

Rick

Signed Orders
making

PRIME MINISTER

proposed part of our
national law.

Fisheries Statement

The Opposition went through the same ritual that they always follow on fisheries statements. Mr. Millan said that the whole package was completely unacceptable, and there would have to be an early debate. It was a hollow claim to say that the UK fishing industry agreed to the package; they had only accepted it for lack of anything better, and for the certainty it might provide. Now there was no certainty. They could not comment on the Orders implementing national measures because these had not yet been laid before the House; but there were clearly doubts about their legality, which would only be cleared up if tested in the European Court. He asked for an assurance that these measures would be enforced exclusively by the UK in UK waters, and that the task of enforcement would not be shared with our Community partners. Concessions had been made to the Danes in the course of negotiations; these must now be withdrawn.

Mr. Walker said that the Opposition were clearly distressed that the fishing industry agreed with the package. The Nine were agreed on the legality of national measures; Danish fishermen might think otherwise, but the Danish Government had not disputed their legality. No concessions had been made in negotiations by the UK which affected UK interests; other concessions had been made which were now withdrawn. That was why the Danish Prime Minister had recommended the package to his Parliament. It was only the Opposition party in Denmark who were holding out, and that party was a Socialist party. Perhaps the Opposition could use their influence with their Danish colleagues. He would warmly welcome a debate.

In subsequent questioning, Mr. Walker added that Danish Ministers had said they would deplore a breach of the fishing rights of Member States, but the Government would be ready to arrest any Danish fisherman who attempted to fish in our coastal waters.

A number of Opposition Members, including Mr. Millan, suggested that the Scottish industry was in uproar over the package. Mr. Walker pointed out that the disagreement in the Scottish industry did not concern the Common Fisheries Policy in any way, and this showed how ignorant the Opposition were.

Finally, Mr. Walker said that it was quite irresponsible of the Opposition to give encouragement to Danish fishermen by questioning the legality of the national measures being introduced.

WM

22 December 1982



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

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Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
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22 December 1982

** copy already with CF*
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22/12
Dear Willie

COUNCIL OF FISHERIES MINISTERS: 21 DECEMBER 1982

... I attach a ²copy of the statement which Mr Walker hopes to make in the House today. I would be grateful for immediate clearance.

/ I am copying this letter to Bernard Ingham; David Heyhoe (Leader of the House's Office); Murdo Maclean (Whip's Office, Commons); Michael Pownall (Whip's Office, Lords); David Wright (Cabinet Office); Keith Long (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office) and to Private Secretaries of the other Agriculture Ministers and members of the OD(E).

Yours sincerely

Robert Lawson

ROBERT LOWSON
Private Secretary

Lee BI

COUNCIL OF FISHERIES MINISTERS: 21 DECEMBER 1982.
DRAFT STATEMENT

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement on the meeting of the Council of Fisheries Ministers which met yesterday in Brussels. I represented the United Kingdom, together with my rt. hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of State.

The nine Member States were agreed on a package of measures for a revised Common Fisheries Policy. No changes to this package were proposed or discussed.

The Commission had clarified to Denmark some of the administrative measures involved in the package and had also arranged for a possible allocation of mackerel in the North Sea which would become available from Norway and the Faroes.

The Danish Government decided to refer this package to the relevant committee of their parliament with the Government's strong recommendation for acceptance.

To the bitter disappointment of the entire Community the minority Danish Government was at yesterday's meeting unable to gain the agreement of that committee. The Danish Government have undertaken to continue to seek to persuade the committee to accept the agreement and the Council has affirmed that it remains open to Denmark to signify before 30 December that the package is acceptable.

The Council then proceeded to consider what national measures would be needed in the event of the Danish Government failing to accept the agreement before the 30 December. The Commission made a declaration as to the manner in which they would authorise national measures in order to protect stocks in accordance with provisions based upon the Commission proposals that failed to gain the full agreement of the Council on October 26.

The Commission made an unequivocal statement as to the right and obligation of all Member States, in the unique circumstances of fisheries, to protect ^{this vital} ~~the common~~ resource, and the Commissioner stated that this would apply to all of the proposals on conservation, access and quotas.

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Hon members may have heard the President of the Commission, Mr Thorn, confirm this morning that these measures would be effective and legal.

As far as the United Kingdom is concerned I signed this morning Orders which will make these proposals part of our national law. They will be laid before the House so that they will come into effect if necessary on January 1.

Agreement was reached on an interim package of structural measures which I know will be welcomed by our industry.

I can only express the hope that Denmark will approve this agreement before the end of the year and will take note of the warning given to them by their Prime Minister that their failure to agree will leave the Danish fishing industry in a worse and not better position.