



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

14 January 1983

Handwritten signature: R. M. Clarke

When we met on 14 December to discuss the closure of the Speedwell Wire Company Limited, Coatbridge, you raised two points in connection with representations you had received from Martin Black PLC. I agreed that both these points should be followed up.

The company was seeking assistance for its efforts to secure the contract for cable laid slings for the British Gas Rough storage project. The Offshore Supplies Office of the Department of Energy carefully monitored the Rough slings contract to ensure that full and fair opportunity was given to British suppliers. However the Office cannot dictate to any client where a particular order should be placed. Provided fair opportunity is given to our industry, clients must remain free to make the final decision based on their technical and commercial assessments. They of course remain responsible for the safety and the technical and commercial success of their projects.

As regards the MAKLOK system the client found this technically unacceptable for this particular job and the Offshore Supplies Office cannot press clients to accept a technical solution which they do not want. It is for suppliers to convince clients that their products meet the clients' specific needs. The Offshore Supplies Office has however been in touch with Mr. Slater and is trying to arrange opportunities for Martin Black to give technical presentations of its system to potential buyers.

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On the company's accusations about the dumping of steel wire, here again Mr. Slater has already received preliminary advice from the Department of Trade about the possibilities of action against competition from other European manufacturers. This might - if the facts warrant it - take the form of anti-dumping remedies in respect of imports from countries outside the Community. Action may also be possible under the European Communities Treaties in respect of imports from other Member States. I suggest therefore that Mr. Slater gets in touch with Mr. D.C.B. Morris of the Department of Trade (01-215 5627) to arrange a meeting to discuss the possibilities in more detail.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Slater

Tom Clarke, Esq., C.B.E., J.P., M.P.



SCOTTISH OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

Willie Rickett Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

7 January 1983

Dear Mr Rickett

You wrote to me on 14 December asking for a draft letter for the Prime Minister to send to Mr Tom Clarke MP reporting the outcome of enquiries she had agreed to have made into two of the points he had raised during their meeting that day.

Mr Clarke had sought help on behalf of Martin Black PLC in its efforts to secure the British Gas contract for the supply of cable laid slings for the Rough Storage Project. He also wished to see pursued the company's accusations that European manufacturers were dumping steel wire to the detriment of British Industry.

The company had already been in touch with the Departments of Energy and Trade on these topics and has been offered the help of the Offshore Supplies Office - with whom Mr Slater has discussed the question of slings - in deciding how best to compete for business in offshore markets. Contrary to Mr Slater's claims Martin Black was not the UK firm closest to securing the British Gas contract. He was also given information by the Department of Trade last February about anti-dumping action and the possibilities of seeking redress under the Treaty of Rome when he enquired about taking action against imports from Norway, Spain, France, Germany and Holland. He was invited to get in touch with the Department again once he had considered whether he wished to take matters further. He did not do so.

A draft letter to Mr Clarke is enclosed for the Prime Minister's consideration.

Yours sincerely

Muir Russell

for A MUIR RUSSELL
Private Secretary

E. B.
DRAFT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

Tom Clarke Esq CBE JP MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

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E. R.

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P. M. : mtg. with Tom Clarke M.P.
12/82

27 JAN 1983





WH 24/12
SCOTTISH OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

Michael Wilshire Esq
Private Secretary to the Minister of State
Department of Energy
Thames House South
Millbank
LONDON
SW1P 4QJ

22 December 1982

Dear Michael

REDUNDANCIES AT MARTIN BLACK PLC, COATBRIDGE

You will have received a copy of Willie Rickett's letter to me of 14 December asking for a draft letter for the Prime Minister to send to Tom Clarke MP.

Although Mr Fletcher attended the meeting with Mr Clarke and undertook to investigate the two points he raised, as we have no involvement in either subject we will be entirely dependent on contributions from you and John Rhodes at Trade in framing the requested draft.

I should be grateful, therefore, if you and John Rhodes to whom I am copying this letter could let me have something for your respective interests that I can stitch together fairly quickly for No 10.

A copy of this letter also goes to Willie Rickett.

A Muir Russell

A MUIR RUSSELL
Private Secretary

PM Dec 82, Martin Blacker.

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TOM CLARKE CBE JP MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Prime Minister²
Prime Minister
6/12
M

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, M.P., 15th December, 1982
Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street,
LONDON, S.W.1.

Dear Prime Minister

I am very sensitive to the pressures of your Office and the great demands on your time and I do want you to know that I greatly appreciated the time you took yesterday to listen to my expressions of concern on behalf of my Constituents.

It was, in my view, a useful exchange and I am grateful.

Yours sincerely,
Tom Clarke