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Apprs



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
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The Rt Hon Lord Hailsham CH FRS DL
The Lord Chancellor
Lord Chancellor's Office
House of Lords
LONDON SW1A 0PW

1) Any reference to previous experience of this? "substantive" - would it be better to make a statement? Very well.
2) Can we not have Mr Ruckley proposes to make a statement tomorrow (Thurs).
3) What Mr Ruckley proposes to make a statement tomorrow (Thurs).
27 February 1984

Dear Quinston

INQUIRY INTO THE ARCHWAY ROAD SCHEME

As I mentioned at Cabinet, Sir Michael Giddings, the Inspector you nominated to preside over this road inquiry has felt obliged to withdraw as a result of the personal and domestic harassment he has undergone. I attach a copy of the letter of resignation he has submitted.

There is of course a history of trouble at Archway and the two previous abandoned inquiries put the Inspectors concerned under similar enormous personal strain - the second in particular involving the same sort of domestic persecution.

I think it was agreed that I should make an early statement in the House deploring what had happened and announcing our intention to set up a fresh inquiry forthwith.

I should like to be able to say something about our intentions with regard to the new Inspector. In the light of experience I believe he will have to be a senior lawyer with the status of a judge, if he is to cope with what is likely to be involved.

My officials are urgently discussing this and the other handling aspects with your people and also with the other Departments most closely concerned. Meanwhile I attach a draft of the sort of statement I have in mind to make, and would welcome any comments you have on this as soon as possible. I would like to make my statement this week.

We must handle this particular case under our present rules, but I agree with you that we do need to look at the rules for inquiries generally in the longer term.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Patrick Jenkin (who jointly with me appointed the Inspector), to Willie Whitelaw, Leon Brittan, John Biffen, John Wakeham, Lord Denham and the Prime Minister.

Your man
Nicholas

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

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DRAFT STATEMENT

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on the inquiry into the proposals for the Archway Road in North London.

I very much regret to have to tell this House that Sir Michael Giddings, the inspector nominated by the Lord Chancellor and appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment and myself has withdrawn. This was as a result of the harassment he and his family has undergone. In his letter of resignation he describes how for several months he has been plagued with telephone calls, how callers have sought various means of speaking to his wife, the receipt of hundreds of letters at his private home, some addressed to his wife, two deputations at the house over Christmas, the involvement of the Police and his neighbours in deterring cars away from his drive, the receipt of a parcel of excreta, trespassers in his garden and the breaking of a window. He has told me that while he has no doubt that he could carry the inquiry through he is not prepared to see his wife further distressed or alarmed. He therefore feels he must withdraw.

X (The Government totally deplores such tactics of intimidation and domestic harassment. They are clearly intended to subvert the statutory processes established by Parliament to protect the interests of the public. The object of any inquiry is to provide a full and fair hearing of all the arguments in the case at issue, and behaviour designed to suppress this is an attack on the rights of the community as a whole.

A new inquiry will be set up forthwith. The Lord Chancellor will nominate a new Inspector. He has in mind nominating a senior lawyer with the status of a judge. Tactics of harassment to prevent a proper hearing of the issues at stake will not be allowed to prevail.

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Setting up a fresh inquiry means that the time and money of many people will have been wasted as a result of these actions by the few. I have conveyed to Sir Michael Giddings my deep regret at the personal attacks on himself and his family that they have had to endure.

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HOUSE OF LORDS,
SW1A 0PW

28th February 1984.

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My dear Nicky:

Inquiry into the Archway Road Scheme

You wrote to me on the 27th February about the resignation of Sir Michael Giddings as the Inspector for the inquiry into the Archway Road Scheme and my officials have since passed on my comments on the wording of your statement in the Commons.

Finding a new Inspector will be no easy task but we must do our best and my department will be in touch with yours as soon as possible for a discussion on names.

I am copying this to be recipients of your letter.

yrs:

The Right Honourable
Nicholas Ridley, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Transport.



10 FEB 1984

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Air Marshal ~~air~~ Michael Giddings
159 Long Lane
Tilehurst
Reading, Berks. RG3 6YW
22 February 1984

Dear Mrs Chalker,

I am very sorry to have to tell you that I have finally decided that I must withdraw from the Archway inquiry. I tentatively proposed doing so in October last year, ten weeks before the inquiry opened. Eventually, however I opened the inquiry with the intention of re-assessing the matter in the light of what transpired. Unfortunately the situation has got worse.

The problem concerns the pressure on my family. For several months we have been plagued with telephone calls (27 on one day in December). Even last Sunday, after the adjournment had been in progress for more than two weeks, we received four calls. On occasions callers have asked to speak to my wife and have tried various devious measures to ensure this. Over 600 letters have been sent to my home (many admittedly by way of proforma). Some of these were addressed to my wife. Two deputations came to the house over Christmas and subsequently the police (and, in two instances, my neighbours) have deterred cars away from the drive. A parcel of excreta was sent to the house. I have found two people in my garden. One window has been broken.

While I have no doubt that I could carry the inquiry through I am afraid I am not prepared to see my wife further distressed or alarmed.

I hope I can truthfully say that I have given my services responsibly over the last five years. I have received much kindness and help from many officers of both Departments, for which I am most grateful. At the same time I have always sought to approach problems objectively, and I have not always come out in favour of the official proposals. I am very much distressed at the conflict of duty.

Finally, may I offer my sincere and profound apologies to you personally. I fully realise the trouble my withdrawal will cause you, and I am deeply sorry.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Giddings

Mrs Lynda Chalker MP
Minister of State
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street London.