

PRIME MINISTER

9 November 1984

CONSERVATION OF THE BROADS' LANDSCAPE(TO BE DISCUSSED AT H, TUESDAY 13 NOVEMBER 1984)

The Broads Authority has insufficient funds to pay six farmers (and possibly others) not to put some unusually beautiful landscape to the plough. Under the present arrangements, which DoE are still reviewing at your request, the options set out in the H paper are:

- 1) Offer the Broads Authority a higher rate of grant-aid (90% rather than 75%), at an extra cost of £30,000 in 1985-86, to enable it to negotiate agreements.
- 2) Introduce a "grazing grant" for 3 years to all farmers grazing on the Broads at a cost of £445,000 in 1985-86.

The DoE and MAFF favour the grazing grant scheme and want a quick decision prior to a meeting on 30 November of the full Broads Authority.

It is essential that we protect the Broads landscape which, as the paper explains in a lyrical passage, is unique, but we are doubtful about the course proposed, for two reasons:

- 1) Why throw more money at this problem before colleagues have considered the options which DoE are working on to

make the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 more effective, at less cost?

- 2) ✓ If we must spend more, why choose the more expensive option? This gives all farmers £40 an acre per year, irrespective of whether they intend to plough up landscape, plus a £60 an acre per year to the hard cases which threaten to plough.

In view of your request of July for a review of the operation of the W&C Act, 1981, you may wish to minute the Lord President in advance of H to enquire:

- 1) Whether any of the options which have emerged from the review of the operation of the W&C Act, 1981 offer a cheaper and less contentious alternative, which does not set a precedent for further expenditure?
- 2) If the options outlined in the H paper are indeed the only alternatives available to us to save the landscape in question, does it make sense to offer automatic grants of £40 an acre to farmers who have no known intention of ploughing, at considerable extra cost?

Approved

Nicholas Owen
NICHOLAS OWEN

PRIME MINISTER

H COMMITTEE NEXT WEEK

Three issues come before H Committee next week.

Nuclear Waste Disposal

Lack of co-operation from ICI, together with local pressure, effectively rule out Billingham as a possible site for the deep disposal of nuclear waste. As foreshadowed at the meeting which you held earlier this year, Mr. Jenkin is now proposing to invite NIREX

- to investigate a total of six sites (three for a shallow facility and three for deep disposal):
- to authorise exploratory works at all six sites by special development order;
- to hold only two "second stage" public inquiries; one for each type of facility.

Even under this expedited procedure NIREX do not expect a shallow facility to be operational before the early 1990's - and deep disposal not much before 2,000. So speed is essential. But there is bound to be a row, not least in the House, as the special development orders go through.

The Norfolk Broads

The Broads Authority (who seem to twist DOE around their little finger) are demanding more money to do their job of preserving the Broads' landscape. Mr. Jenkin and Mr. Jopling are proposing to give to them, in the form either of 90% grant in aid for expenditure on management agreements, or a three year "grazing grant" for all Broads'

Note: spoke to H Secretariat to convey PM's views on the Broads. They will report.

SUBJECT: HOME AFFAIRS
Disposal of Nuclear Waste July 79

Sub
12/11

why?

Farmers. The Policy Unit oppose this (see attached note).
So too does the Chief Secretary, and you may prefer to leave
it to him to make the running in H Committee.

Scotch Whisky

The Minister of Agriculture proposes to offer to a
Private Member a Bill to prohibit the sale of Scotch Whisky
at a strength of less than 40%. This would be designed to
protect the integrity of the finished product, against
in-roads from lower strength spirits. The Scotch Whisky
Distillers need as much help as they can get in retaining
their traditional export markets.

Duty Clerk

PP. David Barclay
9 November 1984