



*Composite version produced for
PM's chestroom.*

AT 2/8

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

19 July 1984

Dear Andrew,

SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY: BS CORPORATE PLAN

Thank you for your letter of today's date attaching a form of words for the Prime Minister to use at Questions in the House if the Select Committee's call for BS documents is raised. The Lord Privy Seal would much prefer the attached form of words to be used since it emphasises the existing arrangements which are now to be looked at again in the light of this incident.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), Hugh Taylor (Home Office), David Peretz (HM Treasury), Callum McCarthy (Department of Trade and Industry), Dinah Nichols (Department of Transport), Michael Reidy (Department of Energy), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office), Henry Steel (Law Officers' Department) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely,
David Morris*

D R MORRIS
Private Secretary

A Turnbull Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister



As was made clear in the Government's reply to the report of the Liaison Committee (First Report, Session 1982-3), on the Select Committee system, there must always be the possibility that differences of opinion may arise between Ministers and select committees as to whether it would be in the public interest for particular information - whether relating to the nationalised industries or any other public matter - to be disclosed to a select committee. (X)

Nevertheless In the final analysis it is for the House as a whole to decide in such instances whether the powers of a select committee should be enforced.

~~The Government will continue to judge these cases on their merits, and will be examining ways of ensuring [redacted] that the disclosure of information to select committees does not prejudice the efficient management of the nationalised industries.~~

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 July, 1984.

Select Committee on Trade and Industry: BS Corporate Plan

I attach a form of words which the Prime Minister might use at Questions in the House today if the Select Committee's call for BS documents is raised. I would be grateful for comments on this by 1300 today.

I am sending copies of this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), Hugh Taylor (Home Office), David Peretz (HM Treasury), Callum McCarthy (Department of Trade and Industry), Dinah Nichols (Department of Transport), Michael Reidy (Department of Energy), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office), Henry Steel (Law Officers' Department), and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Andrew Turnbull

David Morris, Esq.,
Lord Privy Seal's Department.

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Select Committee on Trade and Industry: BS Corporate Plan

Line to take

EX

The Government remains of the view that it is not in the best interests of the good management of nationalised industries or of their relationship with their sponsor Departments that documents of the kind requested should be supplied to Select Committees. Nonetheless, the powers of Select Committees, as currently being interpreted, require that such documents should be supplied if requested, and this has been done. The Government believe that if Ministers are to receive from Chairmen of nationalised industries the advice they need to take what are often difficult and painful decisions, new understandings on the power to call for documents need to be reached with the Select Committees.