

Copied to R.I



SCOTTISH OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

Mark Addison Esq  
Prime Minister's Office  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

1. IF to see  
2. p.c.

27 November 1985

Dear Mark

PUBLICATION OF ATLAS OF CANCER IN SCOTLAND 1975-1980

22 Jan  
not. //

I understand that Bernard Ingham has expressed interest in the publication on 28 November of the Atlas of Cancer in Scotland 1975-80.

The Atlas has been prepared jointly by the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer and the Cancer Registries of Scotland, and will attract some international attention as the first national cancer atlas based on incidence, rather than mortality. 20 major and 19 minor cancers are mapped by local authority district, and the rates compared with other countries, including appropriate English regions. Associations - with smoking, drinking and other dietary and environmental factors - are discussed and priorities for further research identified.

John MacKay will be speaking at the presentation meeting tomorrow, following a press conference by the editors of the Atlas. The format of the Atlas, with districts of high incidence coloured in red, will encourage lively local reaction both from MPs and the press. So will the news that Glasgow has the worst record in the world for lung cancer amongst men. However, the Atlas makes it clear that even on existing knowledge of cancer causation, many (in men a third) of cancers could be prevented by changes in smoking, drinking and dietary intake which are already the targets of specific Government action in the health education field. We shall be pressing this point. Radiation hazards - which are the most sensitive issue, politically, in relation to the leukaemia group of cancers - are not highlighted in the report. Indeed the editors estimate that only 1 in 100 cancers in males can be attributed to radiation (which includes, predominantly, natural and medical forms of radiation as well as that associated with nuclear power stations and waste disposal). A briefing note for Prime Minister's Question Time tomorrow is being sent direct to your Parliamentary Clerk.

E.R.

I am copying this letter to Steve Godber, DHSS, and Colin Williams, Welsh Office.

Yours sincerely

Robert Gordon

Robert Gordon  
Private Secretary

