



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH

From the Minister

NBPM

AT 15/10

CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw CH MC
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
SW1A 2AT

15 October 1984

REGIONAL POLICY

E(A) on 3 October recognised that there were grounds for reviewing the decisions on areas at the margin where other important considerations applied beyond the criteria used in drawing up option A. A small group under your Chairmanship has been set up to consider such proposals and I am therefore writing to put the case for upgrading both Hull and Grimsby on the new assisted areas map from the outer to the inner tier.

Both ports are currently within development areas and their inclusion in the new outer tier would involve a reduction in incentives to new investment. The distant water fleet based on the two ports has declined sharply within the past decade and is now represented by less than a handful of vessels with a ripple effect on the dependent shore-based industries. Quota restrictions under the Common Fisheries Policy on the North Sea fisheries together with the high landing costs on the Humber make Hull and Grimsby relatively unattractive to owners of smaller vessels. The decline in the fishing industry at the two ports in recent years is illustrated by the following figures for full and part-time employment and of landings:-

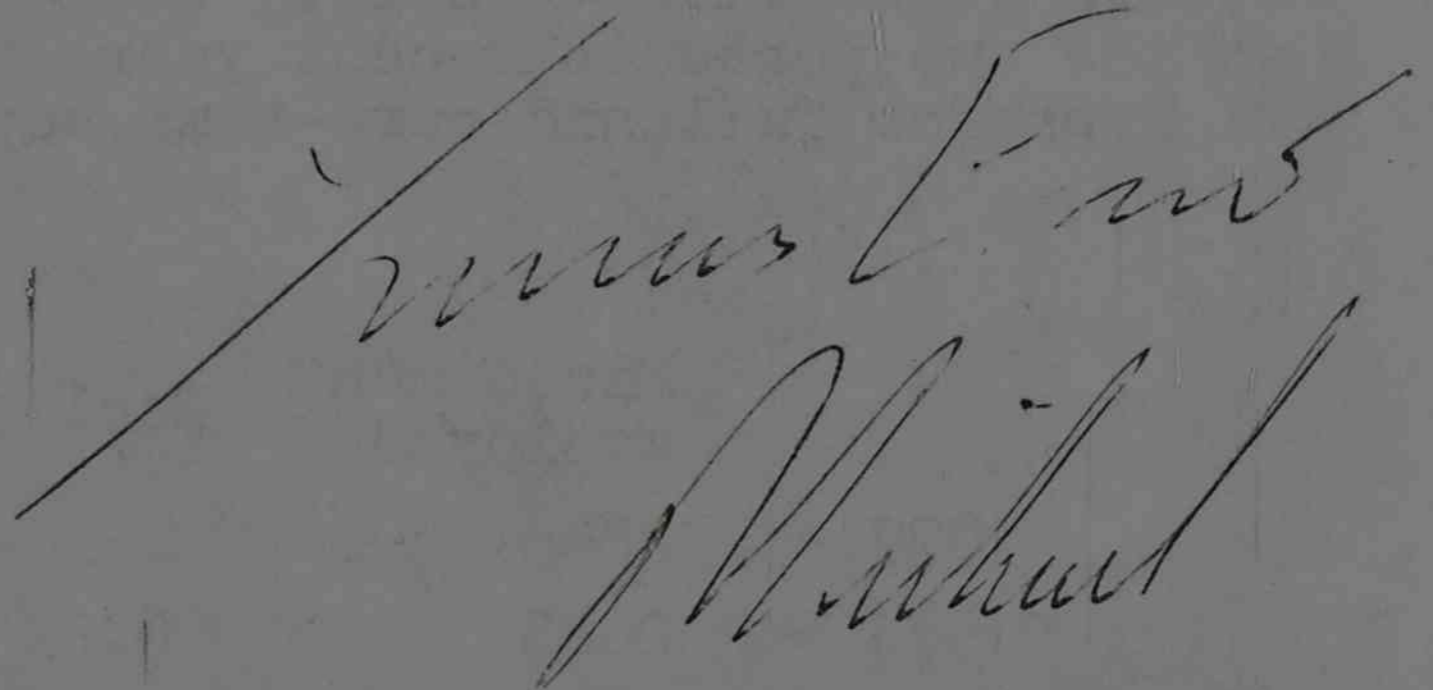
	Fishermen Employed	Decline	Landings quantity (tonnes)	value (£m)
1977	2865	-	176,278	68
1978	2685	6.3%	115,718	46
1980	1962	31.5%	73,649	29
1983	1605	44.0%	46,145	25

/A consultant's study ...

A consultant's study of the fishing industry at Grimsby and Hull, on behalf of the local authorities and the EC Commission as the basis for a possible Humberside Integrated Development Programme for the better focussing of Community development funds on these two ports, has concluded there is now little hope that employment in the fish catching industry will return to former levels.

As the Working Group's report makes clear there is a heavy dependence in these two areas on fishing. While I recognise that there can be no certainty at present of special assistance from Brussels towards an integrated development programme, to reduce the present development area category of both ports would risk sending the wrong signal to our European colleagues. There are, historic rivalries apart, sound reasons for treating both areas alike and I would therefore strongly urge your agreement to their upgrading to the inner tier to maintain their present priority.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, other members of E(A) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Michael Jopling', written in dark ink. The signature is slanted upwards from left to right and is positioned above the typed name.

MICHAEL JOPLING