



file RB
a DT1 (2)
SO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

29 July 1985

Dear Mr. Milne,

Thank you for your letter of 19 July about Ravenscraig. Given the nature of the delegation you propose, I think it better if you see the Secretary of State for Scotland, who would be happy to receive such a delegation.

I cannot help commenting, however, upon the irony that the STUC should be setting itself up as the defender of steel-making at Ravenscraig when a year ago during the miners strike you were seeking to stop production.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Thatcher

James Milne, Esq.

RB

E.R. ce BT.
PRIME MINISTER

RAVENS CRAIG : MEETING WITH STUC

I do not think you should see the delegation led by Mr. Milne and the Scottish TUC.

- i) Such delegations should not come to you directly without first having seen Departmental Ministers. The trade unions have not recently been to see either Scottish Office or DTI Ministers.
- ii) An all-Party delegation, including representatives of local communities is more appropriate to the Scottish Office.
- iii) Mr. Milne's approach is entirely hypocritical as a year ago he was trying to close down Ravenscraig. *- see attached cutting*

I have spoken to Mr. Younger's Office who are content to receive such a delegation. They would schedule this for late August when Mr. Younger returns from holiday. BSC are likely to conclude a deal with Alpha Steel around 2 August and to make an announcement about their plans, including the form of words on steel-making at Ravenscraig agreed at E(A). DTI Ministers will follow up with a statement of endorsement. The meeting with the TUC would then not be about what should be done at Ravenscraig but will provide an opportunity for the Scottish Office to explain what has been decided.

I attach a draft reply to Mr. Milne.

ANDREW TURNBULL

25 July 1985

L03A1H

SCOTTISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS
General Council

223



Our ref. JM/EF
Your ref.

19 July 1985

Rt Hon Mrs M Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Andrew Turnbull

Per you, libik.

MUSA 23/7

Dear Mrs Thatcher,

RAVENS CRAIG STEELWORKS

As you will no doubt be aware, the question of the future of Ravenscraig Steelworks is again up for consideration. We certainly hope that the British Steel Corporation and the Department of Industry take the decision to maintain the three strip mills presently operating in Britain. We believe they are needed and, additionally, it must be appreciated that Ravenscraig steel is used for purposes other than rolling into strip steel.

There is another problem at Ravenscraig in that the coke ovens have reached the end of their useful lives. Certain up-dating would leave them perhaps 5-8 years use. The Ravenscraig unions are of the opinion, however, that a major new investment is needed, which would allow the erection of a new coke ovens facility, which, because of its size, would allow much more efficient use of fuel and other materials. The net result would be a saving of as much as £7.00 per tonne of steel produced. The limited investment, which would allow prolonged use of the coke ovens, would not provide any greater efficiency in the use of energy and, therefore, would have no impact whatever on the price of steel produced.

I am writing to ask you to meet a deputation, which would not simply be composed of trade unionists, but would be representative of local communities dependent upon Ravenscraig for employment. The deputation would seek to impress upon you the absolute necessity, firstly, for a positive decision on keeping the three strip mills open, and, secondly, the need for a speedy decision on an investment which would cost the BSC some £90m, but at the end would give additional cost advantage.../

If phoning or calling ask for



Middleton House
16 Woodlands Terrace, Glasgow G3 6DF.
Tel: 041-332 4946/7/8.
General Secretary: James Milne.

19 July 1985

.../advantages to Ravenscraig.

We would like the meeting to be held as quickly as possible, notwithstanding the difficulties presented by virtue of the Parliamentary recess.

Yours sincerely

James Hume