



Board Room
H M Customs and Excise
King's Beam House
Mark Lane London EC3R 7HE

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ECONOMIC SECRETARY

1. PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE ~~CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER~~
2. *MCX RD 22/6*
3. PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER

THE RT HON DONALD STEWART MP: CUSTOMS FACILITIES AT WICK AERODROME

1. The Secretary of State for Scotland has written to Mr Jock Bruce-Gardyne, accepting, albeit reluctantly, the decision not to provide regular customs facilities at Wick aerodrome.
2. For presentational reasons he has asked the Economic Secretary to agree to see the Highland Regional Council so that they can put their point of view and a meeting is to be arranged.
3. Although there is little likelihood that the original decision will be affected it would seem appropriate to send an interim reply to Mr Stewart.

... 4. The attached reply is suggested.

Joy James

J JAMES
Parliamentary Unit

18 June 1982

"Thank you for your letter dated 9 June about customs clearance facilities at Wick aerodrome. As you probably ^{by} now know, Jock Bruce-Gardyne has agreed to see the Highland Regional Council in order to hear their point of view and I will be better able to reply to you following their meeting."

"Thank you for your letter dated 9 June about customs clearance facilities at Wick aerodrome. As you probably ^{by} now know, Jock Bruce-Gardyne has agreed to see the Highland Regional Council in order to hear their point of view and I will be better able to reply to you following their meeting."



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 June 1982

I enclose a further letter from Mr. Donald Stewart M.P. about Wick Airport, following his earlier exchange with the Prime Minister.

I should be grateful for a further brief draft reply for the Prime Minister to send, agreed with the Scottish Office.

I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosure, together with the earlier exchange, to Muir Russell (Scottish Office).

M. A. PATTISON

C.D. Harrison, Esq.,
Economic Secretary's Office,
HM Treasury.

LM



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 June 1982

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 9 June. I will place this before the Prime Minister and you will be sent a reply as soon as possible.

M. A. PATTISON

The Rt. Hon. Donald Stewart, M.P.

Rt. Hon. Donald J. Stewart PC MP.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

9th June 1982.

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher M.P.,
The Prime Minister,
10, Downing St.,
Whitehall
London SW1

Dear *Prime Minister,*

Thank you for your letter of June 4th regarding the issue of Customs facilities at Wick Airport.

I understand that customs facilities at "small aerodromes" are being restricted but, in my view, the industrial development needs in this case could well amount to being more than just "local" as you seem to think. To have these facilities at Wick could be an important step forward for the whole North Highlands and, with the increased interest in oil developments in the seas off this area, could be nothing short of a necessity in the near future.

As I understand, it would not be necessary to employ extra staff for the purpose of providing the facility. What is happening at present is that the Customs and Excise are talking about cutting the number of staff employed in the area.

Aberdeen and Inverness may well have clearance facilities, as you say, but they are a long way from Wick. Inverness is some one hundred miles away by road and Aberdeen about twice that much. A policy of restriction of customs facilities in England, which may not be too damaging as the country is more populous and has more airports, close together, may seem to make sense to you but the same policy is disastrous for the Highlands of Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

Rt. Hon. Donald J. Stewart M.P., P.C.