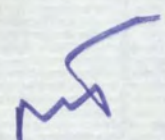


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PRIME MINISTER




I attach Mr. Walker's very brief statement about the Agriculture Council Meeting.

A very thin House produced, for the most part, entirely predictable supplementary questions. For the Opposition, Norman Buchan strongly supported Mr. Walker's position on distillation of surplus wine, and at the conclusion Gavin Strang from the front bench argued that this must be a permanent position, in order to defend thousands of jobs in central Scotland. Albert McQuarrie and Eldon Griffiths were amongst those who also expressed support on this point.

Norman Buchan, with some support from Dennis Skinner, wanted a much broader picture of the state of negotiations over CAP pricing. Mr. Walker said that this kind of meeting, at which national delegations set out their positions, had now become a regular part of the price fixing process.

The only other point worth recording was an allegation from Mr. Buchan, pursued by Ioan Evans, that Russia was buying Community wine at 5 pence per pint. Mr. Walker was unable to confirm the details.



18 March 1982



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food  
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's  
Private Office

M Pattison Esq  
Prime Minister's Office  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1

*Cleared by  
None*

*na - (statement  
with PM)*

18 March 1982

*M.P.  
18/3*

*Dear Mike*

COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE MINISTERS:  
15 - 17 MARCH 1982

I attach a copy of the statement which Mr Walker hopes to make in the House today. I would be grateful for immediate clearance.

I am copying this letter to Ingham; Heyhoe (Leader of the House's Office); Maclean (Whip's Office, Commons); Pownall (Whip's Office, Lords); Wright (Cabinet Office); Buckley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), and to private secretaries of the other Agriculture Ministers and members of the OD(E).

Yours sincerely

*Robert Lawson*

ROBERT LAWSON  
Private Secretary

AGRICULTURE COUNCIL - 15/17 MARCH 1982

DRAFT PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement on the Council of Agriculture Ministers' meeting in Brussels from 15th to 17th March.

Ministers resumed their consideration of the Commission's price proposals for 1982. There were wide differences of view in the Council, but some progress was made in clarifying positions on the major products. Work will continue at the Council's next meeting on 31st March and 1st and 2nd April.

An attempt was made to reach agreement on a measure for the distillation of surplus wine into alcohol. With the support of the Netherlands and Belgium, we argued that we were unable to agree upon such arrangements until the consequences for the alcohol market had been studied and <sup>until</sup> we were sufficiently assured that there would be no unregulated sales that would have a serious impact on this country's industrial alcohol producers.

