



Prime Minister

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Very good news (even
at 8.1%).

MCS 2/12

PRIME MINISTER

OIL TANKER DRIVERS

The threat of a strike by the tanker drivers has been lifted. Despite the efforts of some elements in the TGWU and some of the shop stewards, the Esso, Texaco and Shell drivers have all voted against industrial action and in favour of accepting the companies' 8.1 per cent offer (as the BP drivers did some time ago). The quiet, firm stand taken by the company managements principally concerned has been justified, and I think we can regard the 8.1 per cent settlement as a most satisfactory outcome, all things considered.

The settlement has enabled us to suspend the various arrangements we have been making against the possibility of a serious interruption in oil supplies. LEADBURN will not be needed, and the military personnel have therefore been released from stand-by. Nor is there any further reason to contemplate the declaration of a state of emergency or to set in place new subordinate legislation under the Energy Act to control the distribution of road fuel and other oil products. Plainly it would be better if we could avoid ever having to make contingency preparations of this kind; but this episode, if it has achieved nothing else, has enabled us to sharpen our readiness to deal with a potentially very awkward situation. I am grateful to the members of the armed forces, and to those concerned in Departments and the oil industry, for the effort they have put into this.

I am copying this minute to the Home Secretary, the Secretaries of State for Defence, Transport and Employment, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Janet M. Chadwick

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY

2 December 1981

(Approved by the Secretary of State and signed in his absence)



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

3 December 1981

OIL TANKER DRIVERS

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 2 December about the oil tanker drivers' settlement. She regards this as very good news.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Home Secretary, the Secretaries of State for Defence, Transport and Employment, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

M. C. SCHOLAR

Julian West, Esq.,
Department of Energy.

