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Secretary of State for Industry

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Lord Cockfield
Secretary of State for Trade
Department of Trade
1 Victoria Street
London SW1

NBPM

MUS 27/7

Dear Arthur,

STANDARDS, QUALITY AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Dated 27/7/82 - with me

Thank you for sending me a copy of your note to the Prime Minister with the draft White Paper on Standards, Quality and International Trade.

I agree entirely that the success of the policy depends upon it being manifestly clear to industry that Government is committed to making the policy work; and that we are seen to be making it work. I must therefore express some disappointment that there should be the slightest hesitation about providing the relatively small amounts of cash needed to promote the policy, particularly the funding in support of certification and quality assurance schemes. I think the wording at paragraph 5.8 must stay; it is the least we can say and I would hope we could strengthen it by being able to announce a scheme shortly since we have already received applications for support. I am glad to see a firm statement (paragraph 1.8) about the travel scheme for overseas delegates to international Standards meetings since I understand this matter has been under discussion for some months now and has attracted much attention from industry. Unless we can demonstrate our willingness to commit resources to the policy, Industry may justifiably doubt our interest.

This thought bears also on your observation that the policy should be broadly acceptable to industry. I think this is correct but we should anticipate pockets of resistance, particularly among users of industrial equipment, if the difficulties of the Health and Safety Executive in securing industrialists' agreement to the recognition of 10 British Standards as Approved Codes under the Health and Safety Act



are any guide. I think we must anticipate some criticism and be ready to campaign hard to sell the policy at every available opportunity. A good starting point will be NEDC on 4 August. I had the opportunity to speak on the subject at the British Standards Society on 15 June and I trust your officials will be examining the opportunities for further speaking engagements.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, Members of the Cabinet and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Your ever
Patrice