



From the Minister

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD  
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

*Agree 7/2/83. What the Board need requirement. Some of them a bit and agree now. suggest advised of this. some Prime Minister: only*

Agree to Mr Austen hangs appointment  
16 August 1983  
as Chairman of the Home Grown Cereals Authority?

*Mrs Prime Minister*

CHAIRMAN OF THE HOME-GROWN CEREALS AUTHORITY

*JA*  
*25/8*

Sir George Huckle's term of office as Chairman of the Home-Grown Cereals Authority ended on 2 June. He had been reappointed in 1982 for one final year, having served as Chairman since 1977. Difficulties arose over finding a suitable successor and the search for one was suspended by the announcement of the General Election.

The Authority was set up under the Cereals Marketing Act 1965 to improve the marketing of home-grown cereals. Its main activities now are the provision of a highly respected market intelligence service for the cereals industry, agency work for the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce on the intervention buying of cereals, and the sponsorship of research. The Authority thus has an important role in the marketing of a product whose exports have increased rapidly in recent years. The Government makes a contribution to the non-agency work of the Authority but this has been pegged in money terms since 1976 with a view to the industry meeting an increasing proportion of the costs of the Authority's activities through a levy on cereals marketed.

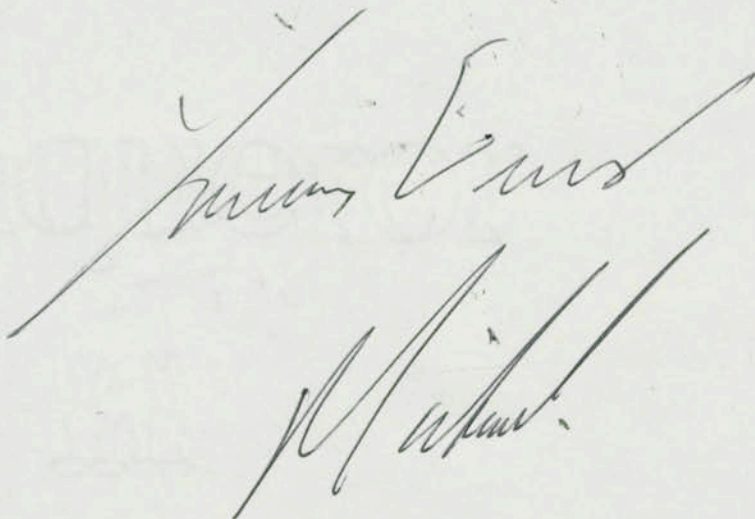
*why?  
ARC?*

The Chairman of the Authority is required by the Act to be an "independent person" in contrast to most of the other members of the Authority who represent specific interests. The main requirement is for someone with commercial experience, who is capable of maintaining the morale and efficiency of the staff of the Authority and guiding it in a sensible direction in response to changing patterns of cereals output and marketing.

/I would like to ...

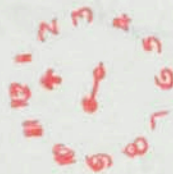
I would like to appoint Mr Austen Laing CBE to head the Authority for the next three years. Mr Laing, who is 60, has recently retired from the post of Director-General of the British Fishing Federation Limited, although he is continuing as a part-time consultant for them. He has proved in his recent work (much of it in the public eye) that he has the qualities needed to guide the Authority's work. He is a man of considerable impact with a special aptitude for economic questions. His judgment is sound and outlook broad. He has considerable experience in the marketing of primary products and in the kinds of problems likely to be encountered by the Authority.

The Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, who make this appointment jointly with me, are content with this proposal and so is Sir Robert Armstrong. I am copying this letter to them.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Michael Jopling', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the typed name.

MICHAEL JOPLING

15 AUG 1963



JL VC



## 10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 August 1983

B/R // The Prime Minister has now seen your Minister's minute of 16 August proposing the appointment of Mr. Austen Laing as Chairman of the Home-Grown Cereals Authority. Mrs Thatcher has agreed to this appointment but has suggested that the activities of the Authority need re-assessment. Some of their activities appear to overlap with those of other Authorities whilst others seem superfluous. In particular, Mrs Thatcher has asked why the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce needs agencies for the intervention buying of cereals. In addition, she wonders why the Home-Grown Cereals Authority needs to sponsor research when the Agricultural Research Council already exists for this purpose. I should be grateful if Mr. Jopling could consider these points and advise the Prime Minister further.

I am sending copies of this letter to Muir Russell (Scottish Office), Adam Peat (Welsh Office), John Lyon (Northern Ireland Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

TIM FLESHER

R. Lawson, Esq.,  
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food

Copies in Appointments Section.

VC