



SCOTTISH HOME AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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L H Brandes Esq  
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31 January 1974

Dear Brandes

BLOOD PRODUCTS

We are greatly concerned here about the need for a concerted Great Britain policy on the Blood Transfusion Service, particularly having regard to the difficulties facing the Service at the present time. I know that you are also very well seized of the need for a common policy and this was indeed the motive of the visit by Gidden and Maycock and you in February 1973 to Edinburgh, following which the Joint Steering Committee on Blood Products Production was set up.

It was recognised from the start that this committee was competent to work only within the framework of broad policy agreed at Departmental level. Unfortunately the committee has not made a great deal of progress. It met once in June 1973 and I understand there is a suggestion that it may meet again in February, but nothing definite has been arranged. There are problems about detailed figures, which I hope can be resolved, but there is also a likelihood that the committee is feeling its progress hindered by the lack of high level policy decisions.

... The nature of the difficulties facing the Service is fully described in a letter which our CMO is sending today to Reid (copy enclosed) and I need not, therefore, set them out in detail. In summary, commercial blood products appear to be gaining a foothold and may find an expanding market in Britain, particularly in England and Wales where the Blood Transfusion Service does not at present appear to be in a position to meet clinical demand. Should this happen, it seems to us that the consequences for the Blood Transfusion Service throughout Great Britain would be extremely grave, especially if the commercial firms took the next step of buying human donor blood in this country. The position is even now causing a great deal of anxiety and unrest among regional blood transfusion directors in Scotland who are being approached by commercial firms and who see only too clearly the possible long-term implications.

None of what I have said is intended to be a criticism of the Blood Transfusion Service in either country, but the events which have now overtaken us could have very serious repercussions on the Service as we know it at the moment. Both countries are involved in this and I think that a meeting at the highest medical and administrative level is essential to try and clear the way for the formulation of an acceptable production policy and to consider to what extent commercial inroads should be resisted or contained.

We feel that this is of sufficient urgency to warrant an early meeting and I shall be glad to have your views as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

**GRO-C**

(EUE ELLIOTT-BINNS)

*Copy to Dr Maycock  
Dr. [unclear]  
Dr. Ransom  
Mr. Jackson*