



SCOTTISH HOME AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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15 September 1982

ALL Received 17/9

Dear John

BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE: PROTEIN FRACTIONATION CENTRE, LIBERTON

Thank you for your letter of 2 September with which you enclosed a copy of your draft submission to Ministers. I am sorry my absence on leave has delayed a reply.

I note, not without some sense of relief, that you have ruled out PFC, Liberton, as a source of supply for England and Wales. I would however be grateful if you could take account of the following points regarding the factual content of paragraph 9 of the submission.

It is important to note that the PFC was designed to work on the continuous flow system and is capable of a high throughput when operated in this mode. The continuous flow system depends, of course, on shift working and apart from a trial period the PFC has not operated (and has not in fact needed to operate so far) in this way. Perhaps the first two sentences could read:-

"There is one other fractionation plant in the UK, PFC Liberton in Edinburgh which was designed for continuous flow operation, and in which DHSS invested £400,000 in the early 1970s with the intention that it would be capable of fractionating English plasma. In the event, the plant has not been able to do so because shift working arrangements have not yet been negotiated."

The impression is given in lines 5-7 that the capital investment of £6-7* millions would be required solely for the processing of English plasma. In fact about half of this sum will have to be spent in any case to fractionate plasma for Scotland and Northern Ireland to Medicines Inspectorate standards. This was explained in Macpherson's letter of 11 January 1982 to Harley. The penultimate sentence of paragraph 9 would need to be amended accordingly.

I note also that you have expressed a pretty firm line in the last sentence of the paragraph on the shiftworking issue. As I said in my letter of 16 July, we here take the view in the light of the known attitude of the main Scottish union official involved that an acceptable agreement can be negotiated, though not without difficulty. I am a little unhappy about the decision on this topic being based to any material extent on the concept of shift working being too difficult for the NHS.

Since I will need to keep the Scottish Minister concerned informed of developments, I should be grateful for a copy of your submission in final form and a few days notice of when it will go forward in DHSS.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

J WALKER

* Discussed with John Wankle (SHD) who in turn had spoken to Mr Walker. Over half of the £6-7m would be as a direct result of taking English plasma 19/9