

Miss M E Stuart

1. Please see my minute of 10 June to Mr Collier and his reply. We have spoken on the telephone, when you asked Supply Division to make a bigger contribution than we had been going to offer. I think that, upon reflection, we must decline. Mr Collier's reply shows our view of our own role; we simply buy material when we are asked to do so. I should add that there are no features of our dealings with Merck Sharp and Dohme that would indicate any particular manner of approach to them now.
  
2. The company has asked us when they can expect a reply to Mr Angel's letter of 21 April to the Minister. We have said that we expected it to be fairly soon.

GRO-C

B W TAYLOR  
DSB  
Room 212 Ext GRO-C  
Russell Square

14 June 1982

cc: Mr A J Collier  
Dr T Geffen  
Mr D Readhead

Mr A J Collier

HEPTAVAX

1. I would be grateful if you could look at the attached minutes and help me with some advice. Besides what is written down you should know that the Secretary of State did not see Mr Horam on 9 June, and no plans for a meeting have been made, and that Minister's advice was accepted without comment.

2. I am not bothered about conveying the bad news to Merck Sharp and Dohme. A letter could go explaining briefly the cost/benefit calculations we have done and that in the present state of the economy we have decided we cannot afford a central contract. But I am much less happy about saying that we do not wish them to market the vaccine in this country. It seems to me that it is questionable practice to seek to limit the freedom of health authorities. They might want to buy the vaccine for humanitarian or (more likely) for industrial relations motives. This last point seems to me very important. It might be that we should run into trouble with the Health and Safety Commission if we had actively prevented workers from being protected from a risk of their employment.

3. I am inclined to want a meeting about this, but as I began by saying, would welcome your advice first. I am sorry to resort to a minute, but I could not manage to ring you yesterday, you are out today, and I am out tomorrow.

GRO-C

B W TAYLOR  
DSB  
Room 212 Ext GRO-C  
Russell Square

10 June 1982

cc: Mr D Readhead

GRO-C

Mr Taylor

It is no longer a purchasing issue. A letter of this kind should go from the Minister (to whom the company wrote) drafted by the

GRO-C