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NBPM

AT 20/2
POLICY UNIT

PRIME MINISTER

SCOTT LITHGOW

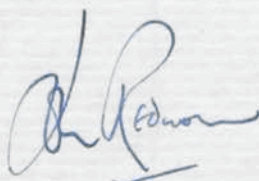
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There is still considerable uncertainty in the press and the public mind about what is happening at Scott Lithgow.

Norman Lamont explained in the House this week that other bidders could try their luck with Britoil and could put forward proposals.

It is vital that the press and public are satisfied that a fair competition between rival bidders has been held in view of recent sensitivity about Trafalgar House. It is also important that the aim of the operation is clarified. It is not privatisation of the yard at any price, rather it is to see if the private sector can come up with a cheaper way out for the Government than total closure.

Would it not be helpful if the press were briefed on both these matters clearly? It seems particularly important that the rival bidders should be aware of (a) the aim and (b) the time they have available to put together proposals.



JOHN REDWOOD
17 February 1984

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