

Prime Minister

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Lead emissions are
not themselves a cause of
acid rain.

W.0344

8 May 1984

PERB.

MR BUTLER

8.5

ACID RAIN - CHANCELLOR KOHL

The latter, I'm sure!
See GERMANY
visits of Kohl
K&S.

There is a curious error of translation or Chancellor Kohl's understanding of his brief in your note of his meeting with the Prime Minister. I hasten to correct it since the Prime Minister mentioned the German view of lead as a possible cause of acid rain in her meeting with Sir Keith Joseph on 3 May - at the time I didn't understand the reference.

Lead is only important in the acid rain controversy to the extent that it poisons vehicle exhaust catalysts which can be fitted to control emission of nitrogen oxides which in turn are believed to be one of the primary causes of acid rain. Thus exhaust catalysts require the adoption of Lead-free petrol as has happened in the USA and as is proposed in Germany. The UK and other European countries prefer 'lean-burn' engines to control nitrogen oxides but, as you know, the UK is also moving to lead-free petrol for human health reasons.

MBW

ROBIN B NICHOLSON
Chief Scientific Adviser

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

Dr. Nicholson

Acid Rain - Chancellor Kohl

Many thanks for your minute of 8 May (W.0344) which the Prime Minister has read with interest. I think it more likely that Chancellor Kohl misunderstood his brief than that there was any mistake in translation.

G. E. P. BUTLER

9 May, 1984.