



0012      ITEM 7 OF 22.2.83

## SCOTTISH NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

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JDC/EP

30th December 1982

Dr R Mitchell  
Director  
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Dear Ruthven

### Blood Supplies/Cardiac Surgery

I had cause to be discussing matters with colleagues in SHHD recently and mention was made of a letter you wrote to David Wheatley (16th December, 1982) which was copied to several colleagues, including Mr John Wastle.

Whilst we must hope that additional funds will be made available in due course, I am particularly anxious that every possible effort is made to ensure that patients requiring cardiac surgery in the West are managed in the optimal way and that surgery is not delayed because of lack of blood. To pick up the final part of the last sentence in your letter to David Wheatley "...I'm afraid that in the circumstances there would be no option but some kind of stop/go policy". I would suggest to you that there may be another option - the provision of red cell concentrates and even whole blood from other SNBTS Regional Centres.

Whilst I recognise that figures can be misleading, particularly in the context of fluctuating supply and demand for blood and blood products, the facts are that in the year ending 31st March, 1983 the SNBTS as a whole outdated more than 40,000 donations of whole blood and 35,000 donations of red cell concentrates. It may well transpire that the periods in the year when the West is short and the periods when other regions are short are identical. This topic, however, has not been explored and, in view of the significant potential implications contained in your letter to David Wheatley, I believe the time has come for me to place the matter on the Agenda for our next Co-ordinating Group meeting.

Perhaps I should conclude on a more philosophical note. One of the major advantages of introducing the pro rata system for factor VIII and albumin issues from PFC was that it provided the necessary stimulus for those regions who had traditionally found it difficult to increase supplies of plasma to PFC. The results have been, as you know, astonishingly successful. However, one of the major potential disadvantages of a pro rata system is that it tends to foster the development of extremes of self-sufficiency. I detect the presence of this trend and would emphasise that at all times we, as senior managers of the SNBTS, must attempt/....

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Dr R Mitchell

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attempt to strike the right balance. We need to remind ourselves that the pro rata system was self-imposed and not a dictate from "those officials". Common sense demands, previous experience points to fact, that real co-operation between the Regional Centres of the SNBTS is an essential option that needs to be explored continuously. The public, not to mention the Scottish blood donors, would be disturbed to discover that because of management failings patients in one part of Scotland were suffering because of a lack of blood and in an adjacent city blood was being discarded.

Kindest regards,

Yours sincerely



John D Cash