

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

6.1. The Committee's terms of reference direct its attention to the Department of Energy's regulations and to the role of the Certifying Authorities in relation to offshore safety. This Chapter sets out in summary form our conclusions and recommendations. We cannot emphasise too much however that safety will not be assured by regulatory controls alone. Safety of operations depends on the wholehearted commitment of owners, employers and employed who must fully accept their individual responsibility for the provision and operation of safe structures, plant, systems and procedures.

6.2. The role of Government is to set objectives designed to achieve a uniformly high standard of safety throughout the Industry and to ensure their achievement through monitoring and enforcement procedures.

6.3. The role of the Certifying Authorities is to provide independent verification of design, construction and operating procedures, particularly in areas of specialisation and where critical factors are involved in safeguarding from disaster.

6.4. The recommendations contain references to the paragraphs in Chapters 4 and 5 in which the background to each recommendation is indicated. The recommendations from 6.13 onwards refer to more detailed matters on which it appears to us that there should be either additional statutory controls, official guidance, or in some cases investigation to see whether further action is desirable. We have related our recommendations for additional statutory control to the Department of Energy's present regulations, and our recommendations for additional guidance or investigation to the Department of Energy itself. It is to be understood however that the need for guidance or investigation will exist irrespective of the identity of the responsible Government agency. We imply, without stating this on each occasion, that as with new regulations official guidance will only be issued after consultation with those affected.

Administration and enforcement

6.5. The Government shall discharge its responsibility for offshore safety via a single Government agency whose task is to set standards and to ensure their achievement (4.10).

6.6. We consider that the Department of Energy is capable of discharging this responsibility effectively, provided it is suitably strengthened and seeks advice from other bodies on matters of common concern. The strengthening is to provide the ability to monitor and where necessary set safety standards in relation to the selection, training and qualification of offshore personnel (5.130),