

PRIME MINISTER

DA VINCI MANUSCRIPT

You asked us to ensure that, if there was any question at all of Government intervention over the da Vinci Manuscript, you should be consulted in advance.

I understand that the Chancellor of the Duchy met Lord Coke yesterday. Lord Coke made it clear that the Holkham trustees were pretty well determined to go for auction in order to go for a true valuation. They are looking to raise funds to cover not only outstanding death duties, but expected death duties in the event of the death of the dowager.

The CDL took one step which might have led the Trustees to expect some Government interest. He asked whether they had in mind a minimum figure, which might allow them to contemplate a private sale. Lord Coke undertook to come back with an answer on this. But I understand that the conversation revealed that they had in mind the higher reaches of £4 to 10 million range canvassed in the press.

Lord Coke left by a back door to avoid the waiting press. Mr St John Stevas issued a brief statement saying that he and Lord Coke had a friendly discussion, and that it was clear that the Trustees were keen to proceed to auction.

22 October, 1980

Charles on

MAP

ms.

2
Aut &
Anonities