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THE PRIME MINISTER

14 February 1980

When I wrote to you last month about the Review Body's thirteenth report I said that I would let you know how our thinking developed.

We have carefully considered your recommendations, and I can tell you that, generally, we intend to propose their acceptance subject to certain modification.

On the secretarial allowance, we agree that the change in scope you have proposed will help members with their task and contribute to the better functioning of Parliament. However, while recognising the force of what you say about accountability, we do not feel it would be right to oblige Members to have their secretaries paid directly by the Fees Office, although we intend to offer every encouragement to them to participate in the agency scheme.

We fully understand your view that the recommendation on travel would assist Members to carry out their duties more effectively, but at the present time we feel unable to propose acceptance of this recommendation because of the potentially very high costs involved. This is the only recommendation we are unable to accept.

/ As you might

As you might expect, the most difficult issue relates to linkage for Members' pay. I know that you have been conscious of the feelings in the House on this and I have been grateful for the way you have examined the problems involved. We, for our part, do not believe that linkage would be the right course for Members' pay at the present time and we intend, therefore, subject to the views of the House, to invite you and your colleagues to undertake annual reviews of Parliamentary pay. I hope that, in the event, you will be able to accept this invitation.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks once again to you and your colleagues for the time and consideration you have given to this study.

(SGD) MT

The Rt. Hon. Lord Boyle of Handsworth