

cc: C.O.

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Five



Part. Mem.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8/18.6.79.

17 June 1979

MPs PAY

The Prime Minister discussed Members' pay with the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster at 1600 on 15 June. The Prime Minister expressed concern about the reception of the Boyle Report. She had hoped that it would deal more thoroughly with the question of allowances than it had in fact done. In discussion it became clear that a second report, now expected to be received during the Recess, would not cover allowances in the way which the Prime Minister had expected.

The Prime Minister also asked about the proposed staging of the payments, and how she could defend asking other groups of workers to exercise restraint when MPs would have voted themselves an 82% pay increase.

Mr. St. John Stevas said that he thought it would be possible to bring Members' pay up to the recommended level in three stages rather than two. He said that the public would complain whatever the amount of the increase was and however many stages there were. He thought that the reception of this report might be better than some of its predecessors. He urged the Prime Minister to accept that the report should be published and dealt with as quickly as possible.

He said that the Review Body had sought to give Members the option of devoting themselves full-time to their Parliamentary work if they so wished. The Prime Minister was unhappy about this, and doubtful about the justification for the level of salary recommended for the Members. Mr. St. John Stevas said that one could not distinguish for salary purposes between full-time and part-time Members.

Finally, the Prime Minister asked for a note on the components of a backbencher's income. She would like to have some updated details of the scale of the various allowances applicable to London Members and those from outside London, together with some information about how those allowances are updated. Mr. St. John Stevas said

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that he thought they were increased in line with the corresponding Civil Service allowances. I should therefore be grateful if you could let me have as soon as possible - and preferably on Monday 18 June, if it can be done - a short note setting out the components of a backbencher's salary, with some indication of their relative financial importance.

I am copying this letter for information only to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

NJS

John Stevens, Esq.,
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office

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