



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon Norman St John Stevas MP  
 Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster  
 Cabinet Office  
 Whitehall  
 London SW1A 2AS

*MSM*

1st June 1979

*4/6*

*Dear Chancellor,*

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE 1979-80

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 30 May to Mark Carlisle.

I fully appreciate that the request for reductions in expenditure on the Arts reached you both late in the day and in an unfortunate manner, and I regret this.

At our meeting yesterday afternoon I offered to find £1½ million from the National Land Fund as an increased contribution towards the required savings, provided you would find the rest of the £5 million I need. I was naturally very sorry you were not able to agree to this but I am glad to learn that you have since agreed to find one-half of the missing £1 million, and that Mark Carlisle will find the other half, which rounds off this exercise so far as DES and your Department are concerned. I well appreciate that it will be difficult and painful for you to find your £3 million, but virtually every other Minister is facing the same situation, and clearly your Department must take its proper share of the burden caused by exercises such as this.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, other members of the Cabinet, the Minister of Transport and Sir John Hunt.

*Yours sincerely,*

*John Biffen*

P.P. JOHN BIFFEN

[Approved by the Chief Secretary  
 and signed in his absence]