

PRIME MINISTER

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Quintin Hailsham sent me a copy of his letter of 14 February to you about the proposal to close the Chancery Lane Reading Room.

The option to close the Reading Room was one of several put forward by his Departments as their contribution to the recent manpower reductions exercise. If, in the light of press comment and the possible consequences of closure of the Reading Room, Quintin Hailsham would prefer not to continue with the proposal, then of course that is for him to decide.

If the proposal is abandoned, however, it will be necessary to put something in its place which will make an equivalent staff saving (£115,000 in 1982-83). If it is not possible to find this in the Public Record Office itself, I would be content with an additional contribution (of the same amount) from any of his other Departments. I know that there are many problems, but the savings in the Lord Chancellor's Department, the largest of the Departments, only amount to a little more than 1%.

There will of course be several proposals for staff savings that will be difficult to put through. But if we are to make these savings then I am sure we must stand firm, or we will find that the savings are whittled down to an unacceptable extent.

I am copying this to Quintin Hailsham.

P.C.

PAUL CHANNON

21 February 1980

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