

PRIME MINISTER

The attached letter from Lord Drogheda and Sir Claus Moser asks whether they can come and see you about the Royal Opera House Development Appeal.

I gather that the target for the first phase of the appeal is nearly £8m, and so far just over £5m. has been raised. When Lord Drogheda and Sir Claus Moser talk about seeking "your help and advice regarding our efforts to ensure the completion of the first phase of the programme", they are in fact going to ask you, I understand, whether the Government could contribute £1m. to the outstanding balance of the appeal. I am reliably informed that they have been advised to try to raise this with you by Mr. St. John-Stevas, who has told them that he has done all he can for the appeal and that if they wished to pursue further the possibility of Government help, you are their only hope.

I understand that Mr. St. John-Stevas has taken a similar line with a number of other pressure groups in the arts world who are seeking financial help from the Government, and this letter about the Royal Opera House may be only the first in a series of requests for meetings.

None the less, I am inclined to think that you should see Lord Drogheda and Sir Claus Moser and let them make their case. The Royal Opera House is a national institution, and I believe it would be right to let it be seen that you are taking the problem of the Development Appeal seriously, even if your conclusion is that you cannot provide any more Government money. Are you ready to see Lord Drogheda and Sir Claus Moser?

Yes not JWS.

22 February 1980