



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

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NOTICE → CF of  
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23 April 1986

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP  
Lord Privy Seal  
Lord Privy Seal's Office  
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LONDON  
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D. John.

COMPANY POLITICAL DONATIONS (GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS)

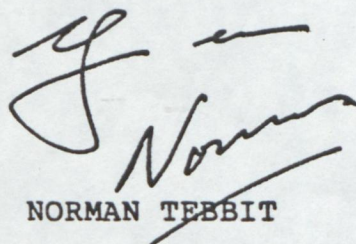
John Moore's letter of 14 April, regarding this Bill, raised again in my mind the question of why it is that we should recommend that Ministers should abstain in a vote on measures to which we are fundamentally opposed.

I can appreciate why we should be wary of asking Ministers to vote against such Bills. It imposes a burden on them, and on the Whips; it might place Government credibility at risk if the majority drops; and give implicit approval if we abstain, instead of voting against. Not least, there are simpler and more effective means of blocking progress on these Bills.

Nevertheless, none of these reasons seems to me to be sufficient to constrain Ministers from voting against Bills to which we have fundamental objections, should they wish to do so. In effect, Ministers who were present would be free to join their backbench colleagues in opposing some of these particularly objectionable measures.

I should be glad to know your view as to whether we can amend our formal procedures to allow this discretion.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Willie Whitelaw, to members of L Committee, the Chief Whips in both Houses, and to the Secretaries of L Committee.

  
NORMAN TEBBIT



PARLIAMENT - Legislation Pt 14