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WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

The Rt Hon George Younger TD DL MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2HB

5 October 1987

NBM

Dear George,

RATE REFORM: CROWN PROPERTY

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 14 September to Nicholas Ridley about the position of servicemen under the community charge system. I have now seen his reply dated 22 September. It seems to me that, for the reasons Nicholas Ridley has given, it would be quite out of the question to accept your proposal that servicemen and their dependents living in Crown property should be exempt from the community charge. This would go against all that we have been saying about it being a nearly universal obligation, and would undermine the clear line we have taken that the charge should apply to those living in various forms of tied accommodation. Moreover, any implication that the registration system could not handle a mobile group such as servicemen would call in question the ability of the new system to achieve satisfactory coverage in the population at large.

I therefore support what Nicholas Ridley has said, and must ask you to agree that servicemen and their dependents should be liable for the charge, subject of course to the development of detailed arrangements for the treatment of special cases on the basis outlined in his original proposals.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, the Lord President, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Members of E(LF) and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours over,
Mick

MALCOLM RIFKIND

LOCAL GOVT: Galana PTO

