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The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw CH MC  
Lord President of the Council  
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My ref:

Your ref:

*Prime Minister* 29 November 1987

*Dear Sir*

*slr  
10/11*

# RATES REFORM BILL

In your letter of 15 October, you suggested that we should take stock of progress on the Rates Reform Bill again in mid-November.

Since I last wrote to you at the beginning of October, Parliamentary Counsel has sent us draft clauses on almost all of the key provisions. The only outstanding items of any substance are community charge capping, rebates and repeals and consequential. It is also clear that we will need to revise what Counsel has drafted on transitional provisions when E(LF)'s present discussions are concluded, though for obvious reasons, we have not yet been able to instruct him on these.

*See* As you know, both Michael and I place great store on having Second Reading before Christmas. We think, given Counsel's present rate of progress, that we will have a Bill ready for Introduction at the beginning of next month. The Bill will be far from perfect. It will require considerable amendment during its Commons' Stages but even if we were to delay Introduction until immediately before or after Christmas, I do not believe we would have a Bill so much better that it would be worth the price of this delay. We may not, however, be able to accommodate some minor provisions dealing with education block grant and provisions relating to TSG and the abolition of the LRT ratepayer levy.

It is therefore my view that we should continue to aim to go to 'L' and introduce during the first week of December. We could then look to have Second Reading during the week beginning 14 December and to begin Committee after the Christmas Recess.

All this, of course, is subject to your views and the views of the Business Managers. If you would like to discuss this, Michael and I would be happy to come over and see you.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Secretaries of State for Wales, Education and Science, Scotland and Transport, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chief Whip, First Parliamentary Counsel and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Nicholas Ridley*

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

*Armstrong*

