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PRIME MINISTER

COMMUNITY CHARGE: EXEMPTIONS

A number of colleagues have now commented on Nicholas Ridley's proposals for responding to the undertakings that had been given at Committee Stage of the Local Government Finance Bill to consider exemptions from the personal community charge.

The treatment of volunteer workers is certain to be a very difficult issue when we consider exemptions and rebates at Report Stage. The pressure that we came under earlier on this question was most intense and unless the Government brings forward an amendment of its own, I am in no doubt that we shall be defeated. We could then find ourselves in the unenviable position of having a wide ranging exemption for volunteers written into the Bill. Tightening the definition of those eligible would be far from easy and we would run the risk of ending up with a provision which would be far more extensive than originally envisaged. I recognise that Malcolm Rifkind and Kenneth Clarke have some reservations about the principle of exempting volunteers, but for the reasons given above I believe that the Government should bring forward its own tightly drawn amendment at Report Stage.

I am sending a copy of this minute to the other members of E(LF), the Chief Whips in both Houses and to Sir Robin Butler.

John Belstead

BELSTEAD

14 June 1988

Local Government



Future of the Rating System P-110

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