



n.b.P.M.

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PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

13 November 1990

Dear Phillip,

Acap P20

The Lord President and Chief Whip today discussed the proposal, in Barry Potter's letter of 17 October, that there might be a Government Handout Bill to exempt certain 19 and 19-year old school leavers from paying the community charge prior to their becoming students at a university or polytechnic. They have also seen Jim Gallagher's letter to you of 7 November.

The Lord President doubts whether, in business management terms, a Private Member's Bill to deal with the "student gap" problem is desirable. The issue of exemption from the community charge is highly contentious, and a number of different groups are seeking special treatment. It seems very unlikely that a Bill could be drafted which would not open up the way for a raft of amendments to exempt particular groups from paying the charge, in ways which the Government have consistently resisted. There are already two Government Bills which will provide an opportunity for community charge issues to be debated and it would, in the Lord President's view, be wrong to provide a further opportunity for such debate in the present Session. He agrees with the Scottish Secretary that the question of the "Student gap" should be held over for the time being.

I am copying this letter to Barry Potter, to the Private Secretaries of the other members of E(LG), to Murdo Maclean, Sir Robin Butler and First Parliamentary Counsel.

T J SUTTON
Principal Private Secretary

Phillip Ward Esq
PS/Secretary of State for the Environment

