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SECRET.



SCOTTISH OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

MALCOLM RIFKIND
Approved by the Secretary of State
and signed in his absence

Rt Hon John Moore MP
Secretary of State for Social Services
Alexander Fleming House
Elephant and Castle
LONDON SE1

2 October 1987

Dear Secretary of State *NBR*

at flap

1. I was surprised at the terms of your letter of 28 September to John Major about the terms in which you propose to uprate benefits in respect of rate liabilities at 1988. I did not know that this was being discussed bilaterally: in view of the past history and because of the complexity and sensitivity of the issues I had certainly expected collective consideration.

2. I note what you say about the pressures on your timetable. Since you are formally concerned only with the 1988 regime at the moment, I am prepared to say that, if colleagues generally are content with what is proposed, I would not wish to dissent.

3. I do want however to register my strong concern that we must make quick progress with the collective discussion you envisage in respect of the community charge, which in Scotland is the 1989 regime. In indicating my acquiescence to your 1988 proposals I have considered in a preliminary way whether they seem likely to provide a satisfactory basis from which to move forward to the 1989 regime; but I will certainly want to look closely at your E(LF) proposals which I hope can come quite soon.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Tom King, Nicholas Ridley, Peter Walker, Norman Fowler, John Wakeham, David Waddington, Sir Robert Armstrong and John Moore.

Yours sincerely
Malcolm Rifkind

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