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The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

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From The Secretary of State for Wales

K August 1984

Secretary of State

N 15/8

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 6 August 1984 to Nigel Lawson.

I am sure it is right that we should now authorise officials to explain the work which has been done to prepare and apply the synthetic index to the EC Commission subject to the qualifications you mention. It is clearly very important that we should eliminate any risk of having to make belated, and enforced, changes to the map after it has been settled. I also accept that we should make every effort, consistent with arriving at a map and scheme which fully reflects both our objectives and conditions on the ground, to introduce the new arrangements with the minimum of delay. I am, therefore, content that the customary two month delay between the Royal Assent and the Act coming into effect should be dispensed with.

On the other issues on which progress is sought, I have to say that, while I accept the desirability of advancing as quickly as possible with the aim of meeting our November target, I have considerable doubts that we shall be able to reach conclusions on all the matters bound up with the new grant arrangements and the assisted area map itself.

From past experience, where the issues involved were much less complex and interwoven than they are in the present exercise, I believe we shall have to be prepared for a longer period of consideration than your letter allows for. In this context I am personally very concerned since I shall be out of the country on an inward investment visit while discussions about the effects of the new arrangements on Wales are taking place.

/On the question ...

The Rt Hon Norman Tebbit MP
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry
1-19 Victoria Street
London
SW1



On the question of taking an advance decision in principle on admitting the West Midlands into the assisted area map, I am not opposed to this provided that the evidence available to us at E(A) supports the decision and that questions of the nature and extent of any designation should be taken in the context of the map exercise as a whole.

I am copying this to the other members of E(A), the Lord Privy Seal, members of the Committee, Sir Robert Armstrong and the first Parliamentary Counsel.

Yours sincerely

Approved by the Secretary of State
and signed in his absence