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The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

From The Secretary of State for Wales

30 October 1986

CONFIDENTIAL

NBN

*John Willie*

**COMMUNITY CHARGE: FRAMEWORK OF DUTIES AND OFFENCES**

I have seen the letters to you from Douglas Hurd of 2 October, Nicholas Ridley of 20 October and Malcolm Rifkind of 21 October about the penalty to be levied on individuals who repeatedly refuse to supply information for the community charge register.

I agree with Nicholas and Malcolm that an enhanced penalty is necessary for a second offence given that there will be no discretion to mitigate the penalty for the first one; and I would be content with the sum set at £200. Compiling and maintaining the community charge registers to an acceptable level of coverage is one of the major areas of difficulty of the rates reform proposals and one which has attracted a lot of attention in the consultation period. It is important that we do all we can to discourage non-co-operation from the individuals who will have to respond to canvasses and requests for information. Local authorities will otherwise not be slow to point out to us the time and effort which they will have to expend in making repeated attempts to obtain registration details and the implications for the scope of the register where they are not successful. We must keep these cases down to a minimum and increasing the penalty fourfold for a second offence is the main way to do so.

I am copying this letter to other members of E(LF), to the Lord Chancellor, the Attorney General, the Lord Advocate and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*John Willie*

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