



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

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12 March 1987

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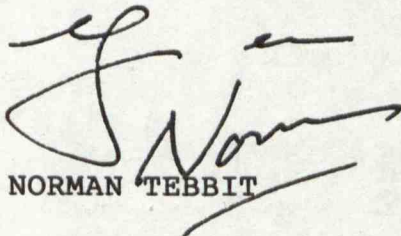
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D Willie.

COMMUNITY CHARGE: MARRIED AND UNMARRIED COUPLES

I have seen Nicholas Ridley's letter of 27 February, that from Malcolm Rifkind on the same day, and from Quintin Hailsham on 9 March. *at trap*

As regards the question of whether couples, whether married or otherwise cohabiting, there should be jointly and severally liable for the full amount of the debt at any point. The difference between Scottish and English law will serve to focus attention on this point. Quintin Hailsham argues most effectively the point of principle at stake. I agree with him. It seems to me unsustainable that the fact of cohabitation for any period, however short, should make one partner responsible for the retrospective liabilities of the other. Quintin goes on to propose a means of tackling this question. I agree with him. It seems both reasonable and workable.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, members of E(LF), and to Sir Robert Armstrong.


NORMAN TEBBIT

LOCAL GOVT : Rating PT6

