



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Personal Minute
No. 1 of 90

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

May I, through you, express my appreciation of the work of the officials in the Department of the Environment working on the Community Charge. Local government finance is a subject of fiendish complexity, the modern day equivalent to the Schleswig-Holstein question. These complexities were compounded by the transition from one regime to another. On top of that each authority has its own characteristics, its own difficulties.

That you and David Hunt were able to put across the Government's case so effectively, whether in meetings with individual colleagues or in the House, owes much to the quality of the advice and briefing you have received from your officials. That they have been able so quickly to identify the impact of the changes, authority by authority, put you in a position to challenge successfully many of the points being made to you. I too have been grateful for the briefing provided for me, both for Questions and in relation to my own constituency.

The last few weeks have put great pressures on all of the officials involved. I and colleagues are extremely grateful for the service they have given and for the excellence of the work done. Ministers are fortunate in this country to have a Civil Service of such quality.

I am copying this minute to the Secretary to the Cabinet.

Nayana Datta

22 January 1990

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