

Housing

Prime Minister

HOUSING ACT 1980 - EXCLUSION OF LEASEHOLD PROPERTIES
FROM THE RIGHT TO BUY

1. Bob Dunn, who is absolutely first class, came to see me this morning.
2. He handed to me the enclosed copy letter dated 11th January from the Leader of the Conservative Group on the Southwark Borough Council.
3. In Dulwich, where, at the last Election, Sam Silkin had a majority of 122 only, a very large number of Council Houses are owned, leasehold, by the Council. But tenants of those properties are in despair because they believe that you promised them the right to buy their Council House or Council Flat. Now they find that they cannot, and they think that they have been betrayed.
4. Bob Dunn says, and I agree with him, that in constituencies like Dulwich, the sense of betrayal which these Council tenants feel (about 100,000 throughout the country) could cost us two or three seats at the next Election.

That is, of course, of importance: what is of greater importance is that having made the promise that tenants would have the right to buy, and having it in our power to give that right, we should do so without delay.

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5. May I again ask, please, that the Bill which has been drafted already should be introduced into the House of Commons forthwith, with a commitment that it should receive the Royal Assent at the earliest possible moment.
6. Whatever advice you may receive from other sources, I still believe that a large majority of our colleagues in the House of Commons would prefer to give up a few days holiday than betray a promise which we gave, which we meant to give, which we have broken, and which it is still within our power to honour.
7. If I have your consent, I would like to send copies of this Minute, and of its attachment, to the Leader of the House, and to the Chief Whip.

10th February 1982



IAN GOW