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10 DOWNING STREET

CC LPO
CDL

THE PRIME MINISTER

26 June 1979

Dear Lord Boyle,

In my letter of 20 June I said I would be writing to you further about the expenses incurred by Ministers in the House of Lords.

I am now writing to ask whether the Review Body would, in the timescale of its present review, be able to include the question of some form of support allowance for Ministers and Office-Holders in the House of Lords, analagous to the secretarial and other allowances paid in the Commons. The purpose of such an allowance would be to ensure that no Minister or Office-Holder in the house of Lords would have to meet unreasonable costs himself through the necessary performance of his duties.

As you know, we have accepted the recommendation made by the Review Body that the limited entitlement of Ministers and Office-Holders in the Lords to draw Peers' Expenses Allowance should end when their revised salaries have been implemented in full. Nevertheless, I am sure you will know that Ministers and Office-Holders may be at a disadvantage compared with their Commons counterparts in that they are also called upon from time to time to perform non-Ministerial Parliamentary duties. For example, members of the public may treat a Lords Ministers or Office-Holder almost as if he were an MP and write to him because his name is prominent even when the subjects raised have little to do with that individual's official responsibilities.

/Individuals

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Individuals feel bound to deal with subjects raised in this way and I am sure that they should not be out of pocket for so doing. And there are other forms of expense which may fall on Ministers and Office-Holders too. I look forward to receiving your views on this question as part of your forthcoming report.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Boyle of Handsworth.