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MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

PRIME MINISTER

THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 1981

Nicholas Edwards sent me a copy of his minute of 24 March about his proposal for a scrutiny of the processing of compulsory purchase orders and other orders and appeals in the Welsh Office.

I welcome this proposal, to which I understand you have agreed. My Department naturally has a close interest in the subjects to be studied. I am happy to make the Planning Inspectorate available for consultation as suggested, and I shall be interested to consider whether the recommendations arising from the scrutiny can be applied in DOE.

I am making several improvements in this area in my own Department already. The compulsory purchase order work in our Regional Offices was embraced in last year's Rayner scrutiny and, arising from this, we are now considering the extent to which we could disengage from unopposed local authority CPOs. I issued a Consultation Paper on the handling of planning appeals, public inquiries and related work last year; we are now following this up - transferring more appeals to Inspectors, providing for quicker



on-the-spot decisions, and experimenting with informal hearings. I am also considering the results of a study by management consultants of the internal operation of the Planning Inspectorate.

So much is on move in this area already that I would not wish to delay its implementation by embarking on a further scrutiny. But the Welsh Office study team are very welcome to draw on our experience and their recommendations will be of great interest to us.

I am copying this minute to Nicholas Edwards, George Younger, Mark Carlisle, Norman Fowler and Sir Derek Rayner.

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