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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

13 April 1981

Dear John,

BRIXTON : INQUIRY

The Prime Minister discussed the weekend's events in Brixton with the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Chief Whip this morning. I passed the essential conclusions of the discussion to Stephen Boys-Smith by telephone as soon as the meeting was over. The purpose of this letter is to confirm what I told him.

Ministers agreed that there would have to be an inquiry into what had happened at Brixton. It should be carried out by Lord Scarman, if he was prepared to accept the task. He should sit alone, and ideally he should conduct the inquiry in private, although it might be necessary to say that the evidence presented to him would be published when the inquiry had been completed. The Home Secretary pointed out, however, that Lord Scarman might himself feel that at least a part of the inquiry should be conducted in public, and if that was so it would be necessary to give him the power to sit in public.

After further discussion it was agreed that the terms of reference of the inquiry should be:

"To inquire urgently into the serious disorder in Brixton on 10-12 April and to report, with the power to make recommendations".

I am sending copies of this letter to David Heyhoe (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

Heri Whitmore.

John Halliday Esq.,
Home Office.

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