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be. Mount  
Sherbourne  
Ingham

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 July 1983

Dear John,

Meeting with Mr. Alan Greengross

The Prime Minister had a meeting this morning with Mr. Alan Greengross, the Leader of the Conservative Group on the GLC.

Your Secretary of State, Mr. Ferdie Mount and Mr. Stephen Sherbourne were also present.

Mr. Greengross said that the Conservative Group on the GLC had declared themselves in support of the Manifesto commitment to abolish the GLC, and they believed that wherever reasonably possible the boroughs should perform the functions currently carried out by the GLC. The task was to identify these functions. But they believed that there were some functions which ought to be carried out at a higher level, because they went across borough boundaries, were too sensitive or too costly to be dealt with by the boroughs. The Government's proposal for Joint Boards might result in the creation of more overspenders of the ILEA kind, since the ILEA was no more than a Joint Board at present: the borough members of the ILEA consistently had argued in favour of higher expenditure, except in election years. But the principal concern of the Conservative Group was that London should continue to have a voice. This would require the creation of a new forum, whose membership, they suggested, should be part elected representatives, part representatives of important interests - industry, the arts and so on. This new forum would have no executive functions, but its task would be co-ordination, and the representation of London's interests to central government. The new body could be obliged by statute to work within whatever financial limits the Secretary of State for the Environment laid down, but to argue that, within this total, resources should be allocated in one way or another. Expenditure on the new body might be constrained, say, by the product of a penny rate.

The Prime Minister said that if there were a need for a voice for London this could be supplied in a number of ways: the House of Commons might decide to set up a London Grand Committee on the lines of the Scottish and Welsh Grand Committees; or there could be a Minister for London. She believed, however, that the Lord Mayor of London already provided the necessary representative office. She did not believe that the proposed new body would have any real function. It would turn into a lobby for higher expenditure from different parts of central government. She disliked the corporatist

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aspect of the proposal, and did not see the need for an advisory committee, which was what the new body would amount to. She did not accept that ILEA functioned as a pure joint committee, because of the existence of the co-opted members. Once such a body consisted, even in part, of elected members, it would be tempted to seek to override other elected bodies. As proposed, it would be a talking shop, and she suspected that industry would not nominate its best people to be members.

The Prime Minister, who had another meeting, then asked your Secretary of State to continue the discussion with Mr. Greengross.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Michael Scholten*

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John Ballard, Esq.,  
Department of the Environment.

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