

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY**

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*From the Permanent Secretary*

Sir Kenneth Stowe KCB CVO

PERSONAL

Robin Butler Esq  
10 Downing Street

20 December 1982

*Dear Robin.*

As you may have gathered, my Secretary of State did not receive his copy of the Prime Minister's letter of 16 September to Mr Whitelaw, asking for a five year "forward look" by Christmas. The first we knew of this letter was a reminder from your office last week. Our Private Office has searched extensively through our generally reliable document-logging system and can find no trace of the original letter.

We shall, of course, let the Prime Minister have the information requested, we hope by this Wednesday. There is no point now in trying to decide whether the 16 September letter was lost by your distribution system or by our Private Office. It was plainly lost in one or other or between the two. The important point for the future, I think, is that in any such large exercise with a long time-scale an interim reminder on progress might be helpful.

*Yours  
Ken.*

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24 December 1982

Thank you for your letter of 20 December. I am sorry that your Secretary of State's copy of the Prime Minister's letter of 16 September to Mr. Whitelaw went astray between our Office and yours. In fact, that was a form of interim reminder since the exercise was originally launched by remit in the Cabinet minutes of 29 July.

AER BUTLER

Sir Kenneth Stowe, KCB, CVO.