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PRIME MINISTER

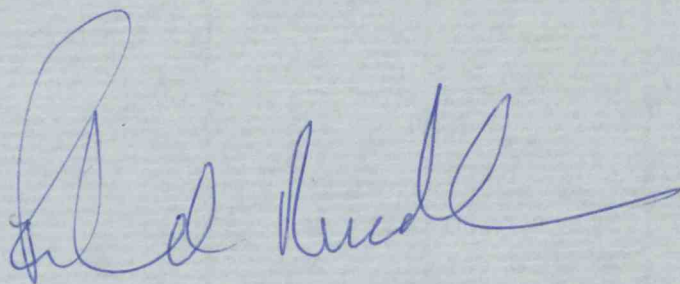
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PPB 26/11

At lunch on Monday I mentioned a successful initiative at one of our hospitals in Northern Ireland to reduce waiting time for hip surgery and I promised to let you have some details.

I now enclose a note on the scheme, which incidentally won the top award in the Health Service Journal's NHS Staff Suggestion Scheme Award Competition.

I have met Professor Mollan and his colleagues at Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast, who were responsible for the initiative and I know that they would be glad to share their ideas with colleagues elsewhere. I feel sure that this is an example of good practice which could profitably be adopted by health authorities in the rest of the country. I have therefore arranged for the scheme to be included in the Guide to Economy and Efficiency measures practised in the NHS, which is published by the National Association of Health Authorities in England and Wales.



RICHARD NEEDHAM

26 November 1987

HIP REPLACEMENT - FIRST PRIZE FOR STAFF

An initiative by Musgrave Park Hospital Staff to reduce waiting time for hip surgery recently won the top award in the Health Service Journal's Third NHS Staff Suggestion Scheme Award Competition which is run in co-operation with the Department of Health and Social Security, London.

The three-pronged initiative consisted of:

- a. the introduction of a central computerised system;
- b. the formation of a "hip pool" for patients waiting more than 6 months for hip replacement; and
- c. the setting up of a hip assessment clinic.

Patients waiting for over 6 months were transferred to the "hip pool" and were no longer the responsibility of a single consultant thus preventing any consultant developing a long waiting list.

As a result of the new strategy, by February this year waiting time had been reduced to 6 months from between 2 and 10 years.

The total number on the waiting list have been reduced from over 1,000 in September 1986 to 500 in September 1987.

Very interesting