

PRIME MINISTER

John Whittingdale is suggesting to you that you should give the CPS enquiry into the NHS some official blessing.

I should like to add a word of caution here.

If the CPS does its job, it will come up with some really radical suggestions - more radical than the Government can accept. But radicalism courts political risk, as we found out with the CPRS report before the 1983 election. These risks can be avoided if the CPS study is at arms length from Government. But conveying any official blessing on their work makes it harder to maintain the arms length relationship.

Our line in Parliament would also be difficult. We will be telling Parliament that we were unwilling to have an "external review" while at the same time we would have given, in private, some degree of official blessing to the CPS enquiry which we would have to deny in public.

I am sure we can find ways of conveying to the Chairman of the enquiry your interest in the results of his work once he has been appointed. But any sort of official blessing for the Committee's work seems to court unnecessary risks. *I agree*

N.L.W.

NIGEL WICKS

19 January 1988

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