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From the Principal Private Secretary

21 March 1988

Dear David,

NHS REVIEW

I have shown the Prime Minister your letter of 18 March in which you seek advice on a reply to a letter from Donald Dewar about your Secretary of State's role in the NHS Review.

You suggest in your letter that your Secretary of State's reply should make three points:

- (i) "All the relevant Departments, including his own, were making an input to the Government's Review of the Health Service".

The Prime Minister agrees that your Secretary of State should use this line. She is content too that he should offer his suggestions, by way of a paper relating to the Scottish health scene, for consideration by herself and the group of Ministerial colleagues considering the NHS Review. She has agreed too that the Secretaries of State for Wales and Northern Ireland should also feel ready to offer papers relating to the health scene in Wales and Northern Ireland respectively for consideration by the Ministerial group.

- (ii) "It was a Review by the Government as a whole but there was nothing unusual in a smaller group of Ministers having an initial go at a subject but before it was considered more widely".

The Prime Minister believes that this sentence is much too defensive. She thinks it better simply to say, if your Secretary of State is pressed on this aspect, that he would, in the normal way, contribute to the discussions and decisions on the NHS in Scotland.

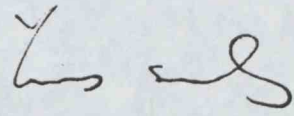
- (iii) "Consultations on implementation will be likely to follow announcement of the results of the Government's Review".

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The Prime Minister does not think that your Secretary of State should refer to consultations on implementation because Ministers have not yet decided how to announce conclusions to the Ministerial Review.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Secretary of State for Social Services, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretaries of State for Wales and Northern Ireland and Sir Robin Butler.


Nigel Wicks

N. L. WICKS

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