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CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

ICL

I have now heard from Sir Christophor Laidlaw that yesterday's Board meeting of ICL passed off smoothly. I had on Monday spoken to Sir Michael Edwardes, and impressed upon him the need to respect the objections that had been raised. This, and the new realism being shown by other members of the ICL Board, mean that the way now appears clear for an orderly transition from Laidlaw's chairmanship to that of Edwardes, who will become Deputy Chairman on 1 January 1984, and full Chairman on 1 April.

2 This leaves unresolved the wider questions referred to in my minute of 24 November, which you have picked up, and are recorded in your Private Secretary's letter of 30 November. In particular, there is the question of establishing what is the proper and productive relationship we should seek between ICL and BT. I am pursuing this, with a view to seeing how ICL's future can best be secured. I shall want to discuss this with you once things have become slightly clearer, and certainly before any irrevocable decisions.

3 I am copying this to Nigel Lawson and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

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1 December 1983

Department of Trade & Industry

Prime Minister

Mr Tebbit will report to you, probably orally, on his news on BT/ICL, after he returns from Saudi Arabia.

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