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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

5 April 1988

Dear Jill,

FINANCIAL REPORTING TO PARLIAMENT

The Prime Minister was grateful for the Chief Secretary's minute of 29 March and the attached memorandum.

The Prime Minister accepts there is a good case for a programme of changes to the public expenditure documents on the basis proposed. She is however concerned about the implication that the debate on public expenditure in January/February should be replaced by a new Parliamentary debate in May/June. A debate at this time, while the Finance Bill is still before the House, could lead to the whole Budget stance being questioned. It could also make it more difficult to restrict discussion to the expenditure plans agreed in the previous year and increase the questioning on the new year's Survey. The Prime Minister would therefore be grateful if the Lord President and the Chief Secretary could give further thought to this aspect of the proposals.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to other members of the Cabinet, Eleanor Goodison (Office of the Minister for the Arts), Myles Wickstead (Overseas Development Administration), Michael Saunders (Law Officers' Department), Alan Maxwell (Lord Advocate's Department) and to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours,
Paul

Paul Gray

Ms Jill Rutter
Chief Secretary's Office.

JR