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From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref.A084/49

5 January 1984

Management of Private Sector Blocks of Flats

Thank you for your letter of 16 December about your Secretary of State's intention to invite Mr John Wheeler MP to serve on the Committee to examine the management of private sector blocks of flats.

Sir Robert Armstrong (who is a constituent of Mr Wheeler's) has no doubt that Mr Wheeler has qualifications and experience which would equip him well for membership of this Committee. But he does wonder whether it is wise to put a Member of Parliament on to a Committee of this kind. There will be a danger of such an appointment being seen (particularly as it is not to be balanced by the appointment of an Opposition backbencher) as liable to politicise the Committee's work, or even as an attempt by the Government to condition the findings in a political sense favourable to the Government. Sir Robert doubts whether Mr Wheeler's qualifications are so uniquely valuable as to offset the potential disadvantages and risks of political criticism to which this appointment would give rise. But these are essentially political considerations, on which it is for Ministers, and in the end to the Prime Minister, to make a judgment. If the Secretary of State is minded to proceed with the appointment, it should clearly be referred both to the Prime Minister and to the Chief Whip.

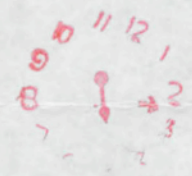
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With the compliments of
The Private Secretary to the
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