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SIR ROBIN IBBS

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"TIMES" ARTICLE ON NHS SCRUTINIES

I have now been told that Nicholas Timmins' article which appeared on 20 February was based on factual briefing by the DHSS press office about the scrutinies and subsequent discussions he had with at least one of the NHS administrators who worked on the scrutinies. It was coincidence that it appeared shortly after I had minuted Mr Barclay in response to the Prime Minister's request for information about unimplemented scrutiny recommendations.

I am also told that the Secretary of State will be writing to colleagues very shortly with new ideas on how to move ahead on the five scrutinies that have reported. He is planning to publish two next week (advertising and transport) and two the week after (road traffic accidents and ambulances). Accommodation will be released after pilot studies to test its validity (even so probably by Easter).

Only a small number of recommendations require action at the centre; the others will be put back into the hands of the Regional and District Chairmen who will be expected to build the savings into their improvement programmes and will be required to identify in general terms what they have achieved as part of the annual planning process. You will receive the Secretary of State's proposals in draft for comment and I will brief you then about what will be necessary to ensure this is real cash and not just paper savings.

I am copying this to David Barclay (No 10) Christopher Monkton (Policy Unit) and Richard Hatfield.

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IAN B BEESLEY
22 February 1984

23 JAN 1984

