PRIME MINISTER

REVIEW OF OFFICE ACCOMMODATION MANAGEMENT

I have seen a copy of Grey Gowrie's report to you on the multi-department review of office accommodation. This is an important if unexciting subject and it is clear that there are substantial savings to be had.

Departments and PSA will have to set themselves tough targets and work towards them with a much greater sense of urgency and energy than they currently show in accommodation matters. They should concentrate particularly on reducing space in London where costs are highest and they should go on looking for continued savings after the first three year target period is up. As always your known interest will be crucial. I suggest that you ask all departments and the PSA to let you have a short interim statement in two years time of accommodation savings already achieved.

Accomodation savings should not mean that civil servants work in squalid surroundings as, on the evidence in the report, too many do at present. If their space saving targets are tough enough, I believe departments should be allowed a proportion of the savings actually achieved to spend on improving the quality of their offices.

My advice is that you should approve the report and publication and urge Departments to produce action plans and start implementation as swiftly as possible. They should regard the three years for implementation as a maximum and aim to get results more quickly.

I am copying this to Robert Armstrong.

ROBIN IBBS
1 July 1985