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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

17 December 1984

REVIEW OF ROAD TRAFFIC LAW

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 10 December about the proposed review of road traffic law. The Prime Minister is content with the proposals set out in the minute, subject to the views of colleagues, and has no objection to the choice of Dr. P. North as Chairman.

I am sending copies of this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), Richard Stoate (Lord Chancellor's Office), Hugh Taylor (Home Office), David Peretz (HM Treasury), John Graham (Scottish Office), Colin Jones (Welsh Office), Graham Sandiford (Northern Ireland Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

David Barclay

Miss Dinah Nichols,
Department of Transport.

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Prime Minister (2)

To note at this stage. Mr Kidley proposes to announce a review of some aspects of road traffic law - see list at A.

JMB 11/12

PRIME MINISTER

REVIEW OF ROAD TRAFFIC LAW

When my Private Secretary replied at the end of last year to your office's letter on reducing the burden of regulation, she mentioned that the Home Secretary and I were considering the case for a basic review of road traffic legislation. This would have the object of producing a simpler structure, easier to understand and with sentencing related more clearly to the offences committed. More recently, I referred to the possibility of a review in a speech to the ROSPA conference in October and there have been some, albeit rather confused, references to this in the media.

Leon Brittan and I have now decided that a fundamental review of the whole body of road traffic law would be too large a task to take on at one time. We have, therefore, set our sights a little lower and are constituting a small review body, with an independent Chairman, one other independent member and two officials from each of the Home Office and my Department, which will consider a number of the most difficult issues where it is known that the present law is not working well. We have cleared our plans with other interested Departments, who are all content for the review to go ahead in this form.

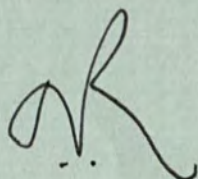
Whether the Committee might later tackle other matters and so eventually take in most of the problem areas, is a question we have left open for the moment but it looks an attractive possibility if their consideration of this limited list is judged a success.

Our choice for chairman, Dr Peter North, Principal of Jesus College, Oxford, has agreed to take on this task. We are anxious to make an announcement quickly and so get the review formally under way before the Recess. I am enclosing a copy of the announcement I would propose to make through a Parliamentary Answer. It assumes that we have already appointed the second

independent member. (Lady Anglesey is considering an invitation.) But if the search is protracted and the degree of public interest justifies it, I would propose to announce the review and its chairman, and to leave the announcement of the other members until later.

I envisage a report from the new body in about a year. That would give us time to consult on and consider those recommendations before the end of this Parliament, and, I would hope, enable us to announce that we have proposals ready for the next which could be widely seen as more effective, comprehensive and acceptable than the present system.

I am sending copies of this letter to Willie Whitelaw, Quintin Hailsham, Leon Brittan, Nigel Lawson, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards, Douglas Hurd and Sir Robert Armstrong.



Nicholas Ridley
10 December 1984

MANPOWER
Seminar
Pt 3

175
175 DEC 1984

234