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## 10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

8 March 1984

### Scrutinies and Value for Money

The Prime Minister has recently been looking at the state of play on improving value for money in government through scrutinies and closely related work. She continues to be impressed by what can be achieved in this way and hopes that Ministers will continue to target scrutinies on good areas and that Permanent Secretaries will use their best people as examining officers.

The Prime Minister feels, in addition, that we need to maintain a strong presumption that scrutinies lead to prompt decisions and action. She is concerned that, unless momentum is maintained, the system will clog up and prevent the right sense of urgency being achieved.

On the basis of the targets for improving value for money in 1984/85 Mrs. Thatcher is most impressed by the action your Secretary of State is taking to improve performance. She has asked me to say that she is wholly behind your Secretary of State in all this and looks forward to seeing implementation of the results. The Prime Minister would also be grateful to be kept informed of progress in securing the improvements identified during the recent review of the Prisons and hopes that urgent action will be possible to take advantage of this work which has opened up new possibilities of management action in a difficult area.

I am copying this to Sir Robin Ibbs and Sir Robert Armstrong.

(David Barclay)

Hugh Taylor, Esq.,  
Home Office