



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 data you supply to the Efficiency Unit, Mrs. Thatcher noted that although many of the recommendations from the 1980 scrutiny of Payments of Benefits to the Unemployed have been implemented, significant savings are still associated with other recommendations for which decisions have not yet been taken. The Prime Minister hopes that it might be possible to seek early decisions and firm dates on these matters too.

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

(David Barclay)

David Normington, Esq.,
Department of Employment



Mr Barclay

I wd be inclined to send
them a copy of the letter
to DE.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 March 1984

Dear Ian,

Scrutinies and value for money:
Payment of unemployment benefit

I had a slightly anguished telephone conversation with David Normington at the Department of Employment about the letter which I sent him on your advice on 8 March about scrutinies and value for money. The Department of Employment feel that a major part of the responsibility for delay in implementing the recommendations of the scrutiny of the payment of unemployment benefit lies with DHSS. He therefore asked whether we had referred to this scrutiny in the letter to DHSS, and I was bound to admit that we had not.

Do you think there is a case for a further letter to DHSS to remind them of their part in the unemployment benefit scrutiny?

Yours ever,

David

David Barclay

Ian Beesley Esq
Cabinet Office