



Prime Minister ⁽¹⁾

PRIME MINISTER

Agree recommendation
at X? (The proposed
scrutiny can be commissioned
by private secretary letter.)

IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFICIENCY SCRUTINIES

When we discussed progress on improving efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector at the beginning of the year I mentioned that some sensible scrutiny recommendations were not being followed up with sufficient vigour. Your Private Secretary later wrote to the departments where the largest sums of money were at stake expressing your concern. I am glad to be able to report that, as a result, there has been a significant amount of "catching-up" on these scrutinies - most notably in the Ministry of Defence.

ms
28/11

2. Nevertheless I remain concerned about implementation. Scrutiny recommendations are taking too long to be put into action, and they are getting watered down in the process. The success of the scrutiny technique has been in large measure because the scrutiny itself is conducted with a sense of urgency and a presumption that change will result. But too often implementation of a scrutiny is approached in a relaxed fashion with a marked tendency to shelve hard decisions. I do not think that exhortation will resolve this problem.

ms

3. I consider that the Efficiency Unit should investigate the factors that lead to slow and incomplete implementation of scrutiny recommendations so that I can advise you on the best way to maintain a sense of urgency in implementing changes. I suggest that you should commission the Efficiency Unit to conduct a quick scrutiny of the implementation process to establish the facts and to produce recommendations for action.

X |

ROBIN IBBS
27 November 1984