SUBJECT
cc Mater

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary   23 November 1982

Dear John

        The Prime Minister met the Home Secretary today to discuss
his minute of 19 November on the immigration rules and in
particular on his proposals on husbands and fiancés. The Home
Secretary said that the new safeguards proposed in his minute
represented a substantial tightening of the rules against abuse.
As such they might well be sufficient to persuade many of those
who abstained in the debate on the White Paper in the House of
Commons to vote with the Government when the rules themselves
were debated. There was still nevertheless a risk of defeat
in the House of Commons. It was however preferable to present
the new rules in their amended form to the House with the option
of reverting to the old rules (although couched in the new
language required by the British Nationality Act) than to make
concessions on operative dates for the new rules. Such a course
could well represent the worst of both worlds both in Parliament
and in the ethnic minority community. The Prime Minister said
that she was content with this approach; every opportunity should
be taken in the period up to the debate to stress the substance
of the new safeguards proposed by the Home Secretary.

        In a more general discussion of the basis of immigration
policy the Home Secretary mentioned the position of men settled
here who would continue to be able to bring in their wives and
fiancées under the provisions of the Immigration Act 1971. There
was a case for bringing this arrangement into line with what was
now proposed for women so that the right to bring in spouses
or intended spouses was held only by British citizens. At the
Prime Minister's request he undertook to look into whether this
was desirable or possible.

        I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries
to the members of H Committee, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary,
Chief Whip, Attorney General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

                                        Yns ever,

                                        Tim Flesher

                                        Tim Flesher

John Halliday, Esq.,   CONFIDENTIAL
Home Office.