



CC MASTER SET

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

3 October 1983

At the Prime Minister's meeting with the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and Sir Robert Armstrong this morning she discussed with the Home Secretary his proposal for a power to refer to the Court of Appeal cases in which excessively lenient sentences were imposed. The Prime Minister said that she was concerned that, if the Court of Appeal found that a sentence was too lenient but it was not possible to take further action in the particular case of the convicted person, the arrangement would lead to public dissatisfaction.

The Home Secretary said that the present arrangement under which the Court of Appeal could find against the judge in a lower court on grounds of law without overturning the verdict in a particular case, had proved useful and had not given rise to dissatisfaction on the lines which the Prime Minister envisaged. To extend such a procedure to sentencing would be likely to bring a useful discipline to bear on judges against giving excessively lenient sentences.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary commented that he thought that the Home Secretary's proposal would have a valuable effect, and the Prime Minister said that she accepted the point that it would act as an effective disincentive to judges to impose lenient sentences. She was therefore prepared to go along with the Home Secretary's proposal.

E. E. R. BUTLER

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