

S  
3000

PREM 19/1881



NEW COVER

MT

*[Handwritten signature]*

Confidential filing

Prime Minister's Questions in the  
House of Commons.

PARLIAMENT

820

PART I:  
JULY 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
<del>18.7.85</del>		PREM	19/1881				
<del>24.7.85</del>							
<del>26.7.85</del>							
<del>5.8.85</del>							
24.10.85							
<del>8/11/85</del>							
<del>11.11.85</del>							
<del>14.11.85</del>							
<del>7.2.86</del>							
<del>28.2.86</del>							
JUNE 86							

keep  
MSG TNA  
4/2/15



PART 1 ends:-

pm's Questions - undated.

PART 2 begins:-

GCHQ to Cabinet-office 25.6.86  
(+att.)



## PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

The purpose of this talk and this session is first, to enable us to tell you something about Prime Minister's Questions, its background and how we organise for them within Number 10; second to meet and thank the people whom we oppress throughout the session; third, to explain what we expect and hope for in briefing; and fourth, to enable you to ask questions and generally complain about our iniquities.

First the history of Prime Minister's Questions:

Until 1902, Questions to all Ministers were taken in the order in which they were handed in. As a courtesy to Mr. Gladstone, however, it had been decided in 1881 to place PM's Questions last. Not surprisingly, they were seldom reached. So in 1902, Questions to the Prime Minister began at No. 45, on Mondays to Thursdays. This remained until 1961 but in the early '50's, Sir Winston Churchill decided he would only answer on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In 1961 the present pattern of PM's Questions at 3.15 on Tuesday and Thursday began. It was at that point that the evolution of PMQs from a leisurely exercise in which the Prime Minister answered one or two rather harmless questions to the present gladiatorial combat.

Even so, PM's Questions in the early 1960s was a very different event from today. All the Questions were substantive - relating to particular responsibilities of the Prime Minister, such as co-ordination of policy or major international meetings. The Leader of the Opposition seldom intervened, although that began to change when Harold Wilson became Leader of the Opposition and saw PMQs as a means of demonstrating his Parliamentary dominance. In the 1960s, however, there began to appear the "open" or indirect Question. This took one of two forms: either, to ask the Prime Minister if he would visit a particular place or, slightly later, the familiar engagements Question. The purpose of these Questions was originally to enable the MP to ask the Prime Minister about particular aspects



of Government policy such as the NHS. If a direct Question on one aspect of Government policy was tabled, the Prime Minister tended to transfer it to the appropriate Minister: the open Questions was a chance to get round the transfer system.

That is not the reason for the predominance of the open Questions today: this Prime Minister has made it clear that she will not, save in exceptional circumstances, transfer a Question. The reasons are two-fold: first, it enables the Questioner to follow up the open Question which he tabled two weeks previously with a topical supplementary; and second, in the case of the Opposition, it enables them to conceal the supplementary in order to score points off the Prime Minister.

The dominance of the open Question is a very recent phenomenon. Even as recently as 1971/72 less than 10% of oral Questions were open; by the mid-seventies, the figure had risen to 50%; and today the overwhelming majority of Questions tabled are open. Since October, almost 1000 oral Questions were tabled and only 7% were substantive. Only 3 substantive Questions were reached.

All this means that PMQs has changed radically over the last 10 years. In the 1971/72 session a Select Committee commented "for the House to make the best use of its opportunity to question the Prime Minister of the day, it must give him the chance to provide considered and properly-researched answers to its questioning. Supplementary Questions already provide an occasion for a battle of wits, which the House enjoys. To introduce a wholly extempore Question period would be to surrender to the tendency to trivialise PM's Question time, which your Committee would deplore".

In fact it is widely suggested that the House is dissatisfied with the form of PMQs as it has evolved. I suspect the truth is rather different. For example, the fact that so



few substantive questions are actually tabled does not suggest any great longing for a return to the previous arrangement; nor does the fact that some 160 MPs have participated in Questions so far this session - about a third of backbenchers.

I doubt whether there will be any changes in the near future; certainly the PM would not wish to seek any change herself. It is a matter for the House.

The result is, of course, that PM's Questions is totally unlike Departments Questions.

- (i) It lasts for much longer in total - two hours a month instead of one; more important, it is much more often - 8 times a month not once. And you have to do as much preparation for 15 minutes of open questions as you would for 45. That means that PMQ is a dominant feature of the PM's working week.
- (ii) The fact that the Order Paper is relatively unimportant. In 1971/72, 7 PMQs were reached on average; now it is 3. Most Departments go faster than that.
- (iii) The absence of foreknowledge of the Questions: apart from Conservative backbenchers in the first four or five, we have literally no knowledge of the supplementaries. And they cover a very wide range as the handout makes clear.
- (iv) As a consequence of that, the PM is expected to have a vast, almost encyclopaedic knowledge of the background to Government policy. She cannot get away with bland answers; nor would that be her style.
- (v) Most important, PMQs is the centrepiece of the Party battle. Departmental questions are, by comparison, mild exchanges of news. PMQs are held to be the litmus test of the Parliamentary performances of the PM and the Leader of the Opposition. The House is

/ always



always crowded; good and bad performances can raise or depress Party morale accordingly.

- (vi) Finally, PMQs is always news; answers are on the tapes 20 minutes after; on the early evening news; in the papers. Every answer - even the lightest - is treated as a major news item eg the answer about the f1 note.

we operate and the demands

All that has implications for the way/we make on you.

Let me first tell you something about the way we organise ourselves. First, on Mondays and Wednesdays we show the PM overnight a folder of briefing on the main subjects which are likely to come up the next day. We are trying to do this more recently: I know that this is a disruption to the normal routine but it should give officials more time and avoid last minute panics on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. I will try to avoid asking for both.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the Questions team gets in at an ungodly hour to check the press, yesterday's Hansard and the day's Order Paper. From 9-9.30 we meet the PM to discuss the issues of the day. The rest of the morning we spend commissioning and writing briefing notes. From 1-3.10 we spend in continuous session with the PM running over the briefing. In this whole process we work very closely with the Political Office.

All these factors: the nature of PM's Questions, the way we operate and, indeed, the PM's own style determine what we ask for.

(i) Quality

Because anything can come up, we inevitably have to ask for more than can conceivably come up. Inevitably, not all of it is used; but nearly all of it is seen by the PM either during the briefing process or overnight. And all of it is seen by the Press Office and the Political Office. What is more, it is cumulative; the PM has a very good memory and can recall briefing she has seen in the past.

/(ii)



(ii) Timing

As I have said, we are trying to ask for briefing earlier. But, in the nature of things, we have to react to media stories on the day in question. Departments generally do remarkably well to get briefing to us on time. But can I make three pleas. First, some Departments always wait for Ministerial clearance before sending us copy. This can be a real problem, especially on Thursday if there is a long Cabinet. Don't wait. Send it to us in raw form and telephone any amendments. Second, make use of the telephone if you do not have much time. Third, try to avoid pleas of lack of messengers.

(iii) Length

When the subject is relatively simple, keep it on one page. If it is complete, the Prime Minister prefers completeness, including all the relevant facts and figures. The Prime Minister has a lawyer's preference for source material, e.g. if you are quoting an official report, give us a photocopy of the page.

(iv) Style and Content

PMQs as different from Departmental questions. It is more Party-oriented; it is more combative. Always include something positive in the line to take; try to include some material, comparative if possible, on the Government's record. May I give an example: throughout the entire period of the row about NHS cuts, none of the DHSS briefing included the devastating counter argument that the last Government reduced provision for the NHS in real terms in 1976/7 and 1977/8. It emerged only in the answer to a written PQ asked by of all people, Michael Meacher.

I know that it is not your job to provide the briefing but I would be grateful if you could keep your eyes open for that kind of material and draw it to our attention.

/May I



May I mention one other point: the vital importance of accuracy. If a departmental Minister makes a factual mistake he can normally correct it quietly. Mistakes made by the Prime Minister or in her name rarely can. For heavens sake, get the figures right.

(v) Layout

Always include a line to take and a background note: make it clear which is which. Try to avoid, wherever possible, sending classified material, especially on the same page as lines to take. We can't use classified material - so don't send it unless essential. Finally, the Prime Minister has to find her place quickly amongst a mass of material and then read it. Use a large type face therefore: ordinary type is impossible and we have to re-type it. The Home Office is a particular offender.

Finally, if you ever get frustrated by the apparently futile demands for briefing made on you, let me reassure you that it has two additional functions. First, PMQs is an awe-inspiring occasion: it is all about confidence and, to feel confident, the Prime Minister must know that she has covered every likely subject. Second, PMQs is one way of ensuring that the Prime Minister knows what is going on.

In conclusion, may I thank you for all you do; apologise when we seem unco-ordinated, such as when we commission briefing simultaneously through Parliamentary and Private Offices; and to ask you for your questions and suggestions as to how we could make your lives easier and, much more important, vice versa.





10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

30 April 1986

Dear Mr Meacher,

The Prime Minister has asked me to inform you that she is transferring the following questions, tabled by you for Priority Written Answer on Friday 2 May, to the Secretary of State for Social Services:

"To ask the Prime Minister, what was: (a) the number of available places, staff and beds, (b) the rates per 1,000 of appropriate population and (c) the expenditure per 1,000 of appropriate population in respect of: (i) residential places, (ii) day care places, (iii) home helps, (iv) social workers and (v) home meals per week for those aged 65 years and over for each local authority in England, Scotland and Wales for each year from 1979 to 1985 inclusive, giving the national averages for (a) (b) and (c) in each case"

"To ask the Prime Minister, what was: (a) the number of available places, staff and beds, (b) the rates per 1,000 of appropriate population and (c) the expenditure per 1,000 of appropriate population in respect of: (i) geriatric inpatients, (ii) geriatric outpatients, (iii) elderly severely mentally infirm inpatients, (iv) elderly severely mentally infirm outpatients, (v) non-psychiatric day patients, (vi) health visitors, (vii) district nurses and (viii) chiropody for those aged 65 years and over for each district health authority in England, Scotland and Wales for each year from 1979 to 1985 inclusive, giving the national averages for (a) (b) and (c) in each case"

and the following question, tabled by you for Priority Written Answer on Tuesday 6 May:

"To ask the Prime Minister, what guidelines Her Majesty's Government is issuing on inter-departmentally linked computerheld information in the light of the White Paper plans for up-dating the Department of Health and Social Security system; and who will have access to the up-dated computers in the Department of Health and Social Security and under what circumstances."

Yours sincerely,  
Nicky Roche

Miss Nicky Roche  
Parliamentary Clerk

Michael Meacher Esq MP





10 DOWNING STREET

28 February 1986

Dear Christopher,

Thank you for your further letter of 20 February about Prime Minister's Questions.

I recognise of course that the arrangement you propose is an eminently sensible one and is a logical extension of that which we have agreed for the transfer of Questions directed to the Prime Minister simply because they cover the interests of more than one department. There is, however, a problem. At present, those departments not in the lead on a particular Question are content to accept that another department should answer on their behalf because that is what the Prime Minister's Office has requested. If this intermediate stage was omitted I suspect that they would be less willing to accept another department to answer on their behalf. I have particularly in mind the territorial departments of whose sensitivity on matters of this kind I am sure you are aware. It would not take many incidents where these sensitivities became engaged for the system to break down altogether which would inevitably lead to the Prime Minister once again having to answer all "inter-departmental questions" herself.

In view of this, and while the number of questions which we transfer remains small, I think we would prefer to stick to the arrangements set out in my previous letter which have not yet had long to prove themselves. Obviously, if there were a significant increase in the number of transferred Questions we would need to look again at the alternative proposals set out in your letter.

I hope that this is satisfactory.

Yours sincerely,  
Nicky Roche.

Miss Nicky Roche  
Parliamentary Clerk

Dr C R M Ward  
Deputy Principal Clerk  
Table Office  
House of Commons





01-219 3303

TABLE OFFICE,  
HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
LONDON, S.W.1

20th February, 1986.

*Dear Nicky,*

Thank you for your letter of 7th February about transfer of Prime Minister's questions. Your proposed arrangements appear to be excellent and I am sure Members will appreciate the arrangements made to see that their questions, when transferred, still get full answers.

Whilst I originally thought, as you know, that it might be possible to avoid directing questions initially to the Prime Minister, I now have my doubts about this. The reason for this is that, if addressed straight to the lead department, they will have no means of knowing that the question would, but for the arrangements you have made, have been directed to the Prime Minister. Unnecessary transfers are work for departments, for the Table Office and for the printers<sup>the</sup> I would be keen to eliminate. Is it possible to extend the arrangements you propose so that the lead department gives a full answer without the question going via the Prime Minister, making clear of course that material supplied by other departments is made available on the authority of these departments? My colleagues and I would then be able to advise Members that the question could properly be addressed direct to the lead department, confident that a full answer could be expected.

*Yours ever  
Christopher.*

C.R.M. WARD  
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CLERK

Miss Nicky Roche,  
Parliamentary Clerk,  
10 Downing Street,  
London, SW1.



PM's Questions file pi.

file



10 DOWNING STREET

7 February 1986

Dear Christopher,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January concerning the Prime Minister's policy on transferring Questions.

In the first category you mention the Prime Minister will transfer any Question that is wholly within the responsibility of another Minister. As you say there are obviously many areas of responsibility, on which the Prime Minister can rightly be expected to answer Questions; but on narrow departmental subjects it is the Prime Minister's practice to transfer such Questions to the appropriate Minister - some past examples are at annex A.

As to the second category of questions which you mention - those straddling the responsibilities of two or more departments, either on a territorial or functional basis - the position is more complex. Some time ago the Prime Minister noted that she was answering a large number of extremely detailed questions simply because they had been put down to her on the basis that they covered more than one department. This seemed even all the more anomalous since in each case we had asked a lead department to prepare the material for the question and provide a draft reply. In such cases it seemed unreasonable that the lead department itself should not reply to the question rather than involving the Prime Minister in a good deal of additional work. Accordingly we began a practice of transferring such questions.

I recognise, of course, that a case of the kind to which you refer in your letter in which a Member has his question transferred to a particular department which is then unable to reply on behalf of another department is galling to the Member concerned and embarrassing to the Table Office. We have raised the matter with the department concerned and they have expressed their regret that they gave a less than full reply. In order to avoid a recurrence of such replies we will ensure that, if we transfer questions of this kind in future we make it clear to the department concerned that they



are expected to reply fully, even if in doing so they make it clear that the material supplied by another department is made available on the authority of that department.

I hope this makes the position a little clearer. The Prime Minister is anxious to ensure that Members receive proper replies to their questions and if there is any difficulty I hope that you will not hesitate to get in touch with us.

Yours sincerely,  
Nicky Roche

Miss Nicky Roche  
Parliamentary Clerk

Dr C R M Ward  
Deputy Principal Clerk  
Table Office  
House of Commons





10 DOWNING STREET

26 February 1985

Dear Mr Taylor

The Prime Minister has asked me to inform you that she is transferring the following Question tabled by you for written answer on Wednesday 27 February:

To ask the Prime Minister, how many overnight stays Welsh Office Ministers spent in Wales during the month of January.

I am asking the Table Office to make the necessary transfer arrangements.

Yours sincerely  
Nicky Roche

MISS NICKY ROCHE  
Parliamentary Clerk

The Rt Hon John David Taylor MEP MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1



<sup>e</sup>  
The Clerk of the Table  
House of Commons  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

FROM: PARLIAMENTARY CLERK



DATE: 1 April 1985

10 DOWNING STREET

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSFER OF PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

20 Mr Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): To ask the Prime Minister, what plans the Govern-  
W ment have to bring forward proposals to facilitate the closing down of uneconomic farms.

Date for Answer	Addressed to	Transfer to
Tuesday 2 April 1985	The Prime Minister	Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food

...Nicky Roche.....



The Clerk of the Table  
house of Commons  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

FROM: PARLIAMENTARY CLERK



DATE: 6.3 1985

10 DOWNING STREET

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSFER OF PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

56 Mr Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): To ask the Prime Minister, whether the allowances of all kinds paid for rearing hill sheep have exceeded the difference between the market price and the guaranteed price of sheepmeat derived from an average hill sheep.

Date for Answer	Addressed to	Transfer to
7 March	PRIME MINISTER	MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE FISHERIES + FOOD

..... Nicola Roche : .....





01-219 3303

*Widney  
we spoke*

TABLE OFFICE,  
HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
LONDON, S.W.1

*W*

20th January, 1985<sup>6</sup>.

*Dear Nicky,*

We have been interested in the recent practice of the Prime Minister regarding transfers of questions. As you know, questions are required to be addressed to the Minister who is primarily responsible, and questions considered by departments to be misdirected are transferred by the Table Office on receipt of the appropriate notification. Thus, although the Table Office has no responsibility for particular transfers nor any part in the decisions, the practices and assumptions underlying transfers are of interest as they are relevant to areas in which Members ask our advice.

Apart from the few specific matters on which the Prime Minister alone can be considered the Minister primarily responsible, the questions which Members seek to table for answer by her fall into two fairly distinct categories. The first is questions which deal with matters for which a single Department appears to be responsible. Although such questions could equally be put down to a departmental Minister, our current practice is not to resist requests for such questions to be put to the Prime Minister. It is difficult to argue that, as head of the Government, she is not "primarily" responsible, and the Prime Minister is of course free to exercise her right to transfer such questions if she wishes. We had noted that she has recently decided to transfer rather more of these questions than she used to. The second category is questions which span the responsibilities of two or more Ministers, whether they relate to policy matters or comprise requests for statistics. This point most frequently arises in respect of matters where a responsibility is divided between Secretaries of State on a territorial basis. Our practice is, therefore, to set questions relating to policy or statistics down to the Prime Minister if the response sought must be drawn from two or more areas in respect of which different Ministers may be considered primarily responsible.

Transfers of questions in the first category are no problem. However, I noticed with interest recently that a question asking "What is the difference in the formula for allocation of resources for the National Health Service in rural areas between his department and the Scottish Office; and if he will make a statement" was transferred to the Secretary of State for Social Services. The Member originally sought to table this question to the Secretary of State for Wales but was advised that he had no responsibility for making such a comparison, having no responsibility for the allocation of NHS resources in Scotland. The question was, therefore, set down to the Prime Minister on the advice of this Office.



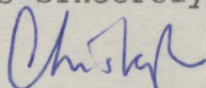
Whilst a necessary consequential textual amendment was, regrettably, overlooked in the process which changed the sense of the question, the underlying point remains the same. Drafted as it appears on the Order Paper, the question would not have been allowed to the Secretary of State for Social Services on precisely the same grounds as the original question was not allowed to the Secretary of State for Wales. The validity of these grounds was confirmed by the terms of the answer ultimately given by Mr. Hayhoe (OR 16th December, Col. 75-6) when he declined to comment on the allocation of resources for the National Health Service in Scotland.

You will, I am sure, appreciate that it is somewhat embarrassing for the Table Office if a question is not allowed on the grounds that it should be addressed to the Prime Minister, as spanning the responsibilities of departmental Ministers, only to be transferred subsequently by the Prime Minister to one of them. Also, a subsequent response from a Minister declining responsibility for some of the information requested does rather add insult to injury as regards the Member asking the question.

I should therefore welcome some guidance as to the factors the Prime Minister has in mind when deciding to transfer questions where the responsibilities involve more than one department, particularly where the split is territorial rather than functional. We shall then be able to advise Members more effectively on the best way to get the information they want. In particular, I hope in your response you will take into account the convenience seen by Members in being able to table such questions to the Prime Minister if it avoids them either getting answers saying some of the matters are the responsibility of another Minister (thus necessitating another question and the consequent delays) or having to table duplicate questions addressed to each Minister concerned. I should also be grateful if you would reflect on how a question such as the specific example I have cited can be fully answered if addressed other than to the Prime Minister.

I look forward to receiving your observations.

Yours sincerely,



C.R.M. WARD (DR).  
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CLERK

Ms. N. Roche,  
Parliamentary Clerk,  
10 Downing Street,  
London, SW1.





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Office of the Leader of  
the Opposition

Prime Minister:

An under the  
table copy to  
Mr Kinnersley letter to  
Sir Peter Emery

14 November 1985

PE  
15/11

I was very disappointed that we were not able to meet today. I am sorry that our appointment had to be cancelled because of preparations I have been making for a visit to Sweden and West Germany. As I said I would be delighted to speak to you about the deliberations of the Select Committee on Procedure on the format of Prime Minister's Questions and I hope that a meeting can be arranged when I return to this country next week.

In the meantime could I say very briefly that my feelings are that the present arrangement of Prime Minister's Questions is satisfactory. I fully realise that your Committee will want to examine other possibilities and that eventually it will be a matter for the House of Commons, but the present system does provide a reasonable way in which the Leader of the Opposition can question the Prime Minister on the issues of the day and that the ability to ask supplementary questions is one which is very important in ensuring that Her Majesty's Opposition carries out its proper function of putting the policies of the Government under regular scrutiny.

I hope this brief note is helpful to you and look forward very much to our talk when it is arranged next week.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Peter Emery MP  
House of Commons  
London





file  
CC LPS  
CWO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

11 November 1985

*Dear Peter*

Thank you for your letter of 24 October about the ideas of the Select Committee on Procedure on the form for Prime Minister's Questions. I am writing to follow up the points I made during our talk last week.

Perhaps I might begin by stressing, as I did in my letter of 5 August, that I shall, of course, be willing to meet the wishes of the House in whatever decisions they reach on the form of Prime Minister's Questions. I must say however that having given further thought to your proposals, I see very considerable difficulties. You suggested that, provided substantive questions were tabled on the morning before Prime Minister's Questions, ie on Mondays and Wednesdays, that might be a sufficient period of notice. Such an arrangement would still, however, mean that departments would only have a period of a few hours to prepare draft replies, supplementaries and sufficient background material - often very extensive - to prepare me for a period of questioning lasting up to 5 minutes on a particular subject. Departments would, moreover, need to clear their material with their own Ministers. This notice



of less than a day is in sharp contrast with the 10 days' notice which is considered appropriate for questions to departments. If that period is considered right for departments the period of notice you propose is very short indeed, especially if the questions which are tabled raise complex issues or cover ground relatively unfamiliar to me.

An additional difficulty, to which I referred when we met, is that unless all the reachable questions on the Order Paper were highly restricted in their ambit, the work involved in preparing for them would be in addition to, and not in substitution for, the background briefing on the issues of the day which occupies all of the available time under the present system. Moreover, in practice, I suspect that even if there are restrictions on the traditional open question of the kind you suggest, such as a limit of one supplementary, new forms of open question are likely to evolve. For example, is a question along the lines of

"Will the Prime Minister make a statement on the level of public expenditure?"

to be regarded as a substantive or an open question? It is certainly a substantive question but has all the wide potential for the supplementaries of the open question. I do not believe that it would be either practicable or indeed desirable to restrict the ability of Members to table such questions yet it would take only one on the Order Paper for my workload and that of my staff in relation to Prime Minister's Questions to be very considerably increased.



All this leads me back to the point which I made in my letter to you of 5 August, that I am not seeking changes in the present arrangements. Indeed, I believe those arrangements represent the best available balance between the desire of the House to question the Prime Minister and the burdens which the system imposes on the Prime Minister and her staff. Were that balance to be substantially altered, it might well be difficult to avoid redressing it, for example by reverting to the practice of some of my predecessors of transferring questions much more often.

Yours ever  
Rogant

Sir Peter Emery MP





cc master set CC. M.A  
NW

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

8 November 1985

The Prime Minister saw Sir Peter Emery together with the Chief Whip yesterday and promised to write to him setting out her views on Sir Peter's proposals for Prime minister's Questions. I attach a draft letter.

It seems to me that the time has come for a heavy shot across Sir Peter's bows. His proposals are not in our interests nor, I believe, is there any significant desire for them in the House. Moreover, they would involve considerable extra work for no apparent return. He proposes that the Prime Minister's Office should have approximately one day's notice of substantive questions. But departments have 10 days' notice. This cannot be right. Nor is it reasonable for us to ask departments to prepare replies, supplementaries and background material appropriate for a 5 minute exchange during the course of an afternoon, clear it with their Ministers and get it to us in time for the Prime Minister's overnight box.

The fact that open questions would not be ruled out (and indeed should not be ruled out) would inevitably mean that all this would be in addition to the Prime Minister's normal preparation for Questions and not in substitution for it.



Prime Minister's Question Time has always involved a balance between the wishes of the House and the Government. When questions put down to the Prime Minister in an earlier period became too detailed the Prime Minister transferred them. As a result the present compromise, under which the Prime Minister is willing to answer virtually any question as a supplementary but does not expect to be cross-examined in detail for 5 minutes on a specific subject unless given adequate notice, has evolved. What Sir Peter proposes will shift the balance. The inevitable result is that we will take steps to shift it back. This would involve transferring questions that we did not like the look of when we received notice of them and, when Government backbenchers are on the Order Paper, ensuring that they asked questions congenial to us. Neither is desirable (and I was alarmed to hear Sir Peter's acceptance of front bench manipulation, yesterday).

For all these reasons I think that we should now spell out to Sir Peter not just that we are sceptical about his proposals but also that we do not like them.

*BT*  
I should be grateful for the Chief Whip's views on this approach which is enshrined in the draft reply. I imagine that we are committed to getting the letter to Sir Peter by Tuesday morning.

Tim Flesher

Murdo Maclean Esq  
Chief Whip's Office





SRWAG2

cc: LPSO  
CWO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

5 August 1985

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter of 18 July about the Select Committee on Procedure's consideration of the format of Prime Minister's Questions. I appreciate the Committee's invitation to me to let them have my views directly but, as you will know, it has been the practice of successive Prime Ministers not to give evidence to Select Committees of the House and I would prefer not to depart from that practice. It was with that in mind that I had a full discussion with the Leader of the House before he met the Committee and his evidence reflected my views. I hope therefore that the Committee will be content with this written account of my views.

As John Biffen will have told you, my starting-point is that the future format of Prime Minister's Questions is a matter for the House of Commons and I should, of course, be willing to fall in with the decisions of the House in this respect. For my part, I have no complaint to make about the existing arrangements. Indeed, I assume that, since the opportunity to table substantive rather than open questions already exists but is taken up by only a few Members, the present system has evolved because it meets the wishes of most Members of the House.

With regard to your objective of encouraging more substantive questions, I have, as you know, normally been willing to answer these questions myself rather than

855



transferring them. It is my intention to continue that practice, provided that questions do not become focussed on details which are wholly within the domain of a Departmental Minister. If any new system produced such questions, there could come a point at which I should feel bound to transfer them.

It has been suggested that various "incentives" should be provided to encourage Members to place substantive questions - for example, a limit of one Supplementary on open questions and a right to define such questions twenty-four hours before the time of answer in order to give them greater immediacy. I am sceptical whether such changes will discourage the open question. What, after all, is an open question? I think it is likely that the ingenuity of Members would be capable of drafting questions with a sufficiently wide ambit to allow the Leader of the Opposition and others to press the Prime Minister on the issues of the day so that the open question would return in another form.

If, however, the aim of the Committee were achieved and there were a greater number of substantive questions, I am bound to say that notice of only twenty-four hours would cause some problems for me. Since the objective is to allow questioning in depth on specific subjects, the other side of the coin is that I would have to prepare answers in similar depth on a series of matters which may be unfamiliar. Although the notice may be longer than for a PNQ, other Ministers do not have to answer several PNQs in one day. The problem of preparation within the time available would be more acute if Question Time were doubled to thirty minutes once a week since the number of questions, and correspondingly the range of substantive issues, would be doubled.

I return to the point that I will comply with any arrangements which the House decides upon. But you will detect that, since I suspect that the present arrangements have developed because they give the House what it currently



wants, and since I believe that the House would adapt any new procedures so that it continues to get what it wants, I am not seeking changes in the present arrangements.

Yours

Rayner

---

Sir Peter Emery, M.P.



PRIME MINISTER

CC MA  
BVP  
Ch/whp

Select Committee on Procedure: Sir Peter Emery

Sir Peter Emery has asked to see you to discuss further his Committee's proposals for Prime Minister's Questions. You will recall that you wrote to Sir Peter on 5 August and I attach a copy of that letter. Sir Peter has raised one small point arising from the letter but no doubt he will want to discuss wider issues as well.

The particular point he raises is the period of notice to be required for substantive questions. In your letter you say that 24 hours would pose problems. This is true, if we had notice of 20 substantive questions at 2.30pm on a Monday for example, we would have to commission answers and supplementaries from departments at about 2 or 3 hours notice in order to get them into your box. This would not make either for reasonable responses by departments or a proper input from No.10, partly because we would need, at the same time, to be providing general background briefing on current events. What Sir Peter proposes would be in addition to not in substitution for our normal work. The answer is not, as Sir Peter suggests, to have 48 hours notice: it is to retain the present system under which Members can put down substantive questions if they wish at the time questions go down.

More generally, it is clear that Sir Peter still hankers after changing the present system. The plain facts are however that:

- i) the present system has evolved because that is what Members want, and
- ii) the present arrangements are in your interests (and, indeed, those of the Leader of the Opposition).



Nobody really wants to change them apart from Sir Peter. All the flaws in the Select Committee proposals really stem from the fact that the Committee is seeking to impose on Members a system which it thinks they need for one which they actually want. The clinching argument against what Sir Peter proposes is that Members are perfectly free at present to put down substantive questions, <sup>T</sup>They don't do so. It suits us that they don't do so. Why tinker?

*Dr*

1 November 1985



DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO SIR PETER EMERY CONCERNING  
PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTION TIME

Thank you for your letter of 24 October about the ideas of the Select Committee on Procedure on the form for Prime Minister's Questions. I am writing to follow up the points I made during our talk last week.

Perhaps I might begin by stressing, as I did in my letter of 5 August, that I shall, of course, be willing to meet the wishes of the House in whatever decisions they reach on the form of Prime Minister's Questions. I must say however that having given further thought to your proposals, I see very considerable difficulties for myself and my staff. You suggested that, provided substantive questions were tabled on the morning before Prime Minister's Questions, ie on Mondays and Wednesdays, that might be a sufficient period of notice. Such an arrangement would still, however, mean that departments would only have a period of a few hours to prepare draft replies, supplementaries and sufficient background material - often very extensive - to prepare me for a period of questioning lasting up to 5 minutes on a particular subject. Departments would, moreover, need to clear their material with their own Ministers. This notice of less than a day is in sharp contrast with the 10 days' notice which is considered appropriate for questions to departments. If that period is considered right for departments the period of notice you propose is very short indeed, especially if the questions which are tabled raise complex issues or cover ground relatively unfamiliar to me.



An additional difficulty, to which I referred when we met, is that unless all the reachable questions on the Order Paper were highly restricted in their ambit, the work involved in preparing for them would be in addition to, and not in substitution for, the background briefing on the issues of the day which occupies all of the available time under the present system. Moreover, in practice, I suspect that even if there are restrictions on the traditional open question of the kind you suggest, such as a limit of one supplementary, new forms of open question are likely to evolve. For example, is a question along the lines of

"Will the Prime Minister make a statement on the level of public expenditure?"

to be regarded as a substantive or an open question? It is certainly a substantive question but has all the wide potential for the supplementaries of the open question. I do not believe that it would be either practicable or indeed desirable to restrict the ability of Members to table such questions yet it would take only one on the Order Paper for my workload and that of my staff in relation to Prime Minister's Questions to be very considerably increased.

All this leads me back to the point which I made in my letter to you of 5 August, that I am not seeking changes in the present arrangements. Indeed, I believe those arrangements represent the best available balance between the desire of the House to question the Prime Minister and the burdens which the system imposes on the Prime Minister and her staff. Were that balance to be



substantially altered, for example by the imposition of significantly greater burdens on the Prime Minister's Office, it might well be difficult to avoid redressing it, eg by reverting to the practice of some of my predecessors by transferring questions.



FROM SIR PETER EMERY M.P.



Top copy

file  
with  
Tessa.

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

24th October 1985

*Dear Margaret*

SELECT COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE.

You were kind enough to reply at some length on the 5th August to my letter concerning the Procedure Committee's current enquiry concerning Question to the Prime Minister. It was only yesterday, at the first meeting of the Committee, that discussion could take place on the points which you raised.

There is just one point which the Committee would like to ask for possible amplification. Basically I believe that my members would like, in our Report, to put before the House any alternative or improvement that might sensibly and practically be devised to see whether the House wished to make any alterations to the present procedure.

One of the completely accepted facts about Prime Minister's Questions is the desire to keep them topical. John Biffen recognised this fact when he appeared before us and suggested that twenty-four hours would be an appropriate period for topicality to be maintained. The Committee on the whole accept this. However, in your letter you said "notice of only twenty-four hours would cause some problems for me." On the assumption that the twice weekly format of Questions to the Prime Minister continues, I wonder how real the problems would actually be for you and your officials, particularly as set against what might be seen as the considerable advantages for the House as a whole? After all, is not some notice for you and departments in preparing briefs better than no notice at all? Our particular concern is that a longer period, say forty-eight hours, would effectively mean that notice for a Tuesday would have to be given on a Friday.

We note what you say about the transfer of Questions. I know that the House has welcomed your readiness to accept any question and would understand if you felt compelled to change that practice if questions became too detailed. We do, however, envisage that many of the specific questions which would be likely to be tabled if our proposals were adopted would relate to major issues of the day and the preparation you might need would thus conceivably be little different from what it is at present.

*Always* ✓  
*John*

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher M.P.  
10, Downing Street,  
London SW1A 2AA.



file



TOP COPY  
with  
Tessa

Tues. 19th  
3.45.  
+ Chief Whip

Pure Minutes

Sir Peter Ems

letter (attached) raises

24.10.85

a relatively simple  
point. But he would

like to see  
you.

Agree? yes  
no

Pear Margaret.

I wonder whether  
we could have no more  
than ten minutes together  
before you referred to the  
enclosed letter? I would  
be very grateful.

15.45. 19/11 Always

+ Chief Whip

+ MIA

6407

SUBJECT- Proceedings Committee  
on P.M.'s Questions





SRWAG2

cc: LPSO  
CWO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

5 August 1985

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter of 18 July about the Select Committee on Procedure's consideration of the format of Prime Minister's Questions. I appreciate the Committee's invitation to me to let them have my views directly but, as you will know, it has been the practice of successive Prime Ministers not to give evidence to Select Committees of the House and I would prefer not to depart from that practice. It was with that in mind that I had a full discussion with the Leader of the House before he met the Committee and his evidence reflected my views. I hope therefore that the Committee will be content with this written account of my views.

As John Biffen will have told you, my starting-point is that the future format of Prime Minister's Questions is a matter for the House of Commons and I should, of course, be willing to fall in with the decisions of the House in this respect. For my part, I have no complaint to make about the existing arrangements. Indeed, I assume that, since the opportunity to table substantive rather than open questions already exists but is taken up by only a few Members, the present system has evolved because it meets the wishes of most Members of the House.

With regard to your objective of encouraging more substantive questions, I have, as you know, normally been willing to answer these questions myself rather than

855



transferring them. It is my intention to continue that practice, provided that questions do not become focussed on details which are wholly within the domain of a Departmental Minister. If any new system produced such questions, there could come a point at which I should feel bound to transfer them.

It has been suggested that various "incentives" should be provided to encourage Members to place substantive questions - for example, a limit of one Supplementary on open questions and a right to define such questions twenty-four hours before the time of answer in order to give them greater immediacy. I am sceptical whether such changes will discourage the open question. What, after all, is an open question? I think it is likely that the ingenuity of Members would be capable of drafting questions with a sufficiently wide ambit to allow the Leader of the Opposition and others to press the Prime Minister on the issues of the day so that the open question would return in another form.

If, however, the aim of the Committee were achieved and there were a greater number of substantive questions, I am bound to say that notice of only twenty-four hours would cause some problems for me. Since the objective is to allow questioning in depth on specific subjects, the other side of the coin is that I would have to prepare answers in similar depth on a series of matters which may be unfamiliar. Although the notice may be longer than for a PNQ, other Ministers do not have to answer several PNQs in one day. The problem of preparation within the time available would be more acute if Question Time were doubled to thirty minutes once a week since the number of questions, and correspondingly the range of substantive issues, would be doubled.

I return to the point that I will comply with any arrangements which the House decides upon. But you will detect that, since I suspect that the present arrangements have developed because they give the House what it currently



wants, and since I believe that the House would adapt any new procedures so that it continues to get what it wants, I am not seeking changes in the present arrangements.

Y  
Lomax

Rayner

---

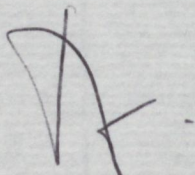
Sir Peter Emery, M.P.



PRIME MINISTER

cc CW +  
LPS

You discussed with the Chief Whip amongst others the letter from Sir Peter Emery inviting you to give evidence to the Select Committee on Procedure on Prime Minister's Questions. The Chief Whip has written to Sir Peter giving an advance indication that you would not wish to give evidence: both the Chief Whip and the Lord Privy Seal have cleared the terms of the attached written response.



TIM FLESHER

30 July 1985





Government Chief Whip  
12 Downing Street. London SW1

R  
31/7

30th July, 1985

Dear Peter,

SELECT COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE

The Prime Minister has asked me to have an informal word with you concerning your letter to her of 18th July, however with the excitement of the last few days no suitable opportunity arose.

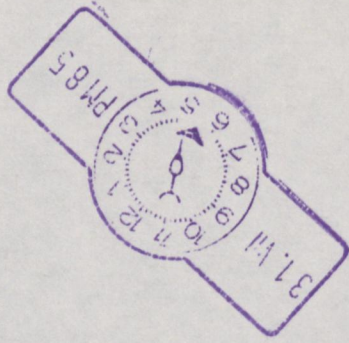
She is not sure that it would be helpful to have a personal discussion because, of course, John Biffen fully reflected her view, and that of the Government, when he came to give evidence to your Committee. She is, however, proposing to send a reply to your letter of 18th July rather than have a meeting, but I wanted to let you know in advance how the Prime Minister intends to handle this matter.

Yours  
John

Sir Peter Emery M.P.



Rashament : PM's Questions  
7/79







// CF  
pse Bf m  
Tuesday  
1 Aug.  
PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

26 July 1985

Dear Tim

Thank you for your letter of 24 July enclosing the draft answer which the Prime Minister is considering sending to Sir Peter Emery about the format for Prime Minister's Questions.

The Lord Privy Seal has seen the draft and has commented: "I think the Prime Minister's draft letter is admirable".

Yours ever,  
Alison

ALISON SMITH  
Private Secretary

Tim Flesher Esq  
Private Secretary to the  
Prime Minister



PM's Questions?



Government Chief Whip  
12 Downing Street, London SW1

26th July, 1985

Dear Mr Butler

Unfortunately the Chief Whip did not have an opportunity to talk to Peter Emery about his letter of 18th July and he is proposing to send the attached letter early next week unless he hears from you or the Lord Privy Seal and I have copied this letter to David Morris.

Yours sincerely  
Robina

ROBINA Z FINLAY

Robin Butler Esq.,  
10 Downing Street.





Government Chief Whip  
12 Downing Street, London SW1

26th July, 1985

SELECT COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE

The Prime Minister has asked me to have an informal word with you concerning your letter to her of 18th July, however with the excitement of the last few days no suitable opportunity arose.

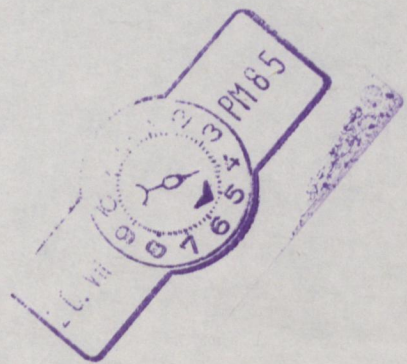
She is not sure that it would be helpful to have a personal discussion because, of course, John Biffen fully reflected her view, and that of the Government, when he came to give evidence to your Committee.

She is, however, proposing to send a reply to your letter of 18th July rather than have a meeting, but I wanted to sound you out as to whether you think this would be an acceptable arrangement for you and your colleagues.

Sir Peter Emery M.P.



Parliament : PM's Questions July 79.





file



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 July 1985

Dear Anne,

You will recall that the Lord Privy Seal discussed with the Prime Minister the evidence that he was to give to the Select Committee on Procedure about the format for Prime Minister's Questions. Following his evidence the Chairman of the Select Committee, Sir Peter Emery, has now written to the Prime Minister seeking her views and, if possible, an appearance by the Prime Minister before the Committee. On the latter point the Prime Minister is unlikely to depart from the normal practice of successive Prime Ministers not to give evidence to Select Committees, but is considering sending a reasonably full written reply to the Committee. I attach a draft on which I should be grateful for the Lord Privy Seal's views. I should be grateful if Murdo Maclean, to whom I am also copying this, could seek the Chief Whip's views.

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Tim'.

TIM FLESHER

Miss A Smith  
Private Secretary  
Lord Privy Seal's Office

cc. Michael Alison Esq MP



DRAFT

DRAFT



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Thank you for your letter of 18 July about the Select Committee on Procedure's consideration of the format of Prime Minister's Questions. I appreciate the Committee's invitation to me to let them have my views directly but, as you will know, it has been the practice of successive Prime Ministers not to give evidence to Select Committees of the House and I would prefer not to depart from that practice. It was with that in mind that I had a full discussion with the Leader of the House before he met the Committee and his evidence reflected my views. I hope therefore that the Committee will be content with this written account of my views.

As John Biffen will have told you, my starting-point is that the future format of Prime Minister's Questions is a matter for the House of Commons and I should, of course, be willing to fall in with the decisions of the House in this respect. For my part, I have no complaint to make about the existing arrangements. Indeed, I assume that, since the opportunity to table substantive rather than open questions already exists but is taken up by only a few Members, the present system has evolved because it meets the wishes of most Members of the House.

/With regard



DRAFT

With regard to your objective of encouraging more substantive questions, I have, as you know, normally been willing to answer these questions myself rather than transferring them. It is my intention to continue that practice, provided that questions do not become focussed on details which are wholly within the domain of a Departmental Minister. If any new system produced such questions, there could come a point at which I should feel bound to transfer them.

It has been suggested that various "incentives" should be provided to encourage Members to place substantive questions - for example, a limit of one Supplementary on open questions and a right to define such questions twenty-four hours before the time of answer in order to give them greater immediacy. I am sceptical whether such changes will discourage the open question. What, after all, is an open question? I think it is likely that the ingenuity of Members would be capable of drafting questions with a sufficiently wide ambit to allow the Leader of the Opposition and others to press the Prime Minister on the issues of the day so that the open question would return in another form.

If, however, the aim of the Committee were achieved and there were a greater number of substantive questions, I am bound to say that notice of only twenty-four hours would cause some problems for me. Since the objective is to allow questioning in depth on specific subjects, the other side of the coin is that I would have to prepare answers in similar depth on a series of matters which may be unfamiliar. Although the notice may be longer than for a PNQ, other Ministers do not have to answer several PNQs in one day. The problem of preparation within the time available would be more acute if Question Time were doubled to thirty minutes once a week since the number of questions, and correspondingly the range of substantive issues, would be doubled.

/I return



RAFT

I return to the point that I will comply with any arrangements which the House decides upon. But you will detect that, since I suspect that the present arrangements have developed because they give the House what it currently wants, and since I believe that the House would adapt any new procedures so that it continues to get what it wants, I am not seeking changes in the present arrangements.

Sir Peter Emery, M.P.



from: Sir Peter Emery MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

*for*

18th July 1985

*Dear Margaret,*

Select Committee on Procedure

There continues to be a good deal of comment both in the House and outside about the arrangements for the twice-weekly period when you answer questions in the House. Criticisms from outside the House may have more to do with noise than with the minutiae of parliamentary procedure, but the Select Committee on Procedure feels under an obligation to consider various procedural options for making the most effective use of the time available.

As you will know the Committee has already heard evidence in private from John Biffen and has been considering proposals aimed at retaining the topicality of questions, but also encouraging the tabling of a greater number of specific questions (of which notice might be given as little as 24 hours in advance). The Committee has now reached the point at which it would like to reach conclusions, but before doing so would greatly value an opportunity to discuss with you present procedures and some of the possible alternatives. I should be delighted to talk to you (or to Michael Alison) about this suggestion, if you think that would be helpful, and particularly to discuss the form such a meeting (which obviously would not be possible until the autumn) might take.

*Always*  
A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Peter Emery', written in a cursive style.  
Chairman

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

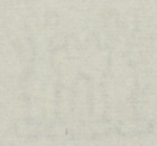


Parliament; PM's Quests July 1979



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

CONGRESSIONAL



LONDON





10 SLBARK

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

**MR. MICHAEL TOWNLEY**

---

Thank you for your letter of 2 July about the evidence due to be given by the Lord Privy Seal to the Procedure Committee about Prime Minister's Question Time. We discussed this matter today but this letter sets out formally our response to the suggestions made by the Procedure Committee, in addition to the conclusions of the Prime Minister's meeting with the Lord Privy Seal and Chief Whip summarised in my letter to Alison Smith of 17 June.

- (i) As you say the Committee's proposals depend upon the Prime Minister willingness to transfer detailed substantive Questions. The Prime Minister is firmly of the view that she cannot be expected to answer detailed Questions which are wholly within the domain of a departmental minister. At present she is prepared to answer Questions across a broad range of Government policy and often on detailed points of application. If, however, Members were to put down detailed Questions on which there were to be up to 5 minutes of supplementaries, the Prime Minister would feel justified in transferring such Questions. More generally a prohibition against the transfer of Questions would withdraw uniquely from the Prime Minister a degree of protection which has hitherto always been available to the Government.
- (ii) The Committee argue that Members would be encouraged to table specific Questions rather than open Questions because they would then receive two replies rather than one. In practice I rather doubt this. Of necessity Members have to frame their supplementary before they receive the substantive answer. Moreover the same applies to substantive Questions in the present system and very few Members take advantage of it.
- (iii) Similar arguments apply against the Committee's suggestion that Members would be deterred from putting down Open Questions by the fact that only one supplementary Question was allowed. That is,

CST



of course, all that Members are allowed at present.

- (iv) The arrangements proposed by the Committee offer at least the potential of coordination. For example, if there were a number of Government backbenchers at the top of the Order Paper they could effectively freeze out the Leader of the Opposition by so choosing the subject of their Questions. Similarly, an Opposition backbencher near the top of the Order Paper might well feel obliged to consult the Leader of the Opposition about the subjects he wished raised. Far from increasing the backbench content of Prime Minister's Questions it might well reduce it.
- (v) The ingenuity of Members is such that even if some method were found of effectively discouraging the present Open Question a way would be found around it. For example, a Question along the lines of "is the Prime Minister satisfied with the present level of public expenditure" would enable practically any supplementary to be raised.
- (vi) From the point of view of the Prime Minister and her office the new arrangements proposed would create considerably more work. It would require only one Open Question on the Order Paper for the Prime Minister to require briefing on the whole range of policy and events as at present. Moreover, the suggestion that notice would be given of up to 20 substantive Questions at 2.30 p.m. on the day before Questions would be more difficult indeed to manage. This may indeed be more notice than is currently given for Private Notice Questions, but such Questions are answered one at a time. The Prime Minister's office would be asked to prepare the answers to up to 20, including the supplementaries, in the space of two or three hours so that the Prime Minister could study them overnight.

TIM FLESHER

5 July 1985





CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 7123

T J Flesher Esq.,  
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister,  
Prime Minister's Office,  
No 10 Downing Street,  
London. SW1A.

2 July 1985

*Dear Tim,*

EVIDENCE TO THE PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The Lord Privy Seal is due to give oral evidence to the Procedure Committee on Tuesday 9 July about (i) Prime Minister's Question Time and (ii) the Operation of Standing Order No 10 (emergency debates).

You will recall that the Prime Minister discussed the Lord Privy Seal's proposed evidence on the subject of Prime Minister's Question Time with the Lord Privy Seal and the Chief Whip on 17 June (your letter of that date to Alison Smith refers).

Since then we have received, in confidence, from the Chairman of the Procedure Committee, Sir Peter Emery, the attached draft paper which gives some further information about the lines on which the Committee's consideration of this issue is developing. As you will see, the Lord Privy Seal has made some marginal comments.

I should be grateful if you would kindly let me know, in the light of this draft paper, if there is any further information you can let me have about the Prime Minister's views on these proposals, beyond those indicated in your letter of 17 June, which we can then cover in the Lord Privy Seal's briefing. It seems clear, for example, that assurances will be sought as to how far the Prime Minister might be prepared to undertake not to transfer substantive Questions under the new arrangements the Committee are considering.

*Yours sincerely,  
Michael.*

M W TOWNLEY



Select Committee on Procedure

Questions to the Prime Minister

Notes on the proposals discussed at the meeting on 11th June

1. The Committee recognises that many Members value the opportunity to ask topical questions of the Prime Minister. There is, however, considerable unease about several aspects of arrangements for questions to the Prime Minister. Disquiet is expressed not only by Members themselves, but by the public who hear extracts on news broadcasts.
  - Among questions to the Prime Minister, the open "engagements" question has almost completely taken over the Order Paper.
  - The open question has the effect that it deprives the Prime Minister of notice of the "real" question. The practice of the House with regard to Ministers generally is to give notice of questions.
  - Because no notice is given of the "real" question, the Prime Minister may not be put under sustained detailed questioning.



- Supplementaries to the open question may cover any subject inconsequentially.
  - The response of Members saying when called by Mr. Speaker "No. 3, Sir", and being given the reply "I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the reply I gave some moments ago" sounds otiose and is a slight waste of time.
2. A previous Committee, in 1976-77, was anxious that a greater number of specific questions should be asked. Both the then Prime Minister and the present Prime Minister have shown their readiness to accept direct questions and not to transfer them. This is much to be welcomed. In practice, however, Members as a whole have preferred to use the open question. It would in any case be impossible to outlaw questions of that form: the engagement question is merely the currently fashionable variety.
  3. It seems to the present Committee that for the generality of Members the wish to be topical is pre-eminent, and wholly understandable. The present notice period of ten sitting days militates against topicality; but Members value the present arrangements because they know almost a fortnight in advance whether their questions are likely to be called. They can then adjust their diaries accordingly.
  4. Question time would be more effective if notice were, in most cases, given of the "real" questions which Members intend to ask. Time would not be wasted on preliminaries. Other Members could ask detailed supplementaries. If notice were much shorter, questions could be topical.
  5. The Committee is therefore considering whether present rules for questions to the Prime Minister should be changed in the following ways:



- (a) Members would give notice ten sitting days in advance of their intention to table a question.
- (b) At that time names would be listed on the Order Paper as at present, but without any reference to a specific question, unless a Member tabled it then.
- (c) Members so listed would then be required to give notice in the Table Office of the specific terms of their questions by no later than 2.30 pm. on the day before the Prime Minister was due to answer. Such notices would then appear on the Order Paper on the next day. If Members failed to give notice they would lose their questions.
- (d) As the subject of questions would then be known the Speaker would be able to ensure that supplementaries related to the Questions tabled, as is normal practice.
- (e) The Prime Minister would then be held to the subject of the original question, and would be able to be questioned in some depth without facing supplementaries on wholly unrelated matters.
- (f) Unlike the Member who tables an open question the Member who tables a specific question would, in effect, receive two answers - one to the question of which he had given notice and the second to his supplementary.
- (g) The Speaker should discourage more than one supplementary on any open questions, which might still be tabled under this new procedure.

YES



6. As a separate proposal for improving the working of the question period with the Prime Minister, the Committee is considering whether it should be held only once a week, but for half an hour. As against any slight loss in opportunities to ask topical questions, that would have the probable advantage, from the point of view of backbench Members, of increasing their share of time because the proportion of total time taken by the Leaders of opposition parties would be less than at present.
- 

Problems with such proposals:

- i. Is the proposed period of notice practicable, viz. 2.30 pm. Monday for Tuesday, or 2.30 pm. Wednesday for Thursday, from the point of view of Members tabling questions? It would presumably be more likely to achieve the Committee's aim of achieving topicality than notice given on Thursday or Friday for the following Tuesday. For the Prime Minister, these proposals would of course give notice which, in 95 cases out of 100, she doesn't have at present. There would be much more time for preparation of answers than for a PNQ.
- ii. Although the Prime Minister has not transferred questions under present conditions when few questions are specific, might she be tempted to do so under this new system? If Questions were transferred freely, the scheme would fail. Should transfers of questions be specifically excluded?



iii. Would PM's questions lose their interest if, as seems bound to happen sometimes, the first two or three questions were narrow, friendly, specific questions which could give rise to only a narrow range of supplementaries?

iv. Would Members still wish to table engagements questions or other varieties of open questions 24 hours in advance? If so, should there be any restraint in addition to that proposed above (Para. 5(e)) that Mr. Speaker should be restrictive on supplementaries? The Committee might wish to consider Mr. Cormack's suggestion (PMQ2) that Mr. Speaker should be authorised to move on to the "next different question on the Order Paper"?

YES

v. Instead of tabling a "notice of intention to table a question" (as in para. 5(a)), should there be a straightforward ballot, as for Private Members' motions, a fortnight ahead for the right to ask an oral question, with only 10 or 20 names being drawn?

YES

G.C.

26th June 1985



Subject  
cc master.



## 10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

17 June 1985

The Prime Minister met the Lord Privy Seal and the Chief Whip today to discuss the proposals of the Procedure Committee for the conduct of Prime Minister's Questions and, in particular, the evidence the Lord Privy Seal was proposing to give to the Committee.

The Prime Minister noted that the Procedure Committee had proposed a 30 minute session of Questions once a week with notice to be given of the Question to be asked on the day before. She stressed that the form for Prime Minister's Questions was a matter for the House of Commons, not for the Government: she would remain ready to answer Questions in whatever form the House of Commons decided. Nevertheless, the meeting noted that there were clear advantages and disadvantages in the proposals of the Procedure Committee. The obvious advantage was that a session once a week with prior notice of Questions would make fewer demands on the Prime Minister's time than the present arrangements. Moreover, substantive Questions might help to reduce the tendency to disorder during Prime Minister's Questions which appeared to be increasing. It was, however, unlikely that the Opposition would see advantage in switching to an arrangement under which the Prime Minister was questioned only once a week. Moreover, there were a number of disadvantages from the Government's point of view. For example, the present arrangements enabled the Prime Minister to defend Government policy in the most public way possible twice a week. To reduce her opportunities to do so to once a week would be a loss to the Government as well as to the Opposition. A system of advance notice for Questions would rob Prime Minister's Questions of much of its spontaneity and hence of its topical interest. In addition, the Prime Minister herself would no longer be required to keep herself briefed on the broad range of Government policy for Prime Minister's Questions and would, therefore, have to find some other way of meeting that need. Moreover, the substantive Questions envisaged by the Procedure Committee may well become excessively detailed, in which case the Prime Minister would see no alternative but to transfer them.



Given these disadvantages and the likely resistance of the Opposition to the proposals made by the Procedure Committee, they were unlikely to make a great deal of progress. Whatever the defects of the present arrangements for Prime Minister's Questions it was clear that they met the wishes of the House. The opportunity to put down substantive Questions was already there but very few Members took advantage of it. Any attempt to impose a different regime upon Members of Parliament would be likely to be met by increased ingenuity in getting round its provisions. The Engagements Question had been invented to put open Questions to the Prime Minister, and other devices would be found in future if that was what the House wanted. Moreover, it was unlikely that a change in procedure alone would bring about an improvement in parliamentary behaviour. A much more significant influence would be the advent of television, if that came about. A much more sustainable position for the Procedure Committee might be to promise a review of the conduct of Prime Minister's Questions if, and when, television was finally installed.

Summing up the discussion the Prime Minister said that in his evidence to the Procedure Committee the Lord Privy Seal should stress that the conduct of Prime Minister's Questions was a matter for the House and that the Prime Minister remained ready to meet the wishes of the House. He might however point out in addition, that the present system had evolved largely because Members wanted it and that the opportunity to ask substantive Questions already existed. Moreover, the Prime Minister could not be expected to answer extremely detailed substantive Questions and such Questions would, as in the past, be likely to be transferred. Any new arrangements likely to command the support of the House as a whole could not prevent Members from raising with the Prime Minister the issues of the day. There would for example, be discontent if the Prime Minister were not to answer Questions on a Thursday after Cabinet meetings.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Murdo Maclean.

**TIM FLESHER**

Miss Alison Smith  
Private Secretary  
Lord Privy Seal's Office

bcc Mr Butler  
Mr Alison  
Mr Sherbourne







than advantages in a once a week, prior notice, system. I see the disadvantages as the following:-

- i) The fact is that you "win" most of your encounters in the House. A reduction in the opportunities for you to put over Government policies from twice a week to once a week would be a loss not a gain.
- ii) The argument set out above is strengthened by the advent of television in the House of Commons. Television will want more of you not less, and you will want to be seen defending your policies on television twice a week not once.
- iii) A system of prior notice Questions would certainly reduce your workload. It would, however, mean that you were not kept in touch with the broad range of Government policy in the way in which the existing system requires. That in turn would require far more extensive briefing for press interviews, etc, for which the Questions briefing process now serves.
- iv) A system of prior notice Questions together with 30 minutes for Question Time would lead to <sup>mini-</sup>~~many~~ debates on specific subjects on which you would require detailed knowledge which would thereafter become much less valuable.

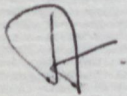
The fact is that the present arrangements, illogical as they are, suit you quite well because:-

- i) <sup>they</sup>~~it~~ keeps you closely in touch with the whole range of major Government policies and means that you are always better informed than interviewers, political opponents, ministerial colleagues, etc; and



ii) you use Question Time to put over and defend Government policy in a way for which there is no substitute.

I suspect that it is unlikely that the Procedure Committee initiative will really get off the ground, if only because there is no real sign of great discontent with Prime Minister's Questions in the House. It is after all up to Members themselves to put down Substantive Questions and very few of them do. The Lord Privy Seal, in giving evidence to this Procedure Committee, will obviously have to be fairly circumspect. We cannot afford to give the impression that you are somehow dissatisfied with the present form: otherwise we shall have headlines about the Prime Minister wanting to duck scrutiny by the House of Commons. You will no doubt wish to discuss tactics with him and the Chief Whip.



TIM FLESHER

14 June 1985

cc Mr Butler  
Mr Powell  
Mr Turnbull  
Mr Addison  
Mr Sherbourne  
Mr Alison  
Mr Ingham



PRIME MINISTER

Questions Tomorrow

It would be surprising if the Opposition led tomorrow on anything other than the TUC talks since Mr Kinnock will probably have had a detailed account of them. We will have to judge the best way to play Questions in the light of that outcome. Peter Walker had a relatively quiet time at Energy Questions today and it was clear that there is little steam left from anyone other than the hard left, although if the Opposition can put you in the role of the "road block to peace" they will certainly try to do so. Mr Walker managed to score heavily against Dennis Skinner by revealing that 90% of the miners at Bolsover were now working.

I suspect the Opposition will see little profit at continued pursuit of the Belgrano in view of today's debate. But we will have to wait to see how it is reported.

Other possible issues include: your visit to America and the whole range of defence, economic, and other issues which you will be discussing. You might also get questions about cold weather, including the DHSS announcement today of a new triggering of severe weather payments in some areas of the country, most of which are in the South and Midlands of England. There might also be reference to the tragic case of the mother with 2 young children who apparently froze to death in a flat in Southwark at the weekend.



On the Order Paper, there are Conservatives at 1, 4 and 5, respectively Michael Stern, Roger Freeman and Marcus Fox. There are Labour Members at 2 and 3, Terry Lewis and William O'Brien. The latter is a mining Member.

17.





*file*  
*Parl: PM's Questions*

10 DOWNING STREET

4 February 1985

You will be aware that a piece of briefing requested for Prime Minister's Questions last Thursday about the 'Stray Soviet Missile' did not arrive until 2.55pm on a day when the Prime Minister also had a major speech. This briefing was requested at 8.30am to arrive by 12 noon.

The briefing the Ministry of Defence provides is always clear and well presented, and the effort which goes into producing it at such short notice is very much appreciated by the Prime Minister. If, however, it arrives beyond a time at which the Prime Minister can study it carefully and raise questions if necessary, much hard work will have been wasted and Mrs Thatcher might have to answer in the House without fully taking into account Departmental advice.

The 12 noon deadline is requested to enable all the briefing for that day's Questions to be assembled in time for the Prime Minister's lunchtime briefing meeting. Of course the system does allow some flexibility if a piece of briefing poses particular difficulties or if the issue has only become topical during the morning but I hope you will agree that cases such as that of last Thursday should be very much the exception.

TIM FLESHER  
Private Secretary

Barry Neale Esq





Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1H 9NF

Telephone Direct Line 01-213 6400

Switchboard 01-213 3000

1) Mr ~~Trent~~

2) Mrs ~~Boche~~

Tim Flesher Esq  
Private Secretary  
Prime Minister's Office  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

4. January 1985

Dear Tim,

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

Thank you for your letter of 12 December. I am sorry that we did not anticipate the Leader of the Opposition's question to the Prime Minister about the allowance for YTS trainees. This had been discussed at the Manpower Services Commission's Youth Training Board the previous afternoon, but no conclusion had been reached.

We need to be more vigilant in future. Officials here have been reminded of the need to be particularly alert in watching for matters under discussion within the MSC which could become controversial and we have arranged that the Branch which has overall responsibility for relations with the MSC will keep a general oversight of matters arising so that information about potentially sensitive issues on MSC matters is drawn promptly to the attention of Ministers and No 10. We will keep this arrangement under review to ensure that it operates effectively.

Yours sincerely

David Normington.

D J NORMINGTON  
Principal Private Secretary





JP

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

4 June 1984

Thank you for your letter of 1 June about Prime Minister's Question Time. I can confirm your understanding of the Prime Minister's view of her oral Questions. In short, Mrs. Thatcher considers that, if there were to be any changes in the arrangements for Prime Minister's Questions, they should be initiated by the House rather than by her, although of course she would wish to have the opportunity to comment on any suggested changes.

(TIM FLESHER)

M.W. Townley, Esq.,  
Cabinet Office.

SR





2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

My ref: J/PSO/14048/84

Your ref:

June 1984

Dear Tim,

In your letter of 23 May to Alan Davis you suggested that the figures of domestic rate bills since 1966/67, given in answer to a recent Question, might be used in conjunction with annual increases in the RPI to develop the Government's argument in favour of rates legislation.

Though information of this kind has not been used on an annual basis, because (as the table attached to your letter demonstrates) there are substantial year-to-year variations in the difference between rate and price increases, Ministers have regularly quoted figures relating to the period since 1979 in support of the Government's case. For instance, the Rates White Paper observes (in paragraph 1.22) that 'between April 1979 and April 1983 domestic rates in England increased on average by 91% while the RPI rose by only 55%'.

Those opposed to the rates legislation have sought to counter the Government's use of this comparison by arguing that the Government itself has been the cause of rates increasing faster than inflation over this period, by its reduction of the percentage of local authorities' 'relevant' expenditure funded by Aggregate Exchequer Grant. Use of the longer period back to 1966/67 (quite apart from the technical problem arising from the change in local authority responsibilities between 1973/74 and 1974/75) would tend only to serve to strengthen the critics' case. As the attached table shows, the present Government's period of office has been the only period since 1966/67, apart from 1976/77 and 1977/78, when grant percentage has been reduced; up to 1975/76 it increased steadily.

Ministers have pointed out that the Government has followed this policy of reducing the proportion of local spending met by central government in order to reduce the cost of local government to the taxpayer, to increase local accountability and to encourage local authorities to reduce their expenditure. However they have also pointed out that if local authorities had spent in line with Government's expenditure plans rate increases would on average have been below the general rate of inflation (see for instance the Rates White Paper, paragraph 1.22).



It would seem therefore that the Government has probably already made as much mileage as it can, for its rates legislation, from a comparison of rate increases and inflation.

*Tommy Mitchell,*  
*Answer*

A C ALLBERRY  
Private Secretary



AGGREGATE EXCHEQUER GRANT AS PERCENTAGE OF SETTLEMENT  
RELEVANT EXPENDITURE AND OUTTURN/BUDGET RELEVANT EXPENDITURE

	Settlement		Outturn/Budgets
	England and Wales	England	England
1967/68	54		
1968/69	55		
1969/70	56		
1970/71	57		
1971/72	58		
1972/73	58		
1973/74	60		
1974/75	60.5		
1975/76	66.5		
1976/77	65.5		
1977/78	61		
1978/79	61	(60)	59.8
1979/80	61	(60)	58.6
1980/81	61	(60)	57.2
1981/82		59.1	54.8
1982/83		56.1	51.2
1983/84		52.8	49.9
1984/85		51.9	



Parliament July 79

PM'S Questioning

07 JUN 1984







*Mr Flesher OJv*

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 7123

T J Flesher Esq  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

1 June 1984

*Dear Tim,*

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTION TIME

As you know, there is now a Commons Procedure Committee currently concerned with "shorter" speeches", but shortly to move on to Standing Committee procedure and eventually no doubt to other procedural matters within their general terms of reference.

We are currently taking a look at various procedural matters which might be drawn to the attention of the Leader of the House as suggestions which he might at some stage wish to bring to the attention of the Committee. One or two of these involve aspects of Question procedure, eg the effects of the present lack of any limit on the numbers of priority Written Questions. We are at present, however, working on the assumption that you would not wish any initiatives taken in relation to the current arrangements for Prime Minister's Question Time. Could you kindly confirm that we are right in this.

*Yours sincerely,  
Michael Townley.*

M W Townley





10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

23 May 1984

Your Secretary of State answered a Question yesterday about the average level of domestic rates since 1966/67. It occurred to us here that these figures, compared with the levels of inflation since that time, might help to develop the Government's argument in favour of rates legislation. In particular, a comparison of the rate of increase of prices and the rate of increase of rates since 1967 shows that until 1978 there was no discernable pattern to whether prices or rates rose faster; subsequently, however, rate increases have been consistently and sometimes substantially higher than price increase. Prima facie this is potent evidence for suggesting that the behaviour of certain local authorities had changed materially in recent years which in turn required a change of approach from Government.

BF | It may be that this kind of evidence has been used before or that it is in some sense flawed. I should, however, be grateful if you could consider this point which is set out in tabular form as attached and let me know whether this is an argument which might be used.

TIMOTHY FLESHER

Alan Davis . Esq.,  
Department of the Environment.



	a	b		c
	Increase in RPI	Increase in average level of domestic rates		a-b
67	2.5	67/8	2.5	0
68	4.7	68/9	2.4	-2.3
69	5.4	69/70	4.7	-0.7
70	6.4	70/1	4.5	-1.9
71	9.4	71/2	15.2	4.8
72	7.1	72/3	13.2	6.1
73	9.2	73/4	8.3	-0.9
74	16.1	74/5	13.8	-2.3
75	24.2	75/6	24.3	0.1
76	16.5	76/7	8.7%	-7.8
77	15.8	77/8	16.0%	0.2
78	8.3	78/9	10.3%	+2.0
79	13.4	79/80	18.7%	+5.3
80	18.0	80/1	28.3%	+10.3
81	11.9	81/2	22.6%	+10.7
82	8.6	82/3	15.5%	+ 6.9
83	4.6	83/4	7.2%	+ 2.6



a)  
Increase in RPI  
RPI

b)  
Increase in  
average level  
of Domestic Rates  
rates

c)  
a - b  
Rate Increase  
RPI Increase

67	2.5	67/8	2.5	0
68	4.7	68/9	2.4	-2.3
69	5.4	69/70	4.7	-0.7
70	6.4	70/1	4.5	-1.9
71	9.4	71/2	15.2	4.8
72	7.7	72/3	13.2	6.1
73	7.2	73/4	8.3	-0.9
74	16.1	74/5	13.8	-2.3
75	24.2	75/6	24.3	0.1
76	<del>15.8</del> 16.5	76/7	8.7%	<u>-7.8</u>
77	<del>8.3</del> 15.8	77/8	16.0%	0.2
78	8.3	78/9	10.3%	+2.0
79	13.4	79/80	18.7%	+5.3
80	18.0	80/1	28.3%	+10.3
81	11.9	81/2	22.6%	+10.7
82	8.6	82/3	15.5%	+6.9
83	4.6	83/4	7.2%	+2.6





PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

29 February 1984

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your letter of 23 February, with enclosures.

It seems to me that what is important here is that Departments should be reminded that certain "consultation papers" may well be of concern to Parliament even though they do not easily fit into the categories usually described as White or Green. Departments should therefore be sure to consider when issuing any Consultation document whether it would be appropriate for topics to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

This seems to me to be entirely uncontroversial, and I think that your draft adequately covers the ground. I believe, however, that this sort of detailed instruction may be more appropriate as a "Dear Private Secretary" letter than one from the Lord Privy Seal to his colleagues, who are unlikely to have the time to exercise any real supervision over the manner in which their Departments respond. Subject to any comments you or copy addressees may have, I therefore suggest that the draft might, suitably amended, be sent by the MPO to the Parliamentary Clerks of all Government Departments. It would tie in reasonably well with the guidance to Parliamentary Clerks for which the MPO is already responsible.

I am copying this to Tim Flesher, Alison Ward and (with the previous papers) John Salveson.

Yours truly,

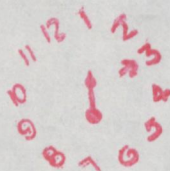
David

D C R HEYHOE  
Private Secretary

Richard Hatfield Esq  
PS/Sir Robert Armstrong



29 FEB 1984







Miss Stevens

Any comments?

D

24/2

70 WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref.A084/616

23 February 1984

Dear David,

Consultation Documents

We have been considering whether it is possible to improve the arrangements for identification and handling of Government consultation documents to meet recent criticisms from Mr Robin Maxwell-Hyslop MP and Mr Trevor Skeet MP, and from the House of Commons Library. This submission seeks the Lord Privy Seal's agreement, subject to the views of his colleagues, to the issue of some new guidance to Departments.

The immediate questions

Mr Robin Maxwell-Hyslop MP has asked the Prime Minister to issue guidance on the use of "white" and "green" papers (PQ of 17 January, Annex A; he has since written to the Prime Minister on the same subject). He has also sent the Chief Whip a memorandum on "Colour Coding of Official Publications" (Annex B).

Mr T H H Skeet MP has tabled a Question to the Prime Minister asking "if she will instruct all Ministers that when their Departments issue consultation documents they should routinely deposit on the day of issue copies of such documents in the Library". A holding answer is being given.

The Head of the Public Information Office, House of Commons, has written to the Committee of Departmental Librarians about the growing problem of consultation papers which are not "published" in the conventional sense, and which are frequently not deposited in the Library.

/Definitions

D C R Heyhoe Esq



## Definitions

Mr Maxwell-Hyslop is not correct in saying that the distinctions between colours were "once absolutely clear", as the attached article published in 1977 illustrates: Annex C. We do not think that his proposals for distinguishing particular kinds of publication by the colour of the cover would be practicable. They presuppose that all Government publications can be categorised in the way he suggests. In fact they cover an almost infinite variety, from papers which are pure announcements of decisions or carriers of information to those which are pure consultation documents. The numerous consultative, discussion and background papers issued by Departments (often in typescript and with no covers green or otherwise) may invite comments by a particular date, may invite comments with no closing date, may be intended to assist discussion of a particular topic but not specifically ask for comments, or may simply provide background information; or any combination. We think it essential for Departments to continue to be able to present papers in whatever form they think Parliament and the public will find most helpful.

### Saying clearly what the paper is for

Nevertheless it is true that the title and format of a paper (even a quick perusal) may not always make its purpose instantly clear. And if comments are wanted by a certain date, it is obviously necessary for this to be prominently stated. The Public Information Office suggested that every consultation paper might be accompanied by an "exploratory note", on the lines of those included in statutory instruments. This would be over-elaborate. But we think it would be reasonable to ask Departments in every case to state clearly on the first page exactly what the function of the paper is.

### The House of Commons Weekly Information Bulletin

There already exists a vehicle for making known the existence of consultation documents. The Weekly Information Bulletin has since 1978 contained a section on "White Papers and Green Papers" (example at Annex D). We understand that the Bulletin is no longer losing money and that its future seems secure. It is subscribed to by all the leading public libraries, and its contents are thus available to the general public.

There are two small problems. One is that the Bulletin is not published during the Summer Recess. But the Public Information Office think it should be possible (if necessary after consultation with the Services Committee) to keep the list of official publications running in one form or another. The second point is that the definition of "Green Papers" may need to be looked at again, if in future it is to cover a rather wider range (background as well as obviously "consultative" papers), which seems desirable. But this should not present the Office with insuperable difficulties.

/Guidance



## Guidance to Departments

It should be possible for the Lord Privy Seal (if he approves the idea) to issue a simple form of guidance on the lines of the attached draft. But it will be much harder to ensure that all consultation and discussion documents actually reach the Library. The present list in the Bulletin is described as:

"... both incomplete and adventitious in nature. Documents reach us by a multiplicity of routes ... there are many we never get or receive very late ... There is universal amazement if we explain that very often one part of a Department does not know another has issued a consultation paper, or that a Departmental Press Notice has referred to the issue of a paper, but without supplying an issuing officer's address, or sometimes even the title of a paper".

The best solution would probably be for each Department to have a single point of contact with the House Libraries (whether the Parliamentary Clerk or the Departmental library) and for Ministers to instruct their administrative divisions that copies of all consultation, discussion and associated papers should be sent to this point, who will then transmit them to the Libraries in accordance with the usual procedures. This, however, would raise questions of internal Departmental organisation and instructions, which not all Ministers in charge of Departments might find acceptable.

There could also be problems of selection. Some consultation papers are too trivial to rate wider circulation (eg enquiries whether a particular section of the business community finds Form x preferable to Form y). And sometimes a Department may actively not want a consultation paper to be widely known about - not because it is confidential (we are referring here only to "open" documents) but simply for economy and because they do not want to be bothered with comments from anyone but those to whom copies have been sent.

### Next steps

Nevertheless, subject to the Lord Privy Seal's views we think it may be desirable to bring the problems to the notice of Departmental Ministers, and suggest broad guidelines for the handling of papers of this kind.

However, because Ministers in charge of Departments may see difficulties for their own organisations, the Lord Privy Seal may wish to give them the opportunity to comment on a draft before any such guidance is issued. A draft letter for this purpose is attached.

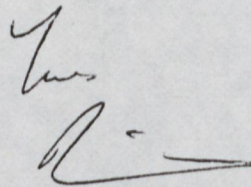
/Longer



Longer term

In the longer term, we think there is a need for more comprehensive guidance on deposit of material (not only consultation documents) in the Libraries - what should be deposited, timing, mechanics, and so on. The only existing guidance that we know of consists of one very inadequate passage in the Handbook for Parliamentary Clerks (which is not available outside Parliamentary Branches), and Private Secretary letters from the then Head of the Home Civil Service of April 1978 and March 1981 (Annex E). If the Lord Privy Seal agrees, we will explore further the practicability of such guidance and what it might contain, and will provide a draft for his consideration in due course.

I am copying this letter and attachments to Mr Flesher (No 10 Downing Street) and Miss Alison Ward (Chief Whip's Office).



(R P Hatfield)  
Private Secretary



(Answered by the Prime Minister on Tuesday 17 January 1984)

UNSTARRED Mr Robin Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Prime Minister, NO. 215 whether she will issue guidance to Ministers that documents announcing Government policy should be in the form of White Papers and that documents inviting comment before policy is finally determined should be identifiable as such by being issued in green covers; and whether she will further give guidance that in the latter case, the final date for representations to be considered should always be clearly stated.

The circumstances in which it is appropriate for Government proposals to be issued in the form of a "White Paper", or alternatively of a "Green Paper", cannot be precisely distinguished in every case. White Papers frequently attract comment, and indeed debate in this House. However, where representations from the general public are invited by a particular date, that date is of course given in the document.



26th January 1984

URGENT



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

A Memorandum on Colour Coding of Official Publications

The purpose of distinctive colours on official papers is (a) so that the purpose of the document concerned may be discerned immediately, and (b) so that documents of a similar character can be grouped logically in a library, for ease of location and identification.

The custom in this matter during the 23 years that I have been in the House of Commons was once absolutely clear and therefore useful. But the position has degenerated into one of meaningless chaos, as if a child had thrown a match into a box of fireworks, which then proceeded to display themselves erratically.

The traditional colour code, which should be resumed without delay, is as follows:-

1. White. This is the proper colour for a White Paper, which has two distinct functions: (a) To declare Government policy, once that has been decided at the highest level. (b) To give an account, on the Government's authority, of an event or series of events of significant public importance.
2. Blue. This is the proper colour for the cover of a Report from a Committee of a House of Parliament, together with material published under the authority of that Committee.
3. Red. This is employed for the cover of a Report by a non-Parliamentary body appointed by Government and required to report its findings on the problem or events into which it was set up to enquire and report. For instance, The Layfield Report into Local Authority Finance, or the Armitage Report into "Lorries, People, and The Environment".
4. Green. This colour is employed for a Consultation Document and is meant to alert the reader to the fact that a considered response is solicited. Without exception when consultation is invited the final date for submissions, and the name and address to which submissions should be sent must always be stated, and should preferably be stated in a uniform location in all such green papers.





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

- 2 -

Other exotic colours should only be used if the document concerned falls into none of these categories, and should not be used in an undisciplined manner, but consistently to create a new, recognisable category of document.

The colour of the cover should extend to the spine of the book so that it is visible when the book is in a bookcase. (For example Armitage is red on its spine, but the Report of the Royal Commission on the Constitution, though red on its face is white on its spine).

The prime example of how not to use colour coding is the Department of Trade & Industry document called "Regional Industrial Policy" issued in December 1983. It embodies four examples of chaos and offence against the above rules: (1) Though a Consultation Document, it is in a blue cover. (2) Though inviting a response, it gives no date by which a response must be received. (3) The invitation to respond at all appears only on page 7, apart from which it is not apparent at all that it is a Consultation Document. (4) Its spine is white and bears no title, making it particularly difficult to find when put in a book case.

It ought to be possible for a competent Government to restore order to the currently prevailing chaos in this matter.



'POLITICAL QUARTERLY' Vol 48 No 1.  
(January-March 1977)

## GREY PAPERS

GRANT JORDAN

ONE can revamp the old joke and ask, "What are Green or White but seldom Red (read)?" The answer is, of course, "governmental publications". Such documents are frequently referred to as Green Papers or White Papers and such labels are part of the common currency of our conversation. However, in practice it is very difficult to define these terms and one finds that in much of governmental publishing the colour of the covers of the document is less significant than the greyness over the meaning attached to the various forms of publication. One believes that one knows the difference between White Papers, Green Papers and their kin, but under close examination they often tend to merge to a uniform grey.

### "Modern" White Papers

"A White Paper", according to Harold Wilson speaking in Parliament on May 13, 1969, "indicates the broad lines of legislation the Government intend to introduce and, very often, of executive action that will be taken." Mr. Wilson thus deftly conveyed the most widely accepted current meaning of the term White Paper: it is a document stating governmental intentions and precedes legislation. In fact the White Paper is now almost part of our legislative process: major legislation "requires" its anticipatory White Paper as much as its formal parliamentary stages.

Yet this meaning of White Paper is less clear than one first expects. White Papers normally indicate their status only in passing in the text and there is doubt about the aptness of the White Paper label for certain papers. Though the recent (Cmnd. 6440) *Cash Limits on Public Expenditure* casually indicates in passing (para. 3) that it is a White Paper, (Cmnd. 6445) *Future of the Crown Agents* and (Cmnd. 6344) *The Development of National Giro* do not appear to call themselves White Papers—but they would nonetheless appear to be relatively unambiguous examples of the genre. On the other hand, a specimen such as (Cmnd. 4683) *Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped*, published in 1971, seemed conspicuously to avoid calling itself a White Paper and repeatedly termed itself a "paper", but this did not prevent it from being commonly regarded

\* The author is Lecturer in Public Administration at the University of Aberdeen. Thanks are due to Miss Diana Marshallsey, Asst. Librarian, Parliamentary Papers, The Library, University of Southampton, for her considerable assistance.

as a White Paper  
debate on a mo

White Paper  
be comparatively  
only a statement  
*A National Wa*  
(1945), or *The*  
followed by the  
example such as  
not precede legi  
slation of the H  
legislation. The  
duced in 1958  
servants to offic  
role as their defu

"The term 'W  
used by Members  
parliamentary and  
use is when a Me  
information of the  
will usually be a C

One does find  
type—for exam  
began by stating  
public understa  
England and W  
national White  
and many Annu  
included. In pra  
"for the inform  
provided the sub  
such as *A Backg  
and Wales*, H.M  
assist Parliament  
a White Paper.  
Papers are such  
often considerab

Both the pre-legi  
be fairly easily c  
come across the u



GREY PAPERS

as a White Paper and indeed it was the subject of a parliamentary debate on a motion which welcomed "the recent White Paper".

White Paper is not a technically precise label. The situation would be comparatively straightforward if a White Paper was always and only a statement of early legislative intentions—in the fashion of *A National Water Policy*, which was followed by the Water Act (1945), or *The Development of the National Giro*, which was followed by the Post Office (Banking Services) Bill (1976)—but an example such as *Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped* did not precede legislation. Such a paper is perhaps more for the information of the House than relating to a particular piece of anticipated legislation. The Treasury publication on *Official Publications* produced in 1958 (reprinted 1963) and intended as a guide for civil servants to official publications, actually implies this informational role as their definition of White Paper:

"The term 'White Paper' has today no precise significance and is often used by Members of Parliament and the Press to refer indiscriminately to parliamentary and non-parliamentary publications. Perhaps its most common use is when a Member asks a Minister to produce a White Paper for the information of the House; if the request is granted the resultant document will usually be a Command Paper" (para. 3).

One does find self-proclaimed White Papers of this informational type—for example (Cmnd. 4214) *People in Prison* (1969), which began by stating, "The purpose of this White Paper is to increase public understanding and knowledge of the prison service of England and Wales . . .". However, if one recognises the "informational White Paper" then the category does appear very open and many Annual Reports, Returns, and general statements can be included. In practice one would not be likely to refer to a document "for the information of the House" as a White Paper unless it provided the subject-matter of a debate. One finds that even a paper such as *A Background Paper to Water Re-Organisation in England and Wales*, H.M.S.O. (1973), which claimed its function was "to assist Parliament in considering the Bill" (p. 5), is not regarded as a White Paper. The conventions about what are or are not White Papers are such that unless a paper actually uses the term, there is often considerable doubt about whether the label is appropriate.

"Traditional" White Papers

Both the pre-legislative and informational uses of White Papers can be fairly easily discovered in post-war documents, but I have not come across the use of the term in a governmental document before

Who was responsible for production of this is anyone's responsibility for keeping up to date



then (though one can, of course, find documents performing such tasks). This is far from proving that the term was not used in such senses pre-war, but it does seem that general acceptance of it is comparatively recent. The traditional meaning of the term White Paper is quite different and derived from printing practice. If a Parliamentary Paper was of sufficient thickness to require a protective cover, it was customary to give it one of blue paper. Thus Blue Paper was the term evolved to describe substantial documents, such as the typical report of the fecund Select Committees of Victorian times. The term White Paper came to be applied to any document so slight as not to require such a blue binding. This traditional definition has in fact survived even into our more recent guides to Parliament. For example, in their *Encyclopedia of Parliament* (revised edition, 1972) N. Wilding and P. Laundy define a White Paper as a colloquial term for a government report, statement of policy or similar document which is not of sufficient thickness to require the stout blue covers which would transform it into a Blue Book. Such an interpretation makes odd reading of that well-known document (Cmnd. 6393) *Public Expenditure to 1979-80*: if one opens its protective blue covers one finds that it begins, "The White Paper sets out the Government's plans for public expenditure . . .". If one assumes the traditional definition of a White Paper, this is not a reassuringly accurate start to the document.

#### White Paper as a Command Paper

The Treasury guide to official publications (cited above) suggested that a White Paper would usually be a Command Paper. This is certainly a characteristic of "modern" White Papers—since the Command Paper is the form in which governmental pre-legislative or informational statements are published and presented to Parliament (as these statements are produced without Parliament, they are in the Parliamentary Papers series only through the constitutional fiction of a "Command from Her Majesty").

The authoritative *Abraham & Hawtreys Parliamentary Dictionary* combines the older and newer meanings of White Paper by invoking the Command Paper characteristic: "Government publications of all kinds, presented to Parliament are known as White Papers. The distinction between white and blue papers is related to the length of the document since a stiff blue cover is used for the bulkier sort. The term is associated with such command papers . . . as are not of sufficient size to need a blue cover." This

is not a very satisfactory by length, their Command Papers were all government papers p

In the past few years : have been presented an issued in the 1974 Sessio regarded as the typical 1 two had the "self assum

Cmnd. 5565. Annu  
Cmnd. 5580. Loan

The weekly listing i mentary Digest) referre i.e. Cmnd. 5593 which renegotiation of the t Callaghan had given to A few others of the 10 example (Cmnd. 5610) vations on the Sixth, Se diture Committee). Cert themselves White Paper seems to have arisen in

Our examination of strated two main points

- (a) That very few C modern sense—but reports of inquiri
- (b) That in reality it very few fit the c papers resolve m is likely to be ami

Judged against the tr papers were traditional paper as the rest of the in that they had stiffer 3 had buff, 3 had red. blue convention is certa

<sup>1</sup> Cmnd. 5548-5648 inclusive. Does not total to 100 as two was not available for inspection.



## GREY PAPERS

is not a very satisfactory definition as in the older sense determined by length, there seemed to be no restriction to the effect that only Command Papers were involved and in the newer sense far from all government papers presented to Parliament are White Papers.

In the past few years an average of around 275 Command Papers have been presented and an examination of the first 100 papers issued in the 1974 Session revealed that none fitted what perhaps is regarded as the typical form of a pre-legislative statement and only two had the "self assumed status" of White Paper:

Cmnd. 5565. Annual Review of Agriculture 1974.

Cmnd. 5580. Loans from the National Loans Fund 1974-75.

The weekly listing in the *Review of Parliament* (and Parliamentary Digest) referred to a further document as a White Paper—i.e. Cmnd. 5593 which was the publication of a speech on the renegotiation of the terms of entry into the EEC which Mr. Callaghan had given to the Council of Ministers in Luxembourg. A few others of the 100 are arguably of White Paper status—for example (Cmnd. 5610) *Defence Expenditure* (Government Observations on the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Reports from the Expenditure Committee). Certain observations—such as Cmnd. 5536—call themselves White Papers, but others do not and no firm convention seems to have arisen in connection with such documents.

Our examination of these 100 Command Papers thus demonstrated two main points:

- (a) That very few Command Papers are White Papers in the modern sense—but that most are committee reports, Returns, reports of inquiries, state papers and the like.
- (b) That in reality it is difficult to recognise a White Paper as very few fit the conventions in "pure" form and unless the papers resolve matters by "self proclamation", the position is likely to be ambiguous.

Judged against the traditional (almost moribund) sense, 76 of the papers were traditional White Papers (i.e. had covers of the same paper as the rest of the document); 23 were traditional Blue Papers in that they had stiffer covers.<sup>1</sup> But of the Blue Papers, 15 had blue, 3 had buff, 3 had red, 1 had green and 1 had grey covers! The blue convention is certainly eroded.

<sup>1</sup> Cmnd. 5548-5648 inclusive (No. 5642 not issued).

Does not total to 100 as two Command Numbers had more than one volume and four was not available for inspection.



## Other Uses

The term White Paper has then changed and is unclear. We have discussed the main meanings but, more technically, note should also be taken of the so-called Blue Paper. This is the collective label for the House of Commons Order Paper, Votes & Proceedings & Division Lists produced overnight for issue the next day and are so called because certain items are printed on Blue Paper. Until late 1940 there was a later reprint of the Blue Paper relating to the current day's sitting which incorporated formal alterations by the authorities of the House and corrections to printers' errors. This reprint was again known as the White Paper. Note should also be taken of the so-called White Book which is the list of members elected to the House and delivered to the Clerk Assistant by the Clerk of the Crown on the first day of a new Parliament.

In a sense, of course, it is unimportant what is, or is not, given the White Paper label since we are merely observing the casual use of an informal label—but it is nonetheless interesting to note the variations in use. It is unfortunate that the term has no more official standing—there is, for example, no published list of White Papers—although it is such a prevalent descriptive term. For example, one might be aware that there was a White Paper on Industrial Relations in 1969, but using the H.M.S.O. Annual List one has to go to "Industrial" in the index then be referred to "Industrial Relations Policy" (p. 1155) and then recognise on that page the official title *In Place of Strife*. Now this is hardly an onerous intellectual task, but it does seem perverse not to use in the official listings the best-known feature of a document (*i.e.* that it is a White Paper). Unless the issuing department includes the term White Paper on the title page then it would not appear in H.M.S.O. lists—and even if it did appear it would be unlikely to appear in the index.

Thus two—conflicting—complaints have been made so far. First, there is doubt about what is or is not a White Paper. Secondly, when we know a document is a White Paper it does not help us locate it.

More important than these points, however, is the question of the significance of the issuing of a White Paper. We have so far assumed that in issuing a White Paper the Government was attempting to further the development of policy in some manner. One can reasonably guess that in the study of the evolution of a piece of legislation, that a White Paper would be a key document—and that is why one has drawn attention to the unsatisfactory loose use of the

term. However, there important documents do not a

In the case of the reorg England and Wales, th not published as a Whit appended to a circular The official responsible a White Paper was no ment (18 pages). Had have represented anothe where a White Paper suspects that the real e circular the Governmen the realm of technical as just one of the flood 1973/74) implied that it

This is hardly a total unorthodox publication announce the decision i available while leaving D.O.E., other departm

Whatever the reason demonstrate the advice (mentioned above) that ing the form in which This arbitrariness doe ance in circular form. finding a copy in a l Parliamentary Paper. Library, for example, is documents are obtained parliamentary publicat parliamentary publicati library acquisitions. Sor lists but others may onl can be "picked up" o of the media.

Circulars do have th the kind of problems t



## GREY PAPERS

term. However, there is also a real problem of access if the important documents do not appear as White Papers.

### The Circular

In the case of the reorganisation of water and sewerage services in England and Wales, the Government pre-legislative proposals were not published as a White Paper but as an explanatory memorandum appended to a circular (92/71)—a Non-Parliamentary publication. The official responsible for the Bill has claimed (in discussion) that a White Paper was not issued because of the brevity of the statement (18 pages). Had this explanation been convincing, it would have represented another twist to the White Paper definition saga—where a White Paper is now a *lengthy* policy statement—but one suspects that the real explanation lay elsewhere. By publishing as a circular the Government attempted to keep the proposed policy in the realm of technical rather than political discussion. Publication as just one of the flood of circulars (D.O.E. alone published 188 in 1973/74) implied that it was a matter of interest only to the initiated.

This is hardly a totally convincing explanation—and perhaps the unorthodox publication also meant that the D.O.E. was able to announce the decision in principle to pursue the most radical option available while leaving certain issues to be resolved between the D.O.E., other departments and outside interests.

Whatever the reason for not issuing a White Paper, it does demonstrate the advice in the official guide on official publications (mentioned above) that “there are no hard and fast rules concerning the form in which a document should be promulgated . . .”. This arbitrariness does have practical consequences and the appearance in circular form does mean that the chances of physically finding a copy in a library are much reduced compared with a Parliamentary Paper. The practice at Aberdeen King's College Library, for example, is to secure all Parliamentary Papers, but other documents are obtained only at the initiative of the staff. Thus non-parliamentary publications are not found with the collection of parliamentary publications but are catalogued and located with other library acquisitions. Some circulars do find their way into H.M.S.O. lists but others may only go direct to local authorities and here they can be “picked up” only when, by chance, they hit the headlines of the media.

Circulars do have the (limited) merit of consistency. One knows the kind of problems to expect in attempting to trace them. With



other publications there is the added complication that one does not know the nature of the beast that is being hunted.

### Green Paper

Green Papers do at first sight have a certain coherence in aim, consistency in appearance, and have been firmly defined by governmental spokesmen. According to Mr. Wilson in *The Labour Government 1964-70: A Personal Record* (p. 380):

"A White Paper is essentially a statement of Government policy in such terms that a withdrawal or major amendments, following consultations or public debate, tends to be regarded as a humiliating withdrawal. A Green Paper represents the best that the Government can propose on a given issue, but, remaining uncommitted, it is able without loss of face to leave its final decision open until it has been able to consider public reaction to it."

Thus the official rationale is something as follows:

Question: What is the difference between a Green Paper and a White Paper?

Answer: A Green Paper is a White Paper that isn't ripe yet.

A more cynical explanation was developed to account for the first example of the species—*The Development Areas: A Proposal for a Regional Employment Premium* (1967). *The Times* of April 5, 1967, suggested the Government's flexibility on the subject actually stemmed from the fact that the Treasury and the D.E.A. had been unable to agree and a statement was needed in connection with the Budget.<sup>2</sup> However, the more flattering explanation of more participatory policy-making has been generally accepted and John Pemberton's<sup>3</sup> article on Green Papers concludes that "... White Papers continue to announce firm government policy for implementation. Green Papers announce tentative proposals for discussion." He comments that in order to distinguish them the new publications have been given a distinctive appearance—a green cover. To date (June 1976) 29 publications in green covers have been the vehicle for preliminary governmental thoughts,<sup>4</sup> but certainly not all documents in green covers of that shade have been Green Papers (e.g. Cmnd. 5045, *Cymru: Wales*). Michael Stewart, who was generally

<sup>2</sup> Cited in A. Silkin, "Green Papers and Changing Methods of Consultation in British Government", *Public Administration*, Vol. 51, Winter 1973.

<sup>3</sup> John E. Pemberton, "Government Green Papers", *Library World*, Vol. LXXI, No. 830, August 1969.

<sup>4</sup> From the list maintained by Miss Marshallsey at Southampton University Library. This list excludes Cmnd. 560—being a Northern Ireland Command Paper—but includes subsequent Consultative Documents in green covers.

credited with the  
sible for the fact  
their function to  
discussion while  
not all self-style  
Arthur Silkin's  
indicated that:  
Green Paper in  
the formative sta  
some firm govern  
ments were requ  
reached, one con  
remaining two v

One limitation  
improvement on  
the Government  
political virility  
during a parliam  
suggested to Mr  
should have bee  
sued after "cons  
have been regard  
all we produced  
In the case of  
*Democracy and  
Our Changing D*  
been reconciled  
deen in Februar  
should discuss a  
to Parliament. B  
form, it could h  
White Paper for  
precise concept o

In Parliament  
that might reme  
Papers". He sai  
details of the leg  
sultation". But i  
Paper (Cmnd. 4  
than detailed con

While the dist  
by "consultativ



## GREY PAPERS

credited with the "invention" of Green Papers as Minister responsible for the first on the regional employment premium, described their function to the House on April 5, 1967, as initiating public discussion while policy is still at the formative stage. By this score not all self-styled Green Papers have been "real" Green Papers. Arthur Silkin's examination of the first 10 so-called Green Papers indicated that: "Five of these followed the pattern of the first Green Paper in inviting public discussion while policy was still at the formative stage, one was a hybrid document which contained some firm government decisions and some proposals on which comments were requested before a final decision about policy would be reached, one consisted of definite government proposals . . . and the remaining two were essentially information documents".

One limitation on the use of Green Papers as a constructive improvement on the White Paper system is that on some subjects the Government cannot afford to be seen without a firm policy: its political virility is at stake. This phenomenon was well exhibited during a parliamentary exchange in 1969 when a Tory backbencher suggested to Mr. Wilson that the *In Place of Strife* White Paper should have been a Green Paper—since it was, of course, not pursued after "consultations". Mr. Wilson retorted: "I think it would have been regarded as an act of cowardice . . . if, after Donovan, all we produced was a Green Paper". (May 13, 1969, col. 1219.) In the case of the White Papers on Devolution—(Cmnd. 5732) *Democracy and Devolution* (September 1974) and (Cmnd. 6348) *Our Changing Democracy* (November 1975)—both could easily have been reconciled with Green Paper status and at a meeting in Aberdeen in February 1976 the Minister responsible proposed that we should discuss a draft "Green Act" before the issue was finally put to Parliament. But had the Government published in Green Paper form, it could have implied hesitancy and the decision to issue in White Paper form had more to do with public relations than any precise concept of the appropriate role of a White or Green Paper.

In Parliament on May 13, 1969, Mr. Wilson suggested a formula that might remove the apparent paradox of "consultative White Papers". He said that even with a White Paper, "Many of the details of the legislation [our emphasis] should be a matter for consultation". But in practice it is difficult to agree that (say) the Green Paper (Cmnd. 4621) *Value Added Tax* led to fundamental rather than detailed consultation.

While the distinction between Green and White Papers is blurred by "consultative White Papers", it is also perhaps blurred by



GRANT JORDAN

"White-Green Papers"—where firm decisions have been taken but the current vogue for "participation" means that the proposals get a better reception in (apparently) tentative form.

Despite their superficial uniformity and despite the fact that they have been in use less than 10 years, Green Papers are no more coherent a category than White Papers. As with the circular, there may be a difficulty in obtaining a Green Paper and the situation is made more complex by the fact that one does not readily know where to look. Up to date they have been published as follows:

	<i>Cmnd.</i>	<i>Non-Parl.</i>	<i>Total</i>
1967-1970 Sept.	1	11	12
1970 Oct.—	14	3	17
			<hr/>
			29
			<hr/>

Other Papers

However, the category of Green Papers is far more unsatisfactory than is even suggested by noting a few "Green Papers" which have been published as White Papers, a few "White Papers" that have been published as Green Papers and an inconsistency in the classification in publication. Arthur Silkin writing in 1971 was unable to discern much difference in function between Green Papers, Consultative Documents and Consultation Papers and since then the situation has, if anything, deteriorated. For example, Silkin noted one example of a Consultative Document which "not only looks like a Green Paper, but like Green Papers and unlike other Consultative Documents was both published by H.M.S.O. and presented to Parliament as a Command Paper". (Actually a Northern Ireland production.) In 1971 he felt able to treat this as an extraordinary Consultative Document but now one finds so many exceptions that the Green Paper has lost its credibility as a distinctive mode of presentation of policy to aid public participation.

We have had since a further three of the cross-bred Consultative Document—Green Papers:

- Cmnd. 5247. Pay and Price Code.
- Cmnd. 5297. Control of Firearms in Great Britain.
- Cmnd. 6398. Consumer Safety.

A simple distinction between Green Papers and Consultative Documents is further undermined by a creation such as *Patent Law Reform* (a Consultative Document)—again in green covers—but a non-parliamentary publication (1975).

Worse even than publisher, "label" functional distinction. Mr. Stewart's public discussion but the expressed purpose of Consumer Safety was: "their views". The Code, stated that: "statement of the Government in the light of consultation of further consideration similar to Mr. Wilson's".

In contrast, the *Law Reform* is distributed like a White Paper! (Cmnd. 6000) *Patent Law Reform* Banks Committee. Details in separate form.

The putative role of Consultative Documents which are appearing in appearance of Documents on Subjects (DCCP November 1971) *Services* (H.M.S.O.) in this case that the *Services* Document on Health is suspiciously like a White Paper.

Other "consultative" paper on *Future Work* discussion—*The Future*. While it has been suggested due to reasons of policy, the papers is mysterious.

Up to this point the Silkin argues that Consultative Documents only in name then all the foregoing while to borrow Silkin's apply it instead to the Papers which are issued.



## GREY PAPERS

Worse even than the confusion resulting from permutations of publisher, "label" and series is the fact that there is (by now) no functional distinction between the papers. We have already mentioned Mr. Stewart's neat description of a Green Paper as inviting public discussion while policy is still at the formative stage, but the expressed purpose of the Consultative Document on Consumer Safety was: "to afford all interests an opportunity to express their views". The Consultative Document, *The Pay and Price Code*, stated that: "it does not at this stage represent a definitive statement of the Government's views since it is open to alteration in the light of consultation, of the views expressed in Parliament and of further consideration by the Government". This sounds strangely similar to Mr. Wilson's definition of a Green Paper (quoted above).

In contrast, the green-covered Consultative Document on *Patent Law Reform* is distinguished by the fact that it reads remarkably like a White Paper! The document supplemented the White Paper (Cmnd. 6000) *Patent Law Reform* and set out in detail the Government's proposals for implementing the recommendations of the Banks Committee. One fails to see the reason for publishing the details in separate form.

The putative role of Green Papers has been usurped by Consultative Documents which do not even make the pretence of masquerading in appearance as Green Papers. Thus one gets Consultative Documents on subjects such as *The Regulation of Estate Agency* (DCCP November 1975); *Priorities for Health and Personal Social Services* (H.M.S.O. 1976). It is symptomatic of the inconsistency in this case that the Scottish equivalent of this DHSS Consultative Document on Health and Personal Social Services came out looking suspiciously like a White Paper—but with no Command number.

Other "consultative publications" have included a discussion paper on *Future World Trends* (H.M.S.O. 1976), and a paper for discussion—*The Future of Northern Ireland* (H.M.S.O. 1972). While it has been suggested that the latter was not a Green Paper due to reasons of political delicacy, the rationale for other discussion papers is mysterious.

Up to this point the issue of Consultation Papers has been avoided. Silkin argues that Consultation Papers differ from Consultative Documents only in name and since it is difficult to dissent from that then all the foregoing also applies to them. But it might be worthwhile to borrow Silkin's definition of a Consultative Document and apply it instead to the Consultation Paper, i.e. "... unlike Green Papers which are issued by H.M.S.O. and can be purchased in the

have been taken  
s that the proposals  
n.  
e the fact that they  
pers are no more  
the circular, there  
und the situation is  
not readily know  
ed as follows:

1.	Total
	12
	17
	—
	29
	=

more unsatisfactory  
n Papers" which  
hite Papers" that  
consistency in the  
ting in 1971 was  
1 between Green  
1 Papers and since  
or example, Silkin  
which "not only  
and unlike other  
I.M.S.O. and pre-  
tually a Northern  
: this as an extra-  
ds so many excep-  
y as a distinctive  
ipation.  
bred Consultative

tain.

and Consultative  
ch as *Patent Law*  
en covers—but a



normal way (Consultation Papers) are issued by the departments concerned and tend to be given limited distribution". In fact most of the more important so-called Consultative Documents issued by departments could be regarded as mislabelled Consultation Papers. Since the process for locating an H.M.S.O. publication is different from a departmental one, it would be useful if (what exists as a tendency) could be codified into a custom and Consultative Documents issued by H.M.S.O. and Consultation Papers were issued by departments.

But even that would not solve the (old) problem of function because the fact that a paper has been issued by a department has not prevented it being of substance. For example, in the course of the evolution of policy on water reorganisation the so-called Consultation Papers actually exhibited many different traits—information, intimation, consultation, etc.—and often one paper performed different roles and indeed simultaneously different roles for different audiences. Thus the Consultation Paper on the *Future Organisation of Land Drainage* (issued by M.A.F.F. September 15, 1972) went through the motions of consultation (and did fulfil a consultative role for certain marginal interests) but its main role was to record the fact that the D.O.E. had finally yielded to the pressures of M.A.F.F. and outside groups. For the N.F.U. or the C.L.A. it was confirmation of the outcome of negotiations, for other groups it was the intimation of the Government's legislative intentions on land drainage—a quasi-White Paper.

#### Conclusion

This note has sought to describe the case of labels such as White Paper, Green Paper, etc., and has indicated that there are no rigid conventions. There is often no exact relationship between the function performed by a paper and the label allocated to it. The status of a document very often tells us more about the tactical situation the Minister faces than its contents. Interpretation of the reasons behind the form of publication can be fascinating, but there is a very practical ramification to this baroque confusion. As far as librarians, researchers and the interested public are concerned it does matter if a policy is promulgated via a circular, a Consultative Document or a White Paper. It matters because parliamentary publications do tend to be more widely available and furthermore the recording of Consultative Documents, Consultation Papers and the like is not as accurate as it could be. An important paper such as the Consultative

Document on the Ir  
strong resemblance to  
as being available free  
in the 1970 H.M.S.O.  
Papers on water we  
There has been no er  
departments were er  
British (Museum) Li  
presses seems to hav  
productions such as a  
ties for Men and Wo  
noted in a press cutti  
ment office or the Be  
the Scottish Office at  
for Scotland.

With parliamentar  
for monitoring the r  
decisions are no longe  
our system of recordi  
between the Govern  
is inadequate. This  
aspects. On the one i  
to minimise publicity  
between Whitehall a  
strange episode in Sta  
discussion of the Wa  
to a "heads of agree  
associations and the  
sewerage functions to  
sition quite fairly ma  
know in future what  
must look not at (th  
in the privacy of his  
the Government Eld  
ment did not exist,  
he was anxious that  
mission of the local  
matter was made so  
heated discussion—it  
had been published i

These negotiations  
been completed with



: issued by the departments  
d distribution". In fact most  
litative Documents issued by  
abelled Consultation Papers.  
S.O. publication is different  
e useful if (what exists as a  
tom and Consultative Docu-  
ultation Papers were issued

(old) problem of function  
issued by a department has  
or example, in the course of  
isation the so-called Consul-  
different traits—information,  
ften one paper performed  
y different roles for different  
on the *Future Organisation*  
. September 15, 1972) went  
nd did fulfil a consultative  
its main role was to record  
yielded to the pressures of  
N.F.U. or the C.L.A. it was  
ions, for other groups it was  
gislative intentions on land

ase of labels such as White  
ated that there are no rigid  
ationship between the func-  
allocated to it. The status of  
out the tactical situation the  
tation of the reasons behind  
ng, but there is a very prac-  
usion. As far as librarians,  
e concerned it does matter  
; a Consultative Document  
rliamentary publications do  
urthermore the recording of  
papers and the like is not as  
per such as the Consultative

Document on the Industrial Relations Bill (which bears a fairly strong resemblance to *In Place of Strife*) appeared on a Daily List as being available free from employment offices, but did not appear in the 1970 H.M.S.O. Annual Catalogue. Not all of the Consultation Papers on water were recorded in the relevant D.O.E. listings. There has been no enforcement of Treasury Circular 3/54 whereby departments were enjoined to deposit specified categories in the British (Museum) Library. A cavalier spirit towards the printing presses seems to have been adopted and one readily comes across productions such as a Consultative Document on *Equal Opportunities for Men and Women* which the Aberdeen University Library noted in a press cutting and (eventually) located in the local employment office or the *Benefits of North Sea Oil*; a paper published by the Scottish Office at the request of the Oil Development Council for Scotland.

With parliamentary papers we have evolved a meticulous system for monitoring the minutiae of parliamentary business, but major decisions are no longer (or at least not only) made in the House and our system of recording and cataloguing the documents which pass between the Government and extra-parliamentary decision-makers is inadequate. This difficulty in locating such material has two aspects. On the one hand, there is the deliberate conscious attempt to minimise publicity and keep policy-making as a private exercise between Whitehall and its cohorts of interest groups. Consider the strange episode in Standing Committee D on April 3, 1973, when in discussion of the Water Bill the Opposition attempted to get access to a "heads of agreement" drawn up between the local authority associations and the D.O.E. covering the allocation of certain sewerage functions to district councils. Denis Howell for the Opposition quite fairly made the point that: "When the public want to know in future what is to be done should a conflict . . . arise, they must look not at (the Bill) but at some heads of agreement which in the privacy of his Ministry, the Minister is drawing up". For the Government Eldon Griffiths attempted to claim that the document did not exist, while his colleague, Mr. Page, explained that he was anxious that the committee should see it—but that the permission of the local authority associations was required. The whole matter was made somewhat farcical when—after 3½ hours of heated discussion—it was discovered that the document in question had been published in full in *The Surveyor* three weeks previously!

These negotiations between the D.O.E. and the Associations had been completed without anyone troubling to inform the M.P.s who



(in the words of one of them) were, "acting as advocates" for the local authorities.

Thus, on the one hand there is the point that policy-making in Britain tends to be carried on in specialised circles. Consultation is consultation within these small communities and other (wider) involvement is not encouraged, it is considered sufficient that those interested see the papers. On the other hand, this note has been mainly concerned with what is more the accidental foreclosure of discussion. But documents which are difficult to trace are as effectively private as those deliberately labelled such.

While one cannot easily do much about the former point, the latter could be remedied by a more considered use of terms. The Under-Secretary in charge of the introduction of V.A.T. has described<sup>5</sup> how the V.A.T. Green Paper (Cmnd. 4621) was evolved: "We duly studied previous Green Papers . . . to see what literary style was deemed suitable and whether ours ought to be 'presented to Parliament by the Chancellor of the Exchequer by Command of Her Majesty' or simply 'published by Her Majesty's Customs & Excise'". This pragmatic spirit in such matters is surely precisely the cause of much confusion and some clear principles ought to be evolved.

However, although one might look forward to more consistency in the use of labels, problems would remain for the user. Significant policy initiatives can be made by a ministerial statement in the House or even in an informal, off-the-record piece of ministerial kite-flying. These can functionally replace a Green Paper, a circular, a consultation paper or even a White Paper.

#### Post Script

Loose informal use of labels is almost inevitable. It is often instructive as when, for example, in a radio interview in March the General Secretary of the Labour Party referred to the latest White Paper on devolution as a "consultative document". But although in this instance the original "mislabelling" was no doubt deliberate, one feels that in many cases no thought seems to have been given to the form of publication. One can appreciate why the media referred to the Consultation Document (*sic*) on Transport Policy (2 vols., H.M.S.O., 1976) as a Green Paper—despite the fact that it had conspicuously orange covers. The convention seems to be arising

<sup>5</sup> See Dorothy Johnstone, *A Tax Shall be Charged*, Civil Service Studies No. 1, 1975, p. 23.

that any publication  
ment of such policy  
understand the paper  
(i.e. consultation doc  
policy-making for a  
Paper where the wide

One often hears th  
but if the word has a  
a hierarchy of officia  
exercise of looking a  
main characteristic o  
system progresses wit



## GREY PAPERS

that any publication claiming to be consultative rather than a statement of firm policy is a "Green Paper". One can less readily understand the reasoning behind the use of yet another category (*i.e.* consultation document) or why such an important step in policy-making for transport should fail to appear as a Command Paper where the wider public might have reasonable access to it.

One often hears the view that we are controlled by a bureaucracy but if the word has any precise meaning it is surely something like a hierarchy of officials bound together by rules. Even the limited exercise of looking at these various publications reveals that the main characteristic of the British system is its lack of rules. Our system progresses with a constant resort to expediency.

vocates" for the  
policy-making in  
Consultation is  
other (wider) in-  
efficient that those  
is note has been  
total foreclosure of  
trace are as effec-

former point, the  
use of terms. The  
of V.A.T. has  
(21) was evolved:  
see what literary  
to be 'presented'  
by Command of  
Her Majesty's Customs &  
is surely precisely  
principles ought to be

more consistency  
for the user. Significant  
statement in the  
absence of ministerial  
Paper, a circular,

It is often instruc-  
tive to read in March the  
of the latest White  
Paper "it". But although  
no doubt deliberate,  
no have been given  
to explain why the media  
Transport Policy  
White Paper the fact that it  
seems to be arising

Public Affairs Studies No. 1, 1975,



(House of Commons  
 Weekly Information  
 Bulletin,  
 W/e 24 December 1983)

\*NOTE: The European Draft Instrument COM (83)638 (above), first appeared in Bulletin No.13 but was wrongly numbered as COM (83)631.

NOTE: Further information available from the London Office of the European Communities Commission at 8, Storey's Gate, London SW1P 3AP (Tel: 01-222 8122). Members may obtain copies of documents from the Vote Office by reference to the weekly yellow demand form, quoting the numbers in brackets.

---

WHITE PAPERS AND GREEN PAPERS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST BULLETIN

---

White Papers

None

Policy Document

21.12 A Policy for Overseas Students: the Government's Response to the Overseas Students' Trust Study. Copies from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Whitehall, London SW1.

Green Papers

16.12 Inquiry into Provision for Retirement: Consultation Letter on Portable Pensions. Copies from Mr Nick Montagu, Room 52, Hannibal House, Elephant and Castle, London SE1 6TE. (Comments by 30 January 1984).

20.12 Intellectual Property Rights and Innovation, Cmnd 9117 (010191170X) £4.65.

20.12 Regional Industrial Policy: Some Economic Issues. Copies (price £3.00 post free) from the Department of Trade and Industry, Headquarters Library, Room LG37, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET. (No date given).

NOTE

White Papers are issued by the Government as statements of policy; and often set out proposals for legislative changes, which may be debated before a Bill is introduced. Government responses to Select Committee reports, which are occasionally regarded as White Papers, are omitted from this section. Some White Papers may invite comments.

Green Papers, which is a term here used to include also all consultative and discussion documents reaching our office, set out for discussion proposals which are still at a formative stage.

Papers to which an ISBN and price are appended are normally available through HMSO. For others, application should be made to the Department concerned.





CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT

WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Telephone Direct line 01 273 5400

Switchboard 01 273 3000

*Sir Ian Dancroft KCB**Head of the Home Civil Service*

11th April 1978

Dear Private Secretary

cc - Mr Willis  
Mr Russell —  
Miss Dickinson + PPS

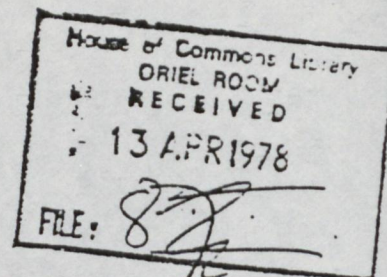
## DEPOSIT OF PAPERS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY

It has recently become evident that there are some differences in Departments' understanding about the availability of papers deposited by Ministers in the House of Commons Library. The purpose of this letter is to clarify the position for the future.

Unless material is specially designated, the Librarian of the House of Commons will make material deposited in the Library freely available on request to all users of the Library (who may include Members' secretaries and research assistants). If any papers are intended to be seen only by Members of Parliament they should be clearly designated "RESTRICTED TO MEMBERS". It is expected that the great majority of deposited documents need not be subject to any restriction and can be made available to all users.

Where deposited material is marked "RESTRICTED TO MEMBERS", Library staff will ensure that it is given only to Members themselves, but thereafter they are not in a position to circumscribe the use that Members may make of such material, beyond drawing attention to any Departmental restriction on the document. The Librarian is bound by a Speaker's ruling in March 1969 to make all material reaching the Library available to all Members. No material marked TOP SECRET, SECRET, or CONFIDENTIAL by the originating Department should in any circumstances be deposited in the Library.

As to mechanics, all papers which are sent further to Answers to Parliamentary Questions or Statements, or which a Minister orders to be placed in the Library, etc, should be sent to the Deposited Papers Clerk, Oriel Room, House of Commons Library, SW1A 0AA (superceding any previous arrangements). When material is deposited in connection with an Answer to a Parliamentary Question or Statement, the covering note should either refer to the relevant Question or Statement, or include a copy of it. The envelopes containing such material should be clearly marked "MATERIAL FOR DEPOSIT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY".





Perhaps I could ask you to arrange for this advice to be put into effect straight away.

I am copying this letter to Private Secretaries to Permanent Secretaries Heads of Departments on the attached list.

Yours sincerely

John Hobson

J HOBSON  
Private Secretary





CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2AZ

cc D. Menhennet

Telephone 01 273 5400

*Sir Ian Bancroft G.C.B.  
Head of the Home Civil Service*

Dear Private Secretary

10 March 1981

DEPOSIT OF PAPERS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY

My predecessor but one wrote to Private Secretaries on 11 April 1978 setting out the arrangements to be used thenceforth for the deposit of papers in the House of Commons Library. I understand that these arrangements function smoothly and to the satisfaction of the House of Commons Library. They have requested however that an additional procedure should be arranged now that the House of Commons Library has a branch in the Norman Shaw "North" Building at some distance from the Main Library.

Departments are asked to provide one copy of each Deposited Paper to the Branch Library in addition to those copies supplied to the Main Library. This extra copy of each Deposited Paper should be supplied, together with a copy of any covering letter to:

The Deposited Papers Clerk  
Branch Library of the House of Commons  
Room 5/19 Norman Shaw [North]  
Victoria Embankment  
LONDON SW1A 2JF

The Library appreciates that occasionally such deposited material might be available only in a unique copy, or that it might be too bulky for duplication; in such instances, the one copy must continue to be sent to the Main Library since this will continue to be the principal place of deposit.

Perhaps I could ask you to arrange for this additional procedure to be put into effect straightaway.

I am writing similarly to Private Secretaries to Permanent Secretary Heads of Departments.

*Yours sincerely,  
Jeremy Colman*

JEREMY COLMAN  
Private Secretary



DRAFT LETTER FROM THE LORD PRIVY SEAL TO  
MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF DEPARTMENTS

Consultation Documents

For some years there have been complaints about the non-availability of consultation documents issued by Departments, and queries about the exact status of particular papers. The problems have been compounded by two factors. First, there appears to have been a significant increase in consultations with the public or sections of it - which of course is in itself entirely commendable. The second is that, because of increased printing costs, the growing tendency is to use less formal methods of communication, such as circulated typescripts, in place of "publications" in the conventional sense. These more ephemeral documents are often not deposited in the House Libraries, and Members are unaware of their existence. The issue has been brought to a head by two recent Parliamentary Questions.

I therefore have it in mind to write to you and our other colleagues on the lines of the attached draft. Before doing so, however, I should like to be sure that it will not cause Departments any significant difficulties.



The guidance is in very broad terms, and the procedures suggested are already generally used in the case of major consultative exercises. But the less widely publicised exercises seem to be falling through the net rather too often, and Members are feeling that information is being withheld from them unnecessarily.

I should be grateful for views. Having in mind that the two Members who have raised this have been given holding replies, it would be very helpful if I could have your comments by 8 March. I am copying this letter to all Ministers in charge of Departments, to Willie Whitelaw in view of his interest in the presentation of Government information, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.



DRAFT LETTER FROM THE LORD PRIVY SEAL TO  
MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF DEPARTMENTS

Consultation Documents

There have recently been pleas from Members of Parliamentary and others for more help in identifying, and obtaining access to, consultation papers issued by Departments. There is no problem with HMSO publications. But the less formal consultation papers, especially if they are not "published" in the conventional sense, are often not deposited in the House Libraries. The status of such papers is not always instantly clear, and if observations are specifically invited this does not invariably appear at the outset. Whether or not Members themselves wish to offer observations, they should be in a position to know that particular issues are the subject of current consultations. (I am of course referring only to open consultations, not to those which are necessarily confidential.)

I think it would be fruitless to try to define consultation papers. It is a very broad category (even White Papers may invite observations). But any document which is intended to assist discussion of a particular



issue might be regarded as coming under this heading, even if it is primarily factual. What matters most is that there should never be any doubt what the function of a particular paper is, and what form of response is invited.

I should be very grateful if colleagues could ensure that, whenever a paper of this kind is issued, from any part of their Departments - and particularly if it is issued simply in typescript or letter form - it should state clearly on the first page what its purpose is. If observations are specifically invited, it should make immediately clear to whom they should be sent and by what date (if there is a closing date). Many papers, of course, do this already. But it would be very helpful to Members if it were the invariable practice.

The other side of the coin is that copies of such papers should be sent to the House Libraries, using the normal procedures for deposit of papers which do not have to be "laid"; the covering envelopes should be marked "Consultation Document". This should be done on the day of issue. There is already a section in the House of Commons Weekly



Information Bulletin (headed "Green Papers" but in fact covering a much wider range than those which are literally "green") where they can be listed for Members' information.

Some consultation papers, I know, are of such narrow interest that deposit could not reasonably be regarded as necessary, even for information. But I must leave the selection to the good judgment of Departments. In general, the presumption should be that any paper with a "consultative" flavour should be deposited unless it is self-evidently of no interest to any except those whom it directly addresses.

In any case of difficulty, my office will be glad to advise.





*CF*

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

10 February 1984

*CF  
Preshans  
file pl  
CS*

I should be very grateful if you could thank the Speaker for his courtesy in sending me a copy of his letter of 9 February to Mr. Campbell-Savours, M.P. I will of course show this to the Prime Minister.

B. E. R. BUTLER

W. A. Beaumont, Esq.

*VC*



*Robin* on Reflection & given that Dale Campbell Savours was appointed  
vs the Select Committee on Members' Interests last night I have  
decided on this course of action. I hope it will ensure  
that this man issue will be removed from the floor of the chamber & hopefully  
finally killed off !!



Mr Speaker

Speaker's House Westminster London SW1A 0AA

9th February 1984

*ds 9/2.*

Looking again at the point you raised in the House after my ruling given on Monday 30 January - namely, whether from the standpoint of declaring an interest, the answer to a question should be distinguished from the question itself - I have concluded that this matter would best be considered in the first instance by the Select Committee on Members' Interests, and that you ought properly to raise it with them.

That Committee is specifically required by Standing Order No. 107

"to consider any specific complaints made in relation to the registering or declaring of interests"

I would therefore think it entirely appropriate for you to raise the matter in the Committee - to which I see you have now been appointed - with a view to seeing whether the present rules need to be extended.

I am quite clear in my own mind that no distinction should be made between backbenchers asking questions and front benchers answering them; and I have already stated that the rules of the House should apply equally to all Members. I am content for the Select Committee to report on the matter in the way they think best.

SPEAKER

Dale Campbell-Savours Esq MP,  
House of Commons



no



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

CEMA  
SS  
131  
Prime Minister

To note

DF  
351

The Office of the  
Leader of The Opposition

30 January 1984

Dear Prime Minister,

I will be in the United States of America for Prime Minister's Questions on Thursday February 9 and Tuesday February 14. The Deputy Leader of the Labour Party Roy Hattersley will take my place on those dates.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Kinnock

Neil Kinnock MP

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London





Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG  
01-233 3000

12 December 1983

Tim Flesher Esq  
10 Downing Street

*Charles*

*Dear Tim,*

PUBLIC PURCHASING

You wrote to Callum McCarthy on 15 November about a continuation of the arrangements by which the Prime Minister is alerted to potentially sensitive public purchasing issues in advance of their becoming public.

Since the new arrangements were set up it has been agreed inter-departmentally that the Treasury and the DTI would select from the cases reported to the Prime Minister those where a post mortem might be useful to establish whether the purchasing policy could be used to help an unsuccessful UK supplier to improve its competitiveness in the future.

For this system to work, the Treasury and Department of Trade and Industry obviously need to see all the cases which are reported but apart from NERC's purchase of Swedish cranes (Jerry Bird's letter to David Barclay of 21 November, a copy of which we obtained from DTI), we have seen none since the new arrangements were set in hand in May. We should therefore be grateful if you could ensure that all these Prime Ministerial cases are copied both to the Treasury and the Department of Trade and Industry, if departments themselves fail to do so. Meanwhile, any briefing material you may have on other cases would also be helpful.

I am copying this letter to Callum McCarthy in the Department of Trade and Industry.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Margaret O'Mara*

MISS M O'MARA  
Private Secretary



Pashament : PM's Questions July 79



Transit, Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG  
01-238 1000

11 3 DEC 1983

1 2 3 4





CE RMT

Hll

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

15 November 1983

Jonathan Spencer wrote to Michael Scholar on 3 May about the arrangements by which the Prime Minister is alerted to potentially sensitive public purchasing issues in advance of their becoming public. In his reply Willie Rickett undertook to review the operation of these procedures in about six months. I am writing to let you know that as far as this office is concerned the arrangements have proved themselves very effective and we would wish to continue them.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Margaret O'Mara (H.M. Treasury).

Tim Flesher

Callum McCarthy, Esq.,  
Department of Trade and Industry.





10 DOWNING STREET

Tina

The arrangement  
has worked very  
well - DoI always  
inform us before  
any controversial  
announcements &  
I'm sure the  
arrangement should  
continue.

Charlotte

15/11



600 *Parliament Procedure for handling  
PM's Questions*

*Change to  
note pa*



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE,  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

6 October 1983

*Dear Sir,*

Thank you for your letter of 5 October. The Lord Privy Seal agrees to stand in for the Prime Minister at Question Time on 22, 24 and 29 November; and, if necessary, on Tuesday 6 December. As you say, we can be in touch about briefing arrangements nearer the time.

I am copying this to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

*Yours ever,  
David*

D C R HEYHOE  
Private Secretary

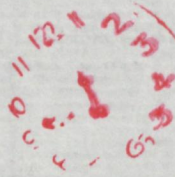
T Flesher Esq  
Private Secretary to the  
Prime Minister  
No 10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1



WESTERN UNION  
TELEPHONE SERVICE



6 Dec 1962







cc: Michael Alison

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 October 1983

As I mentioned to you on the telephone, the Prime Minister is likely to be out of the country during the latter part of November at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting during which she will miss probably three Prime Minister's Questions on 22, 24 and 29 November. In addition, her attendance at the European Council in Athens is likely to preclude her from being present for the Questions on Tuesday 6 December. Mrs. Thatcher would be grateful if the Lord Privy Seal could stand in for her on those occasions. If Mr. Biffen agrees, we can be in touch nearer the time to discuss arrangements for briefing him. I should say that the machinery in No. 10 for briefing the Prime Minister for her Questions will be at the Lord Privy Seal's disposal for those occasions.

I am sending copies of this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

Timothy Flesher

David Heyhoe, Esq.,  
Lord Privy Seal's Office.

DF



1. MR. BUTLER ✓
2. PRIME MINISTER

I agree  
FERB  
4.10

Agreed mb

Prime Minister's Questions in your absence

You are likely to miss three Questions days while you are at CHOGM and one while you are attending the European Council Meeting in Athens. It may be best now to nominate your stand-in for those occasions. The obvious candidate in the Cabinet list of precedence is the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, but of course he is likely to be abroad at the same time. Next on the precedence list is the Home Secretary followed by the Chancellor. My feeling and that of Michael Alison is that neither would be ideal; partly because the choice of one or the other would be misrepresented as conveying a political signal and partly because the style of both would lend itself to a rather more combative occasion than was normal when Lord Whitelaw stood in.

We suggest therefore that you should ask the Lord Privy Seal to stand in in your absence. It would be perfectly natural for you to ask Mr. Biffen as Leader of the House to deal with Prime Minister's Questions while you are away and he would find it easier than would Mr. Brittan or Mr. Lawson to play a straight bat. Nor could the choice of Mr. Biffen be misrepresented as conveying any particular Prime Ministerial favour.

We have consulted Lord Whitelaw and he agrees with this advice.

Agree to ask the Lord Privy Seal to stand in for Prime Minister's Questions while you are away in Delhi and Athens?

TF



CC HMT

13 May 1983

Public Purchasing: Prime Minister's Questions

Thank you for your letter to Michael Scholar of 3 May following the conversation we had about briefing the Prime Minister on public purchasing cases. I know the Prime Minister will be grateful for the arrangements which you have made to ensure that she is properly briefed on controversial cases. We will certainly review the operation of these procedures in six months or so and let you know how useful we have found them.

I am copying this letter to Margaret O'Mara (H.M. Treasury).

WILLIAM RICKETT

Jonathan Spencer, Esq.,  
Department of Industry.



016



Secretary of State for Industry

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY  
ASHDOWN HOUSE  
123 VICTORIA STREET  
LONDON SW1E 6RB

TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-212 3301  
SWITCHBOARD 01-212 7676

JU584

3 May 1983

Michael Scholar Esq  
Private Secretary to the  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

*Mr Rickett*

*Over to you.  
ms 4/5*

*Dear Michael,*

PUBLIC PURCHASING : PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

You will recall that after the recent CEGB barge case, we discussed how the Prime Minister might be provided with more systematic briefing in advance on public purchasing cases which are liable to give rise to public concern and, hence, to questions in the House.

2 I attach a copy of the letter which I have now circulated to all Departments asking for their help in identifying and briefing on potentially controversial cases. I would again emphasise that no such system be entirely foolproof and there will undoubtedly continue to be cases which slip through, either because Departments have not been told of impending orders or sometimes simply because orders are given far more prominence than could be reasonably foreseen. However, I hope that what we are proposing to Departments will result in an improvement in the present situation. As a "belt and braces" operation, Department of Industry Sponsor Divisions are being asked separately to be alert to this need for briefing in cases of which they may themselves become aware. Since this procedure is being introduced for legitimate briefing purposes and is not confined to cases involving prospective foreign purchases, we see no reason why it should be held to be objectionable under the Treaty of Rome if Brussels became aware of it.

3 It would be useful to know, say, in six months time, the extent of briefing provided as a result of this early warning procedure and your perception of its usefulness.

4 I am copying this letter to Margaret O'Mara in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Office.

*Yours sincerely,  
Jonathan Spencer*

JONATHAN SPENCER  
Private Secretary





Secretary of State for Industry

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY  
ASHDOWN HOUSE  
123 VICTORIA STREET  
LONDON SW1E 6RB  
TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-212 3301  
SWITCHBOARD 01-212 7676

JU583

3 May 1983

Margaret O'Mara  
Private Secretary to the  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
Parliament Street  
London SW1

*Dear Margaret,*

PUBLIC PURCHASING: PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

You will recall the intense public interest which arose recently over the CEGB's decision to hire a cable-laying barge of South Korean construction rather than one which would be built in Britain. This case was also notable as an example of the increasing tendency for controversial purchases throughout the public sector to be raised with the Prime Minister during Question Time, especially in view of her frequent statements on the desirability of British goods and equipment being bought whenever they are competitive. On this particular occasion, the Prime Minister had initially to face the questions on the CEGB barge case unbriefed. This, in turn, has caused No 10 to ask for more systematic briefing and advance warning of controversial public purchasing decisions.

2 We have pointed out to No 10 that those cases which excite such comment will usually be where a public sector body, outside direct Government control, "bounces through" a controversial purchase. Moreover, controversy is not necessarily a function of size and it will not be possible to identify all cases which are likely to cause comment in the House without the most burdensome of procedures. Nevertheless, there is clearly scope to do something. Accordingly, we propose that existing arrangements should be improved as follows:

i all Departments should be reminded to provide No 10 with advance briefing for the Prime Minister on cases which they judge merit such notification;

ii where time permits, the relevant material should be cleared with the Department which is responsible for the UK supplying industry in question (mainly but not always this will be the Department of Industry), and with the Department of Industry Branch which is responsible for co-ordination of the Public Purchasing Initiative (contact either Mrs M Matthews on 212:0407, or Mrs Bolton on 212:0409).





3 Of course, the above does not supersede, but rather emphasises, the need for Departments to let us (and the relevant Sponsor Department, where different) know, wherever possible long before a case is likely to reach public attention, of potential purchases which may cause such problems so that the scope for remedial action may be considered.

4 I am therefore writing to you and other Government Departments to request that each Department should establish its own arrangements (or tighten them up where these already exist) to ensure that briefing is provided along the above lines on controversial purchasing decisions involving itself, or the nationalised industries or other public sector bodies for which it is responsible. Such cases will usually - though not invariably - be ones where the public body intends to place a significant order with a foreign supplier in preference to a UK competitor. Departments will have to judge for themselves when they need to provide briefing for this purpose but this Department stands ready to advise in cases of doubt.

5 I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of the Cabinet, Mr Sparrow and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours sincerely,  
Jonathan Spencer*

JONATHAN SPENCER  
Private Secretary





file  
vk  
Pashent

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

16 March 1983

As I mentioned to you some time ago, the Prime Minister will not be able to answer Questions in the House next Tuesday, 22 March, since she will be attending the European Council. She would be very grateful if the Home Secretary could reply on her behalf.

You kindly agreed that our briefing team should come to you for lunch. There will be seven of us: Ian Gow, Derek Howe, Michael Scholar, Tim Flesher, myself, Charlotte Stevens (our Parliamentary Clerk) and Sally Hayter (Parliamentary Questions Section). The usual arrangement is that all of us lunch with you and the Home Secretary, except for Charlotte and Sally who lunch in your Private Office and collect last minute briefing. As I suggested to Lesley Pallett, we will arrive at 1245.

I will let you have the folder of questions and draft answers on Monday evening.

The next day on which the Prime Minister will be unable to answer Questions is likely to be 7 June. I hope you will be able to come here for lunch on that day. We can confirm the arrangements nearer the time.

WR

A.R. Rawsthorne, Esq.,  
Home Office.

086



PRIME MINISTER

Written - We are not complaining about Question Time. They are. Ideas for change should come from them. The real answer lies with those who put down Questions. Let others take the Prime Minister's Questions initiative. ms.

I understand that Mr. Speaker has called an initial conference for 1800 tomorrow evening to discuss his concerns about the state of Prime Minister's Question Time. He has apparently invited the Lord President, and I think John Silkin will represent the Opposition. Unless you object, I think I should tell the Lord President's Office that he should say we are obviously open to suggestions, but that he must reserve his position. It is too important to rush this question.

There are of course ways in which Prime Minister's Question Time could be improved, and I think we <sup>might</sup> ~~should~~ try to use this opportunity to make changes, even if the whole subject has to go to Committee on Procedure. My initial thoughts are as follows.

Prime Minister's Question Time fulfils an important function; it allows the House to question the Head of Government on the topics of the moment; and that feature should not be lost. But the present system, whereby you have no notice of the Questions that will be asked, does waste a lot of your time, and imposes considerable burdens and costs on Government Departments. There is also something in the argument that 15 minutes is inadequate for so important an occasion, but I think we must resist calls to increase the amount of time you spend answering Questions in the House each week. The present system is clearly unfair to backbenchers, but we have to maintain the Speaker's discretion and the rights of front bench spokesmen, Privy Counsellors and Party leaders. Finally it is absurd to have a system in which as many as 90 members appear on the Order Paper when only a handful are ever called (which means that all the rest have to receive a written reply which is almost always identical).

/In short,



In short, I think our guiding principles in making any changes should be that the new system:-

- i) should allow Members to raise the topics of the moment;
- ii) should give the Prime Minister some notice of the subjects that Members intend to raise;
- iii) should not increase the calls on the Prime Minister's time; and
- iv) should maintain the Speaker's discretion, and the right of Party leaders, front bench spokesmen and Privy Counsellors, but should give backbenchers as fairer deal.

(v) Should <sup>mean that</sup> ~~to be given~~ <sup>written replies do not have</sup> ~~to each other~~ <sup>questions that is not</sup> ~~be asked~~.

One possible system which might meet some of these points follows. It is purely illustrative:-

- a) the Prime Minister should answer Questions for 30 minutes once a week, say at 1500 on Wednesdays. This would be administratively much simpler, and would waste far less of your time, but you may feel that it is important to have the opportunity to speak twice a week for 15 minutes;
- b) Members should be allowed to give notice that they wish to ask Questions of the Prime Minister ten days in advance (as at present), but they should only be required to give notice of their actual Question by 1430 the previous day.
- c) The Question would have to be on a specific subject. Engagements Questions, or other devices to conceal the true subject of the supplementary, would not be accepted by the Table Office;

/d)



- d) There would have to be an understanding that the Prime Minister would not transfer Questions. It was to get round this that the engagements Question was devised;
- e) A maximum of twenty Members/Questions would appear on the Order Paper for any day (or ten if there were two 15 minute sessions, rather than one 30 minute session). The rest would be deemed to have been withdrawn. Members would be selected by ballot as at present, but the Speaker might have to have discretion to amend the order so as to obtain a rough balance, or to ensure that individual Members did not appear on consecutive Question Times;
- f) The Speaker would call as few supplementaries as possible, the first from the Member asking the Question. He could restrict the supplementaries to the Member asking the Question plus one, but he would obviously have to have discretion to vary this. In calling supplementaries, the Speaker would naturally bear in mind the <sup>need for</sup> balance, and the rights of front bench spokesmen, Privy Counsellors and Party leaders. (We should not exaggerate the balance that is achieved at the moment. At Question Time today you were asked eight Questions by Opposition Members and four by Conservatives, the time before the figures were ten Opposition to six Conservatives.)

These are only some first thoughts. I would welcome your own views.

1 February 1983



## OPEN QUESTIONS TO THE PRIME MINISTER

1. Indirect or "open" Questions to the Prime Minister first came to notice as a device in Session 1971-72. They were then 10 per cent of all Questions to the Prime Minister. By 1976-77 they had grown to 58 per cent of PM's Questions. The reason generally given for their growth is that they provided a successful way of combating the previous tendency for Prime Ministers to devolve Questions put to them to a Departmental Minister.

2. The issue of "open" Questions to the Prime Minister was last substantively considered by a Procedure Committee in 1976-77 (Fifth Report of the Select Committee on Procedure (Sessional Committee), Session 1976-77). Prime Minister's Question Time had been previously considered by a Select Committee on Parliamentary Questions in 1971-72, which concluded that it was unable to propose any procedural changes that would relieve the current pressures on Prime Minister's Question Time, although they recommended an additional 15 minutes on Thursdays. The Select Committee on Procedure of 1977-78, which had general terms of reference, did not make any recommendations in this field.

3. The Select Committee on Procedure, 1976-77 made the following recommendations:-

- (1) The Prime Minister should retain for answer by himself more Questions that raise wide or important issues, even if strictly speaking they fall within the responsibilities of a Departmental Minister, on the lines of the proposal contained in the letter from the Prime Minister's Secretary of 18th April (Annex 1).
- (2) Members should table fewer Questions of the "official visit" or "official engagement" type ("indirect" Questions) and more Questions of the kind the Prime Minister has now said he is prepared to retain.
- (3) "Indirect" Questions should not be grouped for answer with identical Questions on the paper for that day.



- (4) Mr Speaker should enforce stricter rules of relevance on supplementary questioning arising from "indirect" Questions to the Prime Minister.

Successive Prime Ministers have accepted the first recommendation, but the others seem to have had little effect.

4. In evidence to the Committee the Principal Clerk of the Table Office suggested for consideration two possibilities (paragraphs 28 to 33 of Annex 2 to the report). These were:-

a. that in respect of oral Questions to the Prime Minister the Speaker might be given power to promote "direct" Questions above "indirect" Questions;

and b. that a Question, if drafted in an indirect form, should be ruled out of order.

5. The Committee did not adopt these proposals. They refer (paragraph 7) to "the extreme difficulty of devising a definition of "indirect" Questions that would defeat the ingenuity of Members", and also to the potential value of "indirect" Questions in promoting topicality, spontaneity and flexibility.

6. These reasons - that, assuming the acquiescence of many Members in the present "open forum" character of PM's Question Time, ways will always be found round any procedural restriction - are the usual ones advanced against changing present arrangements. And Prime Ministers may see advantage in the regular "political confrontation" platform which it provides.

7. If it were desired to review the position, the normal method would be to establish a Procedure Committee with a specific remit. The Lord President answered a PQ on Prime Minister's Questions on 28 June last (attached). His predecessor dealt with the matter at Question Time on 25 March (column 1092). The Speaker has made clear on previous occasions his dissatisfaction with the present arrangements.



renewable energy was about one-fifth of what it will be in the coming year. I do not know what interest the hon. Gentleman took in it at that stage, but it is somewhat difficult to accept his criticism today. We have a rolling programme of research into the renewables to arrive at the most promising renewables for use in Britain. The ACCORD report, to which I believe the hon. Gentleman refers, is a further step down that road.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Prime Minister (Questions)

30. Mr. Winnick asked the Lord President of the Council if he will move to appoint a Select Committee to consider extending time for Questions to the Prime Minister.

**The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen):** I have no such proposals to make to the House.

**Mr. Winnick:** In view of the many questions to the Prime Minister on the Order Paper, only the first four questioners are likely to have an opportunity to put their supplementary questions. As there is an obvious wish to question the Prime Minister on a whole host of topics, is there not a case for extending the time allocated by, perhaps, five minutes?

**Mr. Biffen:** The situation to which the hon. Gentleman refers derives from the great preference for the open question. If the time were extended by five minutes, that would not greatly alter the present characteristics of Question Time.

**Mr. Stokes:** Will my right hon. Friend continue to stand firm on any extension of Prime Minister's Question Time? It has been harmed by live broadcasting. In spite of the Prime Minister's marvellous answers to all questions, it is not typical of a day's work in the House. There is far more noise during Question Time than at other times.

**Mr. Biffen:** I agree with my hon. Friend.

### Papers (Pagination)

31. Mr. Dubs asked the Lord President of the Council if he will raise in the Services Committee the practice of using Roman, rather than Arabic numerals, in paginating parts of House of Commons papers, especially in Select Committee reports, with a view to standardising on Arabic numerals.

**Mr. Biffen:** I am sure the House of Commons (Services) Committee will be prepared to consider any proposal the hon. Member puts to it on the subject.

**Mr. Dubs:** I am grateful to the Leader of the House for that answer. This is hardly the most burning political issue that is likely to come before the House during this Parliament, but is he aware that it represents a source of confusion to hon. Members, the public and the press? It is often not possible to find a particular page in many Select Committee reports. Will he support the proposal in my question?

**Mr. Biffen:** The hon. Gentleman makes a fair point about some of the difficulties that derive from the present

forms of pagination. While I should like to secure a role as a great reforming Leader of the House, perhaps by obtaining changes in this regard, I should not like to anticipate what might be the conclusions of the House of Commons (Services) Committee when it considers the matter.

**Sir John Biggs-Davidson:** Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that there is no disposition to abandon Roman numerals? They are part of the inheritance of European civilisation.

**Mr. Biffen:** That is the sort of weighty issue that should be considered by the Services Committee and, mercifully, not by me alone.

### Bridge Street Site

32. Mr. Hooley asked the Lord President of the Council whether he has given consideration recently to the Casson report on providing extra accommodation for hon. Members, and the proposed redevelopment of the Bridge Street site.

**Mr. Biffen:** The House of Commons (Services) Committee recently invited the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee to look into the possibility of securing the assistance of private funds in the implementation of Sir Hugh Casson's plans.

**Mr. Hooley:** would it not be rather degrading for the House of Commons to depend on private funds for the accommodation that a modern democratic legislature requires? Will the right hon. Gentleman again look at the matter with a view to making proper provision for the British Parliament from the funds provided by the taxpayer for it to do its job?

**Mr. Biffen:** The most prudent course would be to await the report of the Sub-Committee that is considering the problem.

**Sir Anthony Fell:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that if this proliferation of Committees continues, hon. Members will not need any offices?

**Mr. Biffen:** I note that point, although I am not quite sure what conclusion my hon. Friend wishes me to draw.

**Mr. William Hamilton:** Does the Leader of the House realise that if we got rid of the other place our accommodation problems would be solved at a stroke?

**Mr. Biffen:** That is an interesting point of view, but it would be inappropriate to engage in debate on that matter from the Dispatch Box.

**Mr. Chapman:** Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind that there could be a considerable advantage in using private investment for such accommodation and that it could be done under a lease—back system? Is he aware that if the choice is between public funds never being made available to provide decent office accommodation and making office accommodation possible through private funds, we would find the latter preferable?

**Mr. Biffen:** Those factors are being considered by the Sub-Committee of the Services Committee.

### Government Publicity

33. Mr. Adley asked the Lord President of the Council what criteria affect the number of staff in his Department who deal with Government publicity.



...debate at some time between the Easter  
...esses?

... is a subject which I think the House  
... debate urgently. I would not like to promise  
... when, but I hope it will be fairly soon.

... Miss Joan Maynard (Sheffield, Brightside): May I  
... draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day  
... motion 328 which has the support of more than 100  
... members?

*[That this House condemns Bernard Matthews, the  
poultry tycoon, and his 18th century attitude to his  
workers, many of whom are on family income supplement,  
at rebates and rate rebates; and fully supports his  
workers who are on official strike in Suffolk and Norfolk,  
and also their union, the National Union of Agricultural  
and Allied Workers in the struggle they are conducting for  
decent living wages, particularly as these workers doubled  
production in the last 12 months.]*

... That motion supports members of my union who are taking  
... industrial action against Bernard Matthews in order to win  
... a decent wage, having doubled production in the last 12  
... months.

... May I remind the right hon. Gentleman and the House  
... that these rural workers have been out on strike for six  
... weeks? That shows their desperation. They have been  
... trying to live on starvation wages of just over £50 a week.  
... Yesterday, Bernard Matthews—the Freddie Laker of the  
... poultry industry—was wining and dining at the Savoy  
... hotel. He can afford a lunch there but he cannot afford to  
... pay our members a decent wage. Is it not high time that  
... the House debated that important matter, or, at least, we  
... had a statement from the Minister of Agriculture?

... Mr. Pym: The House recognises what a difficult  
... dispute this is. It is important, but I do not think that a  
... debate on the subject would help a settlement of the  
... dispute, which everybody wants. It certainly cannot be  
... arranged in the foreseeable future.

... Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Will my  
... right hon. Friend try to find time next week or shortly  
... hereafter for a debate on the operation of the British  
... banking system which is making a considerable profit as  
... a result of high interest rates? In particular, I refer to the  
... Midland bank which foreclosed on Stone-Platt Industries  
... in the North-West and elsewhere in Britain. It employs  
... more than 7,000 people whose jobs are now in jeopardy.  
... That includes more than 400 at Ernest Scragg and Sons  
... Ltd. in my constituency. The receiver decided to make  
... more than half the work force at Ernest Scragg redundant  
... while meaningful discussions are taking place with a  
... potential purchaser. Is that not a subject which the House  
... should debate?

... Mr. Pym: I regret to say that I cannot provide a  
... separate day to debate that subject. My hon. Friend may  
... find an opportunity to raise it. There are other  
... opportunities, such as during the debate on certain parts  
... of the Finance Bill, when speeches on that general subject  
... would be in order. I am sorry that I cannot go further than  
... that.

... all over the world? They have promoted British industry  
... abroad and their films have received praise from small,  
... medium-sized and large firms. Will he also arrange for a  
... statement to be made explaining why the Minister for the  
... Civil Service failed to allow Members of Parliament to  
... visit the unit or to provide the film-makers with the  
... requisite information or the reasons for their dismissal.  
... That is scant thanks for loyal years of service for the  
... Government to put them on the dole on 31 March. The  
... Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians  
... is now blacking all Government work and will continue to  
... do so until something is done.

... Mr. Pym: I note the hon. Gentleman's request, but that  
... would not be a suitable subject for a statement next week.

... Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South-West): Is  
... my right hon. Friend aware that of the 52 questions on the  
... Order Paper today addressed to the Prime Minister, 49  
... have been couched in identical terms? Will my right hon.  
... Friend take steps to refer the whole issue of Prime  
... Minister's questions to the Procedure Committee?

... Mr. Pym: There is some demand in the House for that,  
... but at present it is by no means widespread. The Procedure  
... Committee, or a Select Committee on Procedure, has  
... considered the subject several times and will no doubt do  
... so again. It has been found that it is difficult to establish  
... a method that is not open to various abuses or misuses.  
... Therefore, it is not an easy problem to resolve. I accept  
... that it is curious to see so many similar questions on the  
... Order Paper. In recent years, the House has found that that  
... is one way in which hon. Members can raise almost any  
... question with the Prime Minister. However, it is a matter  
... of opinion whether that is the best or most appropriate use  
... of Prime Minister's Question Time. I shall listen to any  
... views put to me on that subject.

... Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Is the right hon.  
... Gentleman aware that we, at least, are pleased that the  
... Government have climbed down about the use of  
... Westminster Hall for President Reagan's address? In  
... future, will the Government not take the consent of the  
... House for granted?

... Mr. Pym: The hon. Gentleman has misrepresented the  
... position. I am glad that it has been arranged for the  
... President to make a speech in the Royal Gallery. That  
... arrangement suits both Houses of Parliament and is wholly  
... appropriate. There was an informal suggestion at one stage  
... that other possibilities could be considered, but the matter  
... is now settled.

... Mr. Keith Speed (Ashford): My right hon. Friend will  
... be aware of the unsatisfactory buck-passing between the  
... Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office about the  
... Falkland Islands, the Antarctic and HMS "Endurance".  
... May we have a debate on that subject before HMS  
... "Endurance" is finally paid off and we relinquish control  
... over that most important part of the South Atlantic?

... Mr. Pym: There will be the usual debates on defence,  
... the White Paper and the Services a considerable time  
... before there is any question of a different future for HMS  
... "Endurance". I can give that assurance.





PARLIAMENT. *l*

BF.

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

12 November, 1982.

I attach a copy of one of the briefs the Prime Minister has been using for Question Time. She has asked if your Secretary of State has any comments on it, or any suggestions for improving and embellishing it. It would be helpful if you could let me have a reply as soon as possible.

W. F. S. RICKETT

Jonathan Spencer, Esq.,  
Department of Industry.



COMPETITIVENESS AND DEMAND

- A. - Total money demand in the three months to June was about 11 per cent higher than in the same three months of 1981; real demand was 3 per cent higher; domestic output only rose 1%.
- In the 1970s, only £5 of every £100 of extra money demand went into increased output. The rest went in higher prices or higher imports.

- B. Cost in Jobs: The CBI estimate that every 1 per cent loss
- |  |   |                                     |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| <u>in the UK share of world exports)</u><br><u>of manufactures</u>   | ) | means <u>250,000</u> jobs lost; and |
| <u>in the UK share of the home</u><br><u>market for manufactures</u> | ) | means <u>80,000</u> jobs lost.      |

C. Import Penetration

Imports as percentage of home demand

	per cent		
	1970	1980	
Total manufacturing	17.1	25½	(8.4 increase)
e.g. vehicles	10.6	39	(28.4)
textiles	14.3	35	(20.7)
electrical engineering	17.7	37	(19.3)

Source: Department of Industry

D. Loss of Export Markets

UK share of 12 main exports markets for manufactures (in value terms)

	Per cent
1960	15.9
1970	10.6
1980	9.7

Source: Department of Trade.

NB Exports make up 29% of UK GDP compared with 9% in US, 12% in Japan, and 26% in FRG (OECD figures).



E. The CBI estimate that there has been a 10% increase in import penetration, and 2½% loss of export markets in the last 12 years, and they suggest this has led to a loss of almost 1½ million jobs.

F. Labour Costs as a Cause of Uncompetitiveness

Unit Wage and Salary Costs (Manufacturing) between 1975 and 1980

UK: almost doubled (an increase of about 89%)  
USA: went up by one third (37%)  
Japan: stayed level  
FRG: went up about one sixth (up about 17%).

Source: International Financial Statistics

Income from Employment as Proportion of Total Net National Income

		Per cent				
UK	1960	73	compared in <u>1980</u> with			
	1970	77	USA	France	FRG	Japan
	1980	81	78	73	72	68
	1981	81				

Source: OECD Accounts

G. Cutting NIS, and Derating, as a Cure?

- Revenue raised through NIS

1981-82                    £3.6 billion  
1982-83                    £3.4 billion  
(estimated)

These are the figures of revenue received into the Consolidated Fund, set out in the FSBR published at Budget time. (The 1981-82 figure was lower than it would otherwise have been and the 1982-83 estimate correspondingly higher because of the effects of the Civil Service strike)

/- The



- The effective reduction of 1 per cent made in the Budget will be worth £640 million to private sector employers in 1982-83.

- Cost of a 10 per cent derating for industry would be £140 million.

H. Interest Rates

The 6½ percentage points drop since last autumn should be worth about £1.5 billion to industry; each 1% point off improves industry's financial position by £250 million (in a full year).

OUTSIDE FORECASTS OF GDP

GDP profile in recent major assessments:

	<u>NIESR</u>	<u>LBS</u>	<u>St. James</u>	<u>Phillips &amp; Drew</u>	<u>CEPG</u>	<u>CBI</u>	<u>OECD</u>	<u>FSBR</u>
	(May)	(June)	(Aug)	(Oct)	(Apr)	(Aug)	(Jul)	(Mar)
Per cent change 1982 on 1981	+1	+1	+1½	+¾	-½	+½	+1½	+1½

Nearly all see prospect of continued recovery (as always, a range, with Cambridge forecast (CEPG) being the more pessimistic), though recent forecasts are considerably less optimistic than in their post-budget assessments. Single figure inflation through rest of 1982 (also in line with FSBR) is also generally expected.

*Financial Statement and Budget Report (The Red Book)*



## CBI QUOTATIONS

### Unemployment

Tackling unemployment and alleviating its problems is not just a task for government. There can be no solution without greater competitiveness, for which the major responsibility must rest with business.

### Trading with the world

Britain, whose exports make up nearly one third of its gross domestic product, cannot possibly afford to go protectionist, says the CBI.

### Pay and Competitiveness

Sir Campbell Fraser, President of the CBI, on 7 July said: "All the indications are that the 1980s will not be a decade of growth for most of us, but of intense competition as the world adjusts itself to the vast over-capacity that is obvious in so many industries. It is a war, and we have to gird ourselves up for it. The victors will be the efficient ..... you pay yourself not what you want but what the business needs to keep it competitive".

### Help for industry

Sir Campbell Fraser, in July, said that lower interest rates would be "the most important single thing" towards helping industry.



## OPPOSITION POLICIES OF REFLATION

### Quotes

A: John Maynard Keynes (1919)

"Lenin was certainly right. There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency. The process engages all the hidden forces of economic law on the side of destruction, and does it in a manner which not one man in a million is able to diagnose..."

B: Labour Government's Letter of Intent to the IMF (15 December 1976)

"... an essential element of the Government's strategy will be a continuing and substantial reduction over the next few years in the share of resources required for the public sector. It is also essential to reduce the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) in order to create monetary conditions which will encourage investment and support sustained growth and the control of inflation."

C: Mr. James Callaghan at the Labour Party Conference  
(28 September 1976)

"We used to think that you could just spend your way out of a recession, and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting Government spending. I tell you, in all candour, that that option no longer exists, and that, insofar as it ever did exist, it worked by injecting inflation into the economy. And each time that happened, the average level of unemployment has risen. Higher inflation followed by higher unemployment. That is the history of the last 20 years."



EMPLOYMENT POLICY WHITE PAPER - MAY 1944

QUOTES

*Notes* - EMPLOYMENT CANNOT BE CREATED BY ACT OR PARLIAMENT OR BY GOVERNMENT ACTION ALONE.

*Notes* - THE SUCCESS OF THE POLICY OUTLINED IN THIS PAPER WILL ULTIMATELY DEPEND ON THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE - AND ESPECIALLY ON THE EFFORTS OF EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS IN INDUSTRY; FOR WITHOUT A RISING STANDARD OF INDUSTRIAL EFFICIENCY WE CANNOT ACHIEVE A HIGH LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT COMBINED WITH A RISING STANDARD OF LIVING.

- ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN EXPENDITURE WILL BE FRUITLESS UNLESS WAGES AND PRICES ARE KEPT REASONABLY STABLE. THIS IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO ANY EMPLOYMENT POLICY, AND MUST BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY ALL SECTIONS OF THE PUBLIC.

29 JULY 1982





Parliament

bc. FERB  
IG  
MS  
TR

JP

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 October 1982

Dear Jill,

The Prime Minister will need briefing for Questions in the spill-over. I intend to put briefing to her this weekend on the main topics of interest during the recess. The standard Treasury brief will form an important part of this briefing. I note that the next version is planned for 18 October, but it would be very useful if I could have the up-dated version by this Friday, 15 October, so that the Prime Minister may study it over the weekend. *Tomorrow*

I attach a brief which I prepared for the Prime Minister in August. It draws heavily on the CBI's presentation to the NEDC on "competitiveness". I would welcome corrections and any embellishment that you can provide. The section on the economic forecast in particular will need correction, and it would be useful to have any figures you have available on the employment or tax implications of particular measures in "Labour's programme 1982" such as the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Community, the introduction of a 35-hour week without loss of living standards, higher retirement pensions and other social security benefits, the abolition of private health and education services and perhaps the transfer of the private rented sector to public ownership. If you see any difficulties about this, please let me know.

Likewise, additions to the helpful quotes at the back of the brief would be welcome. The only one that occurs to me is Sid Weighell's statement at the Trades Union Congress in September that the assembled delegates were responsible for the "4 million unemployed", but this will probably be unusable until Mr. Weighell's future is clearer.

The Prime Minister will probably face some particular questioning on the RPDI figures, to the effect that living standards are now lower than when the Labour Government left Office, and that it is irresponsible to talk about an up-turn in the economy in these circumstances. Michael Meacher has questioned her on the RPDI figures in the past,

/ and she



and she said at the time of the Hillhead by-election that living standards under this Government were higher than at any time under the Labour Government. I should be grateful if you could provide a suitable defensive line to take on this.

21 I am afraid my deadline for the requests in this letter must be lunchtime on Thursday, 14 October.

I am copying this letter and its enclosure to Barnaby Shaw (Employment), Jonathan Spencer (Industry), John Whitlock (Trade) and David Clark (DHSS).

Yours ever

Willie Rickett

Miss Jill Rutter,  
HM Treasury.



## COMPETITIVENESS AND DEMAND

A - Demand went up by 3 per cent in the year ending in March /ie the six months ending March 1982 compared with the same period a year before/

- In the 1970s, only £5 of every £100 of extra demand went into increased output. The rest went in higher prices or higher imports.

B Cost In Jobs: The CBI estimate that every 1 per cent gain

in the UK share of world exports of manufactures ) means 250,000 jobs gained; and

in the UK share of the home market for manufactures ) means 80,000 jobs gained.

C Import Penetration

Imports as a percentage of Home Demand: (CSO figures)

Total manufacturing	17.1% in 1971	25.4% in 1981: an 8.3% increase
e.g. vehicles	15%	<u>39%</u> : a 14% increase
textiles	17%	<u>35%</u> : an 18% increase
electrical engineering	18%	<u>37%</u> : a 19% increase

D Loss of Export Markets

UK share of 12 main export markets for manufactures (CBI figures):

1960	15.9%
1970	10.6%
1980	9.7%
1982	8.3%

/NB: Exports make up 29% of UK GDP compared with 9% in the USA, 12% in Japan, and 26% in the FRG (OECD figures)/

A loss of 2.3% since 1970



E This 10% increase in import penetration, and 2½% loss of export markets, mean a loss of almost 1½ million jobs in the last 12 years.

F Labour Costs as a Cause of uncompetitiveness

Unit Wage/Salary costs (manufacturing) between 1975 and 1980

UK: almost doubled (an increase of about 90%)

USA: went up by one third (33%)

Japan: stayed almost level (up about 4%)

FRG: went up about one sixth (up about 15%)

Income from Employment as a Proportion of Total Net Domestic Income  
(CBI figures)

UK: 1960	73%	compared in 1980 with	
1970	77%	USA	: 78%
1980	81%	France	: 73%
1981	82%	FRG	: 72%
		Japan	: 68%

G Cutting NIS, and Derating, as a Cure?

- Revenue raised through NIS : 1981/82 : £3.9b.  
: 1982/83 : £2.7b.

- The effective reduction of 1% made in the Budget will be worth £640m. to industry in 1982/83.

- The cost of a 10% derating for industry would be £140m.

H Interest Rates

The 5% drop since last Autumn should be worth about £1.25b. p.a. to industry (CBI figures)



BIRTHS AND DEATHS OF FIRMS: 1980 and 1981

*For every 100 firms that went out of business in 1981, there were about 115 that started to trade.*

	<u>Births</u>	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Excess</u>
1980	113,300	115,300	- 2,000
% of stock	8.0%	8.7%	
1981	124,800	110,000	14,800
% of stock	9.3%	8.2%	

Stock estimated at 1.34 million firms

Figures based on analysis of VAT registrations and deregistrations

OUTSIDE FORECASTS OF GDP

/ GDP profile in recent major assessments:

	<u>NIESR</u>	<u>LBS</u>	<u>St James</u>	<u>Phillips</u> <u>&amp; Drew</u>	<u>CEPG</u>	<u>CBI</u>	<u>OECD</u>	<u>FSBR</u>
	(May)	(June)	(Apr)	(July)	(April)	(May)	(Jul)	(Mar)
Per cent change 1982 on 1981	+1	+1	+1½	+1½	-½	+1	+1½	+1½

Nearly all see prospect of continued recovery (as always, a range, with Cambridge forecast (CEPG) being the more pessimistic) and see single figure inflation through rest of 1982 - also in line with FSBR.



## OPPOSITION POLICIES OF REFLATION

### Quotes

A: John Maynard Keynes (1919)

"Lenin was certainly right. There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency. The process engages all the hidden forces of economic law on the side of destruction, and does it in a manner which not one man in a million is able to diagnose..."

B: Labour Government's Letter of Intent to the IMF (15 December 1976)

"... an essential element of the Government's strategy will be a continuing and substantial reduction over the next few years in the share of resources required for the public sector. It is also essential to reduce the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) in order to create monetary conditions which will encourage investment and support sustained growth and the control of inflation."

C: Mr. James Callaghan at the Labour Party Conference (28 September 1976)

"We used to think that you could just spend your way out of a recession, and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting Government spending. I tell you, in all candour, that that option no longer exists, and that, insofar as it ever did exist, it worked by injecting inflation into the economy. And each time that happened, the average level of unemployment has risen. Higher inflation followed by higher unemployment. That is the history of the last 20 years."

/ D:



D: Mr. Joel Barnett (his memoirs, printed in Sunday Times, 31 January 1982)

Speaking of the last Labour Government:

"All in all there can be little doubt that we planned for too high a level of public expenditure, in the expectation of levels of growth that never materialised."

"...the quaintly titled "social contract", supposedly enshrining a new relationship between Government and unions. To my mind, the only give and take in the contract was that the Government gave and the unions took."

#### Extra Points

In addition to the usual anti-inflation points:

- the last Labour Government's policies did not prevent unemployment from rising, and indeed doubling during their term of office.
- the debt interest that the Government has to pay has risen from £2 billion in the early '70s to perhaps £15 billion this year. It has risen at a faster rate than inflation. It has risen at a faster rate than public expenditure as a whole. This year it is likely to cost as much as the whole of the National Health Service.



Unemployment

Link with suicide rates ?

No causal relationship:

- Average number of suicides in 1961-65 : 5879
- "          "          "          "          in 1980 : 4829

Unemployment in 1961-65 substantially lower than in 1980

- Sweden, Japan, and FRG show about twice the UK suicide rate, yet lower unemployment.

Two million below poverty line ?

Number of people in families with incomes below supplementary benefit level (DHSS figures):

1975 :	1.840 m.	)					
1976 :	2.280 m.	)	end year	1977 :	1.9 m.	)	average
1977 :	2.020 m.	)		1979 :	2.1 m.	)	over year



EMPLOYMENT POLICY WHITE PAPER - MAY 1944

QUOTES

- Notes*
- EMPLOYMENT CANNOT BE CREATED BY ACT OR PARLIAMENT OR BY GOVERNMENT ACTION ALONE.
  
  - THE SUCCESS OF THE POLICY OUTLINED IN THIS PAPER WILL ULTIMATELY DEPEND ON THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE - AND ESPECIALLY ON THE EFFORTS OF EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS IN INDUSTRY; FOR WITHOUT A RISING STANDARD OF INDUSTRIAL EFFICIENCY WE CANNOT ACHIEVE A HIGH LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT COMBINED WITH A RISING STANDARD OF LIVING.
  
  - ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN EXPENDITURE WILL BE FRUITLESS UNLESS WAGES AND PRICES ARE KEPT REASONABLY STABLE. THIS IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO ANY EMPLOYMENT POLICY, AND MUST BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY ALL SECTIONS OF THE PUBLIC.

29 JULY 1982



C.B.I.

CBI : "THE ECONOMIC BACKCLOTH"

BUT, IF WE SUCCEED IN KEEPING OUR UNIT LABOUR COSTS BELOW OUR COMPETITORS', BY THIS TIME NEXT YEAR WE COULD SEE:

- \* INFLATION SLOWING FURTHER.
  
- \* RECOVERY - IN OUTPUT AND PROFITS - GATHERING PACE.
  
- \* AND SOME HOPE FOR CREATING MORE JOBS, WITH THE POSSIBILITY - BUT ONLY THE POSSIBILITY - OF UNEMPLOYMENT FALLING.

THAT IS OUR ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT - WE BELIEVE IT SHOWS CLEARLY THAT:

- \* WE MUST GET AS FAR BELOW OUR COMPETITORS' COST INCREASES AS WE POSSIBLY CAN.

29 JULY 1982



Unemployment high relative to other countries/increasing faster than all other countries of the European Community

It is nevertheless also true that this country has a higher proportion of its population in employment than in any other country in the European Community with the exception only of Denmark. In the United Kingdom 44% of people are in work compared with 39% in the other European Community Countries. (On 1980 figures)

Civilian employment as a percentage of the population

<u>EC Countries</u>	<u>per cent 1980</u>	<u>per cent 1981</u>
Denmark	48 ←	-
United Kingdom	44 ←	41
Luxembourg	44 =	-
Germany (FR)	41	41
France	39	39
Belgium	38	-
Italy	36	37
Greece	35	-
Irish Republic	34	-
Netherlands	33	-

<u>Other Western European Countries</u>	<u>per cent 1980</u>	<u>per cent 1981</u>
Sweden	51 ←	-
Switzerland	47 ←	-
Norway	47 ←	-
Finland	46 ←	-
Austria	41	-
Portugal	40	-
Turkey	33	-
Spain	30	29

<u>Major non-European Countries</u>	<u>per cent 1980</u>	<u>per cent 1981</u>
Japan	47 ←	-
USA	44 =	-
Canada	44 =	-
Australia	43	-

←  
 [ Those above the UK figure. ]



COMPETITIVENESS AND DEMAND

- A - Demand went up by 3 per cent in the year ending in March /ie the six months ending March 1982 compared with the same period a year before/
- In the 1970s, only £5 of every £100 of extra demand went into increased output. The rest went in higher prices or higher imports.

B Cost In Jobs: The CBI estimate that every 1 per cent gain

in the UK share of world exports) of manufactures	)	means	<u>250,000 jobs gained; and</u>
in the UK share of the home market for manufactures	)	means	<u>80,000 jobs gained.</u>

C Import Penetration

Imports as a percentage of Home Demand: (CSO figures)

Total manufacturing	17.1% in 1971	25.4% in 1981: an 8.3% increase
e.g. vehicles	15%	<u>39%</u> : a 14% increase
textiles	17%	<u>35%</u> : an 18% increase
electrical engineering	18%	<u>37%</u> : a 19% increase

D Loss of Export Markets

UK share of 12 main export markets for manufactures (CBI figures):

1960	15.9%
1970	10.6%
1980	9.7%
1982	8.3%

/NB: Exports make up 29% of UK GDP compared with 9% in the USA, 12% in Japan, and 26% in the FRG (OECD figures)/

A loss of 2.3% since 1970



E This 10% increase in import penetration, and 2½% loss of export markets, mean a loss of almost 1½ million jobs in the last 12 years.

F Labour Costs as a Cause of uncompetitiveness

Unit Wage/Salary costs (manufacturing) between 1975 and 1980

UK: almost doubled (an increase of about 90%)

USA: went up by one third (33%)

Japan: stayed almost level (up about 4%)

FRG: went up about one sixth (up about 15%)

Income from Employment as a Proportion of Total Net Domestic Income (CBI figures)

UK: 1960	73%	compared in 1980 with	
1970	77%		USA : 78%
1980	81%		France : 73%
1981	82%		FRG : 72%
			Japan : 68%

G Cutting NIS, and Derating, as a Cure?

- Revenue raised through NIS : 1981/82 : £3.9b.  
1982/83 : £2.7b.

- The effective reduction of 1% made in the Budget will be worth £640m. to industry in 1982/83.

- The cost of a 10% derating for industry would be £140m.

H Interest Rates

The 5% drop since last Autumn should be worth about £1.25b. p.a. to industry (CBI figures)



BIRTHS AND DEATHS OF FIRMS: 1980 and 1981

For every 100 firms that went out of business in 1981, there were about 115 that started to trade.

	<u>Births</u>	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Excess</u>
1980	113,300	115,300	- 2,000
% of stock	8.0%	8.7%	
1981	124,800	110,000	14,800
% of stock	9.3%	8.2%	

Stock estimated at 1.34 million firms

Figures based on analysis of VAT registrations and deregistrations

OUTSIDE FORECASTS OF GDP

/ GDP profile in recent major assessments:

	<u>NIESR</u>	<u>LBS</u>	<u>St James</u>	<u>Phillips</u> <u>&amp; Drew</u>	<u>CEPG</u>	<u>CBI</u>	<u>OECD</u>	<u>FSBI</u>
	(May)	(June)	(Apr)	(July)	(April)	(May)	(Jul)	(Mar)
Per cent change 1982 on 1981	+1	+1	+1½	+1½	-½	+1	+1½	+1½

Nearly all see prospect of continued recovery (as always, a range, with Cambridge forecast (CEPG) being the more pessimistic) and see single figure inflation through rest of 1982 - also in line with FSBR.



## OPPOSITION POLICIES OF REFLATION

### Quotes

A: John Maynard Keynes (1919)

"Lenin was certainly right. There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency. The process engages all the hidden forces of economic law on the side of destruction, and does it in a manner which not one man in a million is able to diagnose..."

B: Labour Government's Letter of Intent to the IMF (15 December 1976)

"... an essential element of the Government's strategy will be a continuing and substantial reduction over the next few years in the share of resources required for the public sector. It is also essential to reduce the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) in order to create monetary conditions which will encourage investment and support sustained growth and the control of inflation."

C: Mr. James Callaghan at the Labour Party Conference (28 September 1976)

"We used to think that you could just spend your way out of a recession, and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting Government spending. I tell you, in all candour, that that option no longer exists, and that, insofar as it ever did exist, it worked by injecting inflation into the economy. And each time that happened, the average level of unemployment has risen. Higher inflation followed by higher unemployment. That is the history of the last 20 years."

/ D:



D: Mr. Joel Barnett (his memoirs, printed in Sunday Times, 31 January 1982)

Speaking of the last Labour Government:

"All in all there can be little doubt that we planned for too high a level of public expenditure, in the expectation of levels of growth that never materialised."

"...the quaintly titled "social contract", supposedly enshrining a new relationship between Government and unions. To my mind, the only give and take in the contract was that the Government gave and the unions took."

#### Extra Points

In addition to the usual anti-inflation points:

- the last Labour Government's policies did not prevent unemployment from rising, and indeed doubling during their term of office.
- the debt interest that the Government has to pay has risen from £2 billion in the early '70s to perhaps £15 billion this year. It has risen at a faster rate than inflation. It has risen at a faster rate than public expenditure as a whole. This year it is likely to cost as much as the whole of the National Health Service.



Unemployment

Link with suicide rates ?

No causal relationship:

- Average number of suicides in 1961-65 : 5879  
" " " " in 1980 : 4829

Unemployment in 1961-65 substantially lower than in 1980

- Sweden, Japan, and FRG show about twice the UK suicide rate, yet lower unemployment.

Two million below poverty line ?

Number of people in families with incomes below supplementary benefit level (DHSS figures):

1975 :	1.840 m.	)					
1976 :	2.280 m.	)	end year	1977 :	1.9 m.	)	average
1977 :	2.020 m.	)		1979 :	2.1 m.	)	over year



EMPLOYMENT POLICY WHITE PAPER - MAY 1944

QUOTES

- Intro*
- EMPLOYMENT CANNOT BE CREATED BY ACT OR PARLIAMENT OR BY GOVERNMENT ACTION ALONE.
- Intro*
- THE SUCCESS OF THE POLICY OUTLINED IN THIS PAPER WILL ULTIMATELY DEPEND ON THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE - AND ESPECIALLY ON THE EFFORTS OF EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS IN INDUSTRY; FOR WITHOUT A RISING STANDARD OF INDUSTRIAL EFFICIENCY WE CANNOT ACHIEVE A HIGH LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT ~~COMBINED WITH A RISING STANDARD OF LIVING.~~
- ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN EXPENDITURE WILL BE FRUITLESS UNLESS WAGES AND PRICES ARE KEPT REASONABLY STABLE. THIS IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO ANY EMPLOYMENT POLICY, AND MUST BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY ALL SECTIONS OF THE PUBLIC.

29 JULY 1982



C.B.1

CBI : "THE ECONOMIC BACKCLOTH"

BUT, IF WE SUCCEED IN KEEPING OUR UNIT LABOUR COSTS BELOW OUR COMPETITORS', BY THIS TIME NEXT YEAR WE COULD SEE:

- \* INFLATION SLOWING FURTHER.
  
- \* RECOVERY - IN OUTPUT AND PROFITS - GATHERING PACE.
  
- \* AND SOME HOPE FOR CREATING MORE JOBS, WITH THE POSSIBILITY - BUT ONLY THE POSSIBILITY - OF UNEMPLOYMENT FALLING.

THAT IS OUR ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT - WE BELIEVE IT SHOWS CLEARLY THAT:

- \* WE MUST GET AS FAR BELOW OUR COMPETITORS' COST INCREASES AS WE POSSIBLY CAN.

29 JULY 1982



Unemployment high relative to other countries/increasing faster than  
 all other countries of the European Community

It is nevertheless also true that this country has a higher proportion of its population in employment than in any other country in the European Community with the exception only of Denmark. In the United Kingdom 44% of people are in work compared with 39% in the other European Community Countries. (On 1980 figures)

Civilian employment as a percentage of the population

<u>EC Countries</u>	<u>per cent 1980</u>	<u>per cent 1981</u>
Denmark	48 ←	-
United Kingdom	44 ←	41
Luxembourg	44 =	-
Germany (FR)	41	41
France	39	39
Belgium	38	-
Italy	36	37
Greece	35	-
Irish Republic	34	-
Netherlands	33	-

<u>Other Western European Countries</u>	<u>per cent 1980</u>	<u>per cent 1981</u>
Sweden	51 ←	-
Switzerland	47 ←	-
Norway	47 ←	-
Finland	46 ←	-
Austria	41	-
Portugal	40	-
Turkey	33	-
Spain	30	29

<u>Major non-European Countries</u>	<u>per cent 1980</u>	<u>per cent 1981</u>
Japan	47 ←	-
USA	44 =	-
Canada	44 =	-
Australia	43	-

←  
 [ Those above the UK figure. ]



010  
From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

*Palmer*



HOME OFFICE  
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE  
LONDON SW1H 9AT

*4<sup>th</sup> May 1952*

*Dear Mike*

You wrote to John Halliday on 27th April regarding the occasions when the Home Secretary will deputise for the Prime Minister when she would be top for Questions.

It will be our turn to provide luncheon on Thursday 10th June, and in line with our previous arrangements our people will come to you on Tuesday, 29th June.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Jessie Gibbon*

MISS J. E. FAIRBARIN

M. Pattison, Esq.

*Question one answer  
to 20/5*



File

Sub

cc. Miss Kellester

Patison

27 April 1982

I wrote to you on 5 January about the Prime Minister's expected absences from the House on days when she is top for Questions.

I can now confirm that there are only two more scheduled absences before the summer recess. These are Thursday, 10 June (NATO Meeting in Bonn) and Tuesday, 29 June (European Council Meeting, Brussels).

In due course, perhaps you could let me know what arrangements would be most convenient for you on those days, assuming that the Home Secretary will be free to deputise for the Prime Minister.

M. A. PATTISON

J.F. Halliday, Esq.,  
Home Office.





10 DOWNING STREET

MR. PATTISON

*MP*

Prime Minister's Absences  
for Questions

I only have two days  
between now and the summer  
recess when the Prime  
Minister will not be here.  
They are:

Thursday, 10 June

when she will be in Bonn  
for the NATO meeting;

and

Tuesday, 29 June

when she will be in  
Brussels for the European  
Council.

*es.*

26 April, 1982





bcc Teresa

DSG.

Rainier

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 March 1982

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS: MAUNDY THURSDAY: 8 APRIL

Prime Minister's Question Time will take place at 1015 on Maundy Thursday. We will need to consider issues of the day from about 0830 that day. In view of the short timescale, we will have to ask Departments to be able to provide us with any necessary background and advice over the telephone as rapidly as possible.

We will of course try to minimise demands on that morning, and to anticipate as many items as possible the previous day. But, in view of the onset of the Easter holiday, I thought it would be helpful to remind Departments that we may be making demands on them that morning. I should be grateful if you and colleagues to whom I am copying this letter could arrange for your Parliamentary branches to tell Teresa Rolleston here whether you would like us to put our enquiries direct to Private Offices, or through Parliamentary branches, on the morning of 8 April.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the members of Cabinet.

MAP

John Halliday, Esq.,  
Home Office.

HU



*Parliament*

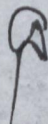
26 January 1982

Prime Minister's Questions

We had a word about this the other day. I enclose a draft minute which incorporates the points which we here think need to be made. I have done it in the form of a minute which you could send to departments. But I have chosen that form only to try to save you time. It is of course entirely up to you how you use the material. The main objective is to gear FCO briefing more closely to the present form of Prime Minister's Question time - there have been certain changes in recent months which may not have been brought to the attention of your Parliamentary Unit.

AJC

Brian Fall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.





DRAFT MINUTE

Prime Minister's Questions

Prime Minister's Question Time each Tuesday and Thursday is a major Parliamentary/political event. It is important that the briefing supplied by Departments matches No. 10 requirements.

Guidance is set out in DSP, Volume 5, Chapter 3. While this remains generally valid, it is now a little out of date in respect of preparation for the Prime Minister's Oral Questions. This is because the Questions reached on Tuesdays and Thursdays are now almost invariably "open" Questions, ie Questions about the Prime Minister's engagements for the day which allow the questioner and other MPs to ask supplementary Questions about any topical issue of domestic or foreign concern. The bulk of the material now requested by No. 10 for Prime Minister's Question Time is required to deal with that situation, and Departments should therefore note in particular the following points:

a) For any topic, the Prime Minister requires a "line to take" (or, in the rare case of a substantive Oral Question which will be reached, a draft answer). This should normally consist of a statement in plain, politically sensitive and unevasive language, of the Government's attitude or policy towards the issue raised. Ideally, it should take the form of three or four short sentences, suitable for easy oral delivery.

/ b)



b) The Prime Minister likes to make her responses as substantive as possible. Devices such as referring the questioner to an earlier answer are not appropriate.

c) Where No 10 specify that briefing should take a particular form and be received by a stated time, it is important that these requirements are met. In the majority of cases, No 10 will ask for material either the night before Prime Minister's Question Time, or on the morning itself. This must reach No 10 by noon unless, for overriding reasons, the Department have negotiated a later timing with the Prime Minister's Office. Subject to the terms of No 10's request, briefing should be confined to a "line to take" together with relevant factual information which can be worked into an answer in the light of the specific Question raised in the House. In one or two instances recently, briefing has been both too lengthy and too late for the Prime Minister's use.

d) Where Notes for Supplementaries and/or Background Notes have been requested, they should be concise. As the Prime Minister must prepare for Supplementary Questions on any domestic or foreign issue of the day, she inevitably calls for briefing material on a wide variety of topics. Background Notes which are too lengthy and detailed cannot be read in the time available.



Prime Minister's Questions

Prime Minister's Question Time each Tuesday and Thursday is a major Parliamentary/political event. It is important that the briefing supplied by Departments matches No. 10 requirements.

Guidance is set out in DSP, Volume 5, Chapter 3. It remains valid, but the following points in particular should be noted:

- a) Draft answers to Oral Questions should normally consist of a statement in plain, politically sensitive and unevasive language, of the Government's attitude or policy towards the Question raised. Ideally, they should take the form of three or four short sentences, suitable for easy oral delivery.
- b) The answers should be as substantive as possible. Devices such as referring the questioner to an earlier answer are not appropriate.
- c) Where No. 10 specify that briefing should take a particular form and be received by a stated time, it is important that these requirements are met.

/d) In



- d) In particular, "last minute briefing" (DSP, Volume 5, Chapter 3.6) must reach No. 10 by noon on the Tuesday or Thursday in question and should be brief. In one or two instances recently briefing has been both too <sup>lengthy</sup> ~~indecisive~~ and too late for the Prime Minister's use.
- e) Notes for Supplementaries should take a similar form. Both they and Background Notes should be concise. (Since Questions may be put to the Prime Minister without notice on any domestic or foreign issue of the day, the amount of briefing material provided is inevitably very large. Background Notes which are too lengthy and detailed cannot be read in the time available).

26 January, 1982



## CHAPTER 3

## PRIME MINISTER'S PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

## 3.1 PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTION TIME

The Prime Minister answers oral PQs in the House of Commons each Tuesday and Thursday at 3.15 pm for 15 minutes. MPs use Prime Minister's Question Time as a means of examining and criticising the broad range of the Government's policies and the Prime Minister has to be prepared to answer a much wider range of Supplementaries than a Departmental Minister.

*Mr Coles (No 10)*  
*We spoke. This is the bare - and I am told that there is no other relevant text.*

## 3.2 FCO ADVICE ON ANSWERS

3.2.1 The FCO is required to provide advice to No 10 for use in answering PQs addressed to the Prime Minister on subjects which concern the FCO. The Parliamentary Questions Section at No 10 tells the Parliamentary Unit specifically what advice or briefing is required and this is passed on to Departments, who are also notified of the date and time by which it should reach the Parliamentary Unit. Dockets are prepared by the Parliamentary Unit in the usual way (see para 2.6.1); green labels are used to distinguish Prime Minister's PQs. Any queries on these requests (eg if clarification is required, or if it appears inappropriate for the FCO to provide the advice) should be raised with the Parliamentary Unit without delay. There is, however, no possibility of varying requests for full sets of Notes for Supplementaries, as Supplementary questions may be very wide-ranging.

*Jan 20/1*

3.2.2 In preparing briefing for the Prime Minister, Departments should bear in mind that PQs to the Prime Minister should not be taken too literally. Supplementary material needs to range somewhat beyond the apparent narrow terms of individual PQs, and concentrate on any topical issues of political interest within the broad field of the question. Departments should not assume that No 10 have retained any knowledge of a subject from previous PQs, but should draft each time afresh.

3.2.3 Material should be submitted in good time in the usual way through an Under-Secretary, after clearance with other Ministries concerned. Deadlines are set as late as possible. It is important, therefore, that Departments should ensure that the material is complete and in the correct form, especially with the last minute briefing (see para 3.6); there is often no time for review in the Parliamentary Unit and return to Departments for correction.

3.2.4 It is important that deadlines should be strictly observed in respect of all material prepared for No. 10. The Prime Minister requires all briefing for parliamentary occasions, including draft answers to PQs, to be seen and personally approved by the Cabinet Minister concerned. The Private Office and/or the Parliamentary Unit ensure that this is done through the Secretary of State or the Lord Privy Seal as appropriate.

## 3.3 QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER

3.3.1 The Department concerned will be asked to provide a draft answer unless No 10 have specifically agreed to draft the answer themselves. Only the draft typed on the PQ docket is required in the Parliamentary Unit.

3.3.2 Notes for Supplementaries, if they are requested by No 10, should be phrased specifically for the Prime Minister in words that can be read out in the House. They should be in short sentences and in the first person. The Notes should be typed on the special blue paper used for Notes for Supplementaries for FCO PQs, with brief headings to identify each subject and typed



in 1½ spacing. The original and 3 copies should be sent to the Parliamentary Unit.

- 3.3.3 Notes for Supplementaries should be specific. A Note should not say, eg simply that a meeting was useful, but should say in which respects it was useful; if the Note says, eg "We are satisfied with our facilities at X", the background note must spell out what those facilities are. Special attention should be given to MPs' known interests.
- 3.3.4 A background note must always be provided. It should contain any classified or other information which the Prime Minister needs to bear in mind in considering the draft answer and in handling the PQ and Supplementaries in the House. Wherever possible, it should be confined to a single page and contain only essential supporting information. These notes are normally submitted to the Prime Minister; they should therefore be clearly legible and require no editing or retyping. As No 10 will not normally see the minute submitting the draft answer and other material within the FCO, all information required by the Prime Minister should be included in the background note. The original and 3 copies should be sent to the Parliamentary Unit.
- 3.3.5 References and supporting documents should be provided as Departments judge necessary. These should be listed on a separate sheet of good quality size A4 paper (and not listed on the Notes for Supplementaries or the background note). Two copies of each reference or document are required, flagged, in the Parliamentary Unit.

#### 3.4 QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWER

- 3.4.1 The Department concerned will be asked to provide a draft answer unless No 10 have specifically agreed to draft the answer themselves. Only the draft typed on the PQ docket is required in the Parliamentary Unit.
- 3.4.2 A short background note is required, except in the rare event that the draft answer is completely self-explanatory (See para 3.3.4). The original and three copies should be sent to the Parliamentary Unit.
- 3.4.3 References should be provided as necessary (See para 3.3.5). Two copies of each reference, flagged, are required in the Parliamentary Unit.

#### 3.5 GENERAL BACKGROUND BRIEFING

- 3.5.1 This material should in general take the normal form of Notes for Supplementaries and background notes (See para 3.3.2). The original and 3 copies should be sent to the Parliamentary Unit. Unlike material provided for specific PQs, general background briefing material will usually be carried forward by No 10 from one Prime Minister's Question Time to the next, with necessary amendments to keep it up to date, until No 10 decide to omit it. The deadline for submission to the Parliamentary Unit is noon on Mondays. Departments need not necessarily re-write material which requires little amendment to bring it up to date; an amended photocopy of the version previously provided will be acceptable. But when substantial (or numerous minor) amendments are necessary, material should be re-typed.
- 3.5.2 Departments must ensure that material submitted on a Monday remains up-to-date for both the following Tuesday and Thursday Prime Minister's Question Time. If changes become necessary,



Departments should advise the Parliamentary Unit immediately by telephone and submit amendments as soon as possible.

### 3.6 LAST MINUTE BRIEFING

3.6.1 No 10 ask for this material on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Usually only up to one page of Notes for Supplementaries and/or a short background note are needed. Brevity and speed are essential, as the firm deadline for arrival at No 10 is noon the same day. The original only is required in the Parliamentary Unit.

3.6.2 Requests from No 10 for last minute briefing are relayed immediately to Departments by telephone by the Parliamentary Unit, which is equipped to transmit briefs to No 10 without delay. Departments are thus able to use all the available time to produce the material called for and should regard its preparation and timely submission as requiring a very high priority. Where an Under-Secretary needs to be consulted, he should be alerted at an early stage.

### 3.7 EXPENSIVE ANSWERS

Advice that the Prime Minister should decline to provide the information requested in a PQ on the grounds of disproportionate cost must be sent to No 10 so that the Prime Minister may consider in good time whether, nevertheless, either a full or at least a partial answer should be given. The advice should explain enough of the background to enable the Prime Minister to see what the PQ is about and also to assess the difficulties in providing the information.

### 3.8 ADVICE TO NEWS DEPARTMENT

News Department does not receive copies of the draft advices sent to No 10 for the Prime Minister's PQs and as a general rule does not need them. However, from time to time, in answering a PQ, the Prime Minister makes an announcement about some new development or initiative in the field of foreign or Commonwealth affairs and it is essential that Departments inform News Department in advance if such an announcement is likely.





## 10 DOWNING STREET

15 January 1982

Dear Parliamentary Clerk,

There have been a number of staff changes in Parliamentary Branches since we last circulated the Notes for Guidance on the handling of PQs tabled to the Prime Minister, so it may be helpful to you to have the enclosed slightly revised edition as Parliament comes back for a New Year.

The few changes can be found in paragraph 3c, on last minute briefing. I know that we have been making increasing demands on hard-pressed Departments during Tuesday and Thursday mornings. The Prime Minister much appreciates the work that goes in to responding to our requests at short notice. She was very pleased to be able to thank some of you personally last month. But we have been concerned that some of your colleagues in policy branches may have taken longer than they need to produce more material than the Prime Minister can assimilate in the limited time available. I hope that this revised guidance will be helpful all round, and that it may reduce the extent to which we tie up departmental resources on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Our aim is to provide the Prime Minister with concise briefing on topical subjects which she can read over lunch and have with her at Question Time. Given the vast range of subjects on which she might be expected to comment, we have found increasingly that the amount of material requested of Departments has become too unwieldy to fulfil its purpose effectively and a lot of effort can be wasted. Obviously there are times when full notes for supplementaries and background notes are necessary but in the main we shall in future restrict our requests to a line to take and essential background material. It is worth reminding you that the Prime Minister will rarely be asked to give more than one answer on any subject, apart from the main story of the day. That is why we are looking simply for a broad line to take, coupled with hard information which can be worked in if the question takes an unexpected form.

*Yours sincerely*

*Mike Pattison*

All Parliamentary Clerks



compiled, Hansard references or references to Annexes should not be given in the body of the supplementaries or the background note, but should be attached on a separate sheet.

The Parliamentary Section at No 10 will contact Departments on Wednesdays and Fridays to commission briefing on specific Questions which have appeared on the Order Paper that morning, for answer in 13 days time. Material for Tuesday's Questions must reach No 10 by 4 pm on the preceding Friday and material for Thursday's Questions by 4 pm on the preceding Tuesday.

b) General Briefing

This material should in general take the form of notes for supplementaries and a background note. The points made about the form of notes for supplementaries and background notes for specific Questions apply equally to this general background briefing.

c) Last Minute Briefing

Each Tuesday and Thursday morning No 10 will tell Departments as soon as possible (ie after consultation with the Prime Minister) of any last minute briefing which is required. Necessary briefing must arrive at No 10 by 12 noon. It is essential that this deadline be met if the material is to be processed and submitted to the Prime Minister in time for her to read it during lunchtime. Last minute briefing should take the form of one page containing a line to take, in double spacing, and background material on which the Prime Minister may draw freely. This should cover crucial facts and statistics and, where appropriate, rebuttals to common misunderstandings. Essential but classified background material should be attached on a separate sheet. Supplementaries and full background notes should not be provided unless specifically requested by No 10.





10 DOWNING STREET

Parliament  
original filed on: -

Econ Pol: Strategy: Pt 11.

From the Principal Private Secretary

8 January 1982

RESTRICTED

Dear Private Secretary,

The Prime Minister is anxious to improve the presentation of the Government's policies. I am therefore writing, on her instructions, to suggest some practical ways in which this might be achieved.

A | The Prime Minister and the Lord President both like to have the opportunity personally to comment on Parliamentary statements and particularly important Answers. But to do this they need time, and Departments should accordingly aim to get drafts to the No 10 Private and Press Offices and to the Lord President's Office early on the morning of the day before the announcement.

B | Second, Departments should ensure that when draft statements and Answers are sent to No 10 and the Lord President they are accompanied by background notes which identify the likely points of attack and suggest how those attacks can best be met. It is essential that before any Department makes an announcement, the lines of attack should have been anticipated and a means of securing the most positive presentation should have been devised.

C | Third - and at a more routine level -, Departments should as a matter of course identify issues which are likely to give rise to problems with the media and should ensure that their Press Offices and the No 10 Press Office are put in the best position to meet the problems and at the same time to exploit any opportunities for presenting matters in a positive and favourable light. For maximum effect, guidance should reach the No 10 Press Office by 10.45 am and 3.45 pm each day. If No 10 learn about a departmental problem for the first time through a press inquiry, we are not best placed to handle it to the Government's advantage.

D | Finally, it goes without saying that Departments should pay particular attention to items of good news and should see that they are put over with vigour. The Prime Minister is herself ready to give publicity to items of good news, for example, at Question Time and in speeches. She also wants Departments to give her Press Office positive material it can draw on on a day-to-day basis. (I should, however, caution Departments about the practice of early



release of Written Answers. In the light of recent exchanges in the House, new guidance will be circulated shortly).

I should be grateful if you could ensure that the above points are borne constantly in mind in your Department. If there is one aspect of them I would single out for particular mention, it is the importance of giving departmental Press Offices and the No 10 Press Office as much notice of proposed announcements as possible: good presentation needs time for preparation.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to all members of the Cabinet, the Attorney General and the Chief Whip and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,

Alwi Whitman.



5 January 1982

Prime Minister's Questions

During the period for which the Questions rota is already published, we expect the Prime Minister to be absent on only one occasion, Tuesday 30 March. I see that the Home Secretary does not have to answer his own Questions that day. Assuming that he will be available to deputise for the Prime Minister, we should be happy to welcome your team over here for lunch that day on the usual basis.

Later in the summer, it is possible that the Prime Minister may be away on Tuesday 8 June, and ~~I am~~<sup>we are</sup> certain that she will be absent on Tuesday 29 June. We can sort out arrangements for those dates nearer the time, in the light of the Questions rota for that period.

M A PATTISON

J. F. Halliday, Esq.,  
Home Office.



CF

Sup  
Pattison

MR. HOSKYNS

Thank you for your note about PQs  
and MPs letters.

I did not intend to deluge the Policy Unit. I think I have referred only three points to you. One concerned the closed shop, and the Prime Minister had specifically asked for your assistance in preparing a reply in No. 10. The other two were PQs about Government strategy, the second leading on from the first. On that specific subject, I am sure the Policy Unit is better placed than anyone Minister to suggest an answer - and you will know that the Prime Minister was pleased with the one you suggested. I hope, therefore, that I may continue to call on you on points like that.

M. A. PATTISON

12 June 1981



12 June 1981

MR PATTISON

Are you sure you really need the Policy Unit to draft these little answers to PQs? We have only ever been asked to do this once before, on a PQ about the Policy Unit itself. We suddenly now seem to be getting a trickle of PQs and letters to answer. I just hope the trickle isn't going to build up.

JOHN HOSKYNS

Of course S'U do the  
ones S'U got but I  
thought S'd just  
found a warning note.



CF

file

10 June 1981

I mentioned to you on the telephone yesterday the Prime Minister's reply to a Parliamentary Question from Mr. Richard Needham, M.P., about building society practice on house insurance. This is recorded in column 261 of the Official Report.

I should be grateful if you could ensure that we are informed of the outcome of the Director General of Fair Trading's current consideration of these matters.

MAP

Peter McCarthy Esq  
Department of Trade

24





*010*

*010*

*E.F.*

*V*  
*MS*

with compliments

Private Secretary to  
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER  
68 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS  
Telephone 01-233-7113

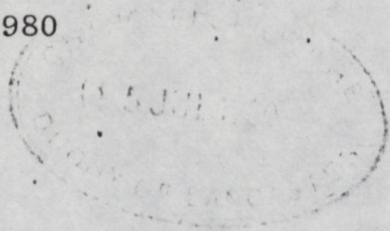




*Parliament*

Speaker's House Westminster London SW1A 0AA

14th July 1980



*attached*

Thank you for your letter of 10th July about Prime Minister's Questions.

I agree with you that the appearance of identical questions on the Order Paper is repetitive and time-consuming. Unfortunately however the Table Office are not empowered to refuse questions which, though possibly repetitive, are otherwise in order, and I have no authority to direct them to do so.

I fear therefore that the change which you propose is one that could only be made by the House. As soon as a Procedure Committee has been set up, this is probably one of the matters which they could usefully examine.

Speaker

Frank Hooley Esq MP  
House of Commons.





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

*Handwritten notes:*  
J. ...  
10.7.80

10th July 1980

Dear George,

On the Order Paper for Tuesday, 8th July, there are 49 questions down to the Prime Minister of which 41 are in identical terms.

This is a grotesque waste of time, labour and paper, since the whole world is aware that the P.M. will not be called upon to answer at the maximum more than five questions in the 15 minutes allotted to her.

Surely it must be possible for the House of Commons to set a slightly better example in terms of the waste of public money. Cannot the Table Office be instructed to decline to accept oral questions for the P.M. beyond the first 12 for any particular day.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Hooley, M.P.

The Rt. Hon. George Thomas, M.P.,  
Speaker of the House,  
Speaker's House,  
Palace of Westminster,  
LONDON SW1A 0PW

c.c The Rt. Hon. Norman St. John-Stevas, M.P.

SEEN BY SPEAKER

*Handwritten initials:* W ref



Nick Sanders

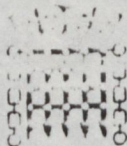


with compliments

✓  
MS

Private Secretary to  
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER  
68 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS  
Telephone 01-233-7113





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

MR KENNARD  
TO file?  
24  
Parliament.

10th July 1980

Dear George,

On the Order Paper for Tuesday, 8th July, there  
*we* are 49 questions down to the Prime Minister of which  
41 ~~are~~ are in identical terms.

This is a grotesque waste of time, labour and  
paper, since the whole world is aware that the P.M.  
will not be called upon to answer at the maximum more  
than five questions in the 15 minutes allotted to her.

Surely it must be possible for the House of Commons  
to set a slightly better example in terms of the waste  
of public money. Cannot the Table Office be instructed  
to decline to accept oral questions for the P.M. beyond  
the first 12 for any particular day.

Yours sincerely,

FH

Frank Hooley, M.P.

The Rt. Hon. George Thomas, M.P.,  
Speaker of the House,  
Speaker's House,  
Palace of Westminster,  
LONDON SW1A 0PW

✓ c.c The Rt. Hon. Norman St. John-Stevas, M.P.



## QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

**Mr. Speaker:** I have a short statement to make.

I reminded the House recently of my concern at the way in which Question Time is being changed by open questions. By such questions I mean questions which give no indication to the House of the real question which the hon. Gentleman seeks to ask. Examples of such questions—and we have had them today—involve asking when the Minister expects to meet the chairman of a particular nationalised industry, of a particular trade organisation, the Director of Public Prosecutions, or his colleagues in the EEC.

Questions are listed on the Order Paper so that the House itself is given notice of questions that are to be raised and so that considered answers to them can be prepared. The whole House knows that the open question is allowed for Prime Minister's questions because of the desire of Members to table questions that will not be transferred to other Ministers. I confess to the House that I feel embarrassed when I see as many as 20 or more questions on the Order Paper all asking about the Prime Minister's engagements for the day. It would be far better for us all if the hon. Members concerned table the actual question which they wished to ask the Prime Minister.

Since the special problems of Prime Minister's Question Time have been considered by the House relatively recently, I do not propose any change in practice in relation to it. When it comes to other Ministers, however, I see no reason why hon. Members should not put on the Order Paper the question that they intend to ask, or at least disclose its subject matter so that the whole House may know the topic that is being raised. In all honesty I have to say to the House that very often a supplementary question to an open question turns out to be one which could not have been accepted by the Table Office and is, therefore, an abuse of our rules.

In an effort to protect the House, I propose, for an experimental period, to extend the practice that I introduced in March 1978 for questions to departmental Ministers asking them about their

engagements for the day. When a question about a Minister's meetings with various persons or organisations appears on the Order Paper without its purpose being stated reasonably precisely, I shall allow it to be called and for the Minister to reply but I shall not call any supplementary questions. If the subject matter is indicated in the question, supplementary questions will be confined to that subject.

If in consequence of this action I find that other open questions are being devised, I shall consider applying the same restrictions to them. The new practice will be applied to questions tabled after today.

As I see it, if such action is not taken at this stage the character of our Question Time will be changed without the House itself having consciously decided that the old system of giving notice of questions should be pushed aside. I hope that I have the support of the House in the course that I have outlined.

**Mr. Cryer:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you please examine a matter which arises as a result of your statement? The general problem arises because of the difficulty of pinning down Government Departments. I know that you, Mr. Speaker, want to protect the rights of Members to ensure that the Government are accountable.

Since you have, in effect, narrowed the opportunity of asking questions, will you also examine the way in which Government Departments narrow their opportunities to provide replies and the blocking mechanism which Government Departments put on answers by replying "No"? Such a reply means that it is impossible to table a similar question in the Table Office for three months, which eradicates the possibility of making the Government accountable for that period. All Governments use that system consciously. If we are to be inhibited to some degree, you, Mr. Speaker, should examine the matter which I have put to you.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman misunderstood my statement if he thought that I was talking about pinning the Government down. There was no such reference in my statement. I remind the House that I am expected to be the guardian of our rules and Standing Orders. I can see a danger that the whole character of



**Mr. Bruce-Gardyne :** Should not another hard look be taken at the role of the Pay Research Unit? Since the Government rightly set cash limits, based on their calculations on what the community can afford, is it not thoroughly unfortunate that the Pay Research Unit should come forward with solutions that can only lead directly to redundancies?

**Mr. Channon :** I understand my hon. Friend's view. I must point out to him, as I did on an earlier occasion, that the Conservative Party election manifesto said that we would reconcile pay research with cash limits. That has been the Government's policy and one that I have been trying to implement. I take note of what my hon. Friend says.

#### Civil Service Staff-Side

55. **Mr. Straw** asked the Minister for the Civil Service, when next he will meet representatives of the Civil Service Staff Side.

**Mr. Channon :** I met them yesterday, and I am sure that we shall meet again soon.

**Mr. Straw :** If the Civil Service is reduced by 70,000 would the Minister welcome that?

**Mr. Channon :** I should welcome the smallest Civil Service that the country can have which can carry out the tasks which Parliament sets it. I am certain that a smaller and even more efficient civil service would be in the national in-

terest and in the interests of the Civil Service.

**Mr. Michael Brown :** Will my hon. Friend study the replies to a series of written questions to various Government Departments which I have tabled which, while bearing out the good results that he announced this afternoon, show that some Departments are still lagging sadly behind his requirements?

**Mr. Channon :** Each Department varies. I certainly do not wish to criticise any individual Department. I shall take note of what my hon. Friend says and bear it in mind when considering future policy.

**Mr. Cryer :** Will the Minister be able to assure the Civil Service Staff Side that before highly-paid jobs in industry or public corporations are offered to senior civil servants such as Mr. Ron Dearing, they will be advertised throughout the Civil Service? May we have assurances that such jobs will not be given to people in a clique working with a particular Secretary of State, but that the jobs will be brought into the open and advertised either generally or throughout the Civil Service?

**Mr. Channon :** The usual practice for the appointment of the chairmen of nationalised industries will be followed by those of my right hon. Friends who are responsible for appointments. The practice has not varied under successive Governments.



Question Time will change unless this course is followed. I propose to follow it until the House instructs me otherwise.

**Mr. Dykes:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that there will be a wide welcome for your proposal. There is a special characteristic and possible problem in respect of EEC questions after the Foreign Affairs questions slot. Specific subjects are bound to be transferred to the relevant Departments because of the way in which the constitutional relationship between the Government and the EEC operates. There is bound to be a wider aspect in EEC questions because of the Foreign Office spokesman's role in dealing with constitutional matters relating to the EEC.

**Mr. Skinner** rose—

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall call the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) in a moment. I welcome him back, on St. George's Day.

Whilst I am preparing myself to call the hon. Gentleman, I must tell the hon. Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) that the subject of open questions about the EEC was one matter which I considered carefully. Such questions were asked last week. Neither the Minister nor the House knew what topic was coming up. The topics ranged between Afghanistan, the Olympic Games and Iraq. The House is entitled to have notice of the questions which are to be asked.

**Mr. Skinner:** I have left the dragon outside!

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think that you have not looked at the matter as closely as you should, especially in relation to the Common Market and the chairmen of nationalised industries. One of the problems is that we cannot ask relatively narrow questions about nationalised industries because of arguments about day-to-day administration. One of the reasons for questions about meetings with the chairmen of British Rail, the National Coal Board and other nationalised industries is to overcome the possibility of such questions being stopped at the Table Office. There will be difficulties if we are not allowed to table that type of question about nationalised industries. The matter needs another look.

**Mr. Speaker:** May I say, before responding to the hon. Gentleman's question, that I am glad that he is in his old form. I mean that. I am very glad to see him. I do not say anything about hearing him, but seeing him—certainly, yes.

Question 2 today, an open question, drew supplementary questions dealing with salaries on the railways, electrification on the railways, freight in Cornwall, "Transport 2000", rural transport, cash limits and the question of transport in Wales. Those questions, or some of them, could have been put on the Order Paper, and, if they could not, they were out of order.

**Mr. St. John-Stevas:** May I, Mr. Speaker, express the gratitude of, I think, most hon. Members for your statement today, because I believe that the open question at Prime Minister's Question Time has led to abuse. Both the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition and the present Prime Minister have attempted to return the tradition to the more specific question. The more specific a question is, the more Ministers are in fact pinned down by it. I think that there would be a great danger to the tradition of our Question Time if the open question became the norm for all questions to Ministers, and I believe that the vast majority of Members will be most grateful for the early action which you have taken.

**Mr. Foot:** While thanking you for the ruling or suggestion which you have given to the House, Mr. Speaker, may I say that some of us have some sympathy with what has been said by my hon. Friends, and one of the dangers of jumping out of the frying pan is that one may land in the fire. One of the problems is that these developments have occurred precisely because of real difficulties, and I therefore urge you, Mr. Speaker, since you have yourself said that there shall be an experimental period, that if you find that the alternative abuse of Ministers being able to transfer questions or to escape their responsibilities arises, we should have the matter looked at by the Procedure Committee. Indeed, perhaps the Committee ought to look at it in any case. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that while we conduct the experiment which you have asked for, we shall look at the other possibilities, and I urge that that should go to the Procedure Committee.



**Mr. Spriggs:** I thank you for your statement, Mr. Speaker, but may I draw your attention to the other side of the coin in relation to Departments and Ministers? I have recently put down questions to Ministers and been told in reply that, because of the disproportionate costs of finding out the information which I required, they were not able to give me the answer. When I have asked the Ministers concerned to tell me what the costs were to which they referred, they still did not give me the answer. Would you have a look at that side of the coin, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** I am much obliged to the House for the way in which it has responded. I suggest that we have this experimental period at least until the spring bank holiday, which, I think, is about five weeks away. We shall then look at it again, but I hope that it will work in the interests of the House.

## IRAN

**The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Douglas Hurd):** With permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall make a statement on yesterday's decision by the Foreign Ministers of the members of the European Community concerning Iran. I am arranging for a copy of the text of the approved communiqué to be published in the *Official Report*.

As the House will recall, my right hon. and noble Friend and his colleagues had adopted a decision in Lisbon on 10 April which was, in effect, a last appeal to the authorities in Iran to release the hostages in conformity with international law. Our ambassadors in Tehran were instructed to convey this appeal to the Iranian President and to request him to name the date and method by which the hostages would be released. They did so on 12 April. Mr. Bani Sadr's reply was unsatisfactory. The most he would say was that he hoped that a decision on the future of the hostages would be taken by the new Iranian Parliament when it had been elected and established. While holding out the prospect that visits to the hostages might be arranged, he could give no firm assurance as to when the Parliament might meet, or whether it could be relied upon to act as he hoped.

When this matter came up in this House and in another place on 14 April, the mood of the House was unmistakable, and the phrase "the utmost solidarity with the United States" was used from the Benches on both sides. There was a general feeling that diplomatic methods had, for the time being at least, been exhausted and that the time had come to find some more concrete and far-reaching way of expressing our abhorrence at the continued defiance of the rules of international behaviour and the opinions of the civilised world.

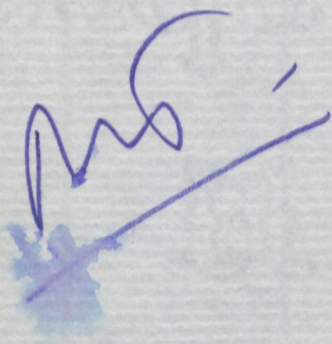
The House will I hope, find this mood reflected in the decision adopted yesterday in Luxembourg. In accordance with a suggestion made last week by the United Kingdom, it was decided to proceed in two stages. In the first stage, the Nine will put into effect to the extent that they are not in force already certain measures mainly of a political nature. We shall reduce still further our embassy staffs in



PRIME MINISTER

You might like to see the attached statement about Questions procedure which the Speaker made this afternoon. You will see that no change is proposed in the arrangements for Prime Minister's Questions, but he has taken powers to kill off open Questions to other Ministers. There was some doubt about this decision from the Opposition and Michael Foot said that they were happy if everybody was clear that we really did mean an experimental period rather than a permanent change.

Dennis Skinner was present in the House again, and was warmly welcomed from all sides. The Speaker said that it was very nice to see him, although he was not quite sure about hearing him. When Mr. Skinner rose to comment (adversely) on the Speaker's statement, someone behind him shouted "Sit down now Dennis, while your credit is still good". If he questions you tomorrow, I hope that you will offer your own welcome to him.



Ms

23 April 1980



Draft Statement for Mr. Speaker on Open Questions.

I reminded the House recently (17th April) of my concern at the way in which Question Time is being changed by open Questions. By such Questions I mean Questions which give no indication to the House of the real Question which the hon. Member seeks to ask. Examples of such Questions are, 'when the Minister expects to meet the Chairman of a particular Nationalised Industry', or 'of a particular trade organisation', or 'the Director of Public Prosecutions or 'when the Minister expects to meet his colleagues in the E.E.C.'. We have Questions listed on our Order Paper so that the House itself is given notice of Questions that are to be raised, and so that considered answers can be prepared to them.

The whole House knows that the open Question is allowed for Prime Minister's Questions because of the desire of Members to table Questions that will not be transferred to other Ministers. I confess to the House that I feel embarrassed when I see as many as twenty or more Questions on the Order Paper all asking about the Prime Minister's engagements for the day. It would be far better for us if the hon. Members concerned tabled the actual Question they wish to ask the Prime Minister, but since the special problem of Prime Minister's Question time has been considered by the House relatively recently, I do not propose any change of practice in relation to it.

When it comes to other Ministers, however, I see no reason why hon. Members should not put on the Order Paper the Question they intend to ask, or at least disclose its subject matter, so that the whole House may know the topic that is being raised. In all honesty, I have to say that very often a supplementary Question to an open Question turns out to be one that could not have been accepted by the Table Office, and is therefore an abuse of our rules. In an effort to protect the House itself I therefore propose for an experimental period to extend the practice I introduced in March 1978 for Questions to Departmental Ministers about their engagements for the day. When a Question about a Minister's meetings appears on the Order Paper without stating reasonably precisely the purpose of the meeting, I shall allow it to be called and for the Minister to reply, but I shall not then call the hon. Member concerned to ask a supplementary Question. If the subject matter is indicated in the Question, then supplementary questioning will be confined to that subject.



If, in consequence of this action, I find that other open Questions are being devised, I shall, of course, consider applying the same restriction to them. The new practice will be applied to Questions tabled after today.

As I see it, if such action is not taken at this stage, our Question Time will have its character changed without the House itself having consciously decided that the old system of giving notice of Questions should be pushed aside.

I hope that I have the support of the House in the course that I have outlined.





file NB  
Parliament

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

20 February 1980

Dear George,

Thank you so much for your letter of 7 February about the format of Prime Minister's Questions. You passed on the suggestion that the subject for a particular Question could be established by the first supplementary, so as to give a greater sense of coherence to Question Time.

I have given this idea some thought, but on reflection I have concluded that it would probably not be a success in practice. As you said yourself, Members are jealous of their right to put random and unexpected Questions, and I am sure that a sizeable minority would resist any change which restricted that freedom. Furthermore, the proposal would place the Chair in the position of having to determine throughout Questions whether a particular supplementary fell within the area which was defined by the first supplementary or not. This would give scope for procedural dispute and recrimination.

/ Although

GCP



Although the existing system is far from perfect, it seems to me that we have little alternative but to continue with it. I am sorry that more Members are not taking advantage of the opportunity to put down substantive, rather than open, Questions to me; perhaps we shall see a larger proportion as time goes by, so bringing about the change which has been suggested to you.

I should of course be delighted to consider any other changes in procedure which are proposed directly to you, and I hope that you will not hesitate to pass them on to me. I am most willing to look at any suggestion which has any degree of support in the House.

Yours ever

Margaret

The Rt. Hon. George Thomas, M.P.





Speaker's House Westminster London SW1A 0AA

7th February 1980

29/2

Dear Margaret,

I have recently had an interesting suggestion about the handling of Prime Minister's Questions in the Chamber, and should be grateful for your views. The suggestion was based on the belief that the Open Question, as at present conducted, results in somewhat incoherent proceedings because:

- (a) successive supplementaries often raise totally disparate issues: if there is a dominant subject, it is frequently interrupted by supplementaries on other matters:
- (b) because any Member is free to raise virtually any subject, Questions become protracted and Members with Questions lower down on the Order Paper have no hope of being reached.

The suggestion that I have had is that the first supplementary (i.e. that raised by the Member tabling the Question) should establish the subject for that particular Question, and that when supplementaries on that subject had been exhausted, the Speaker should move on to the next Question.

As you know, attempts have been made before to rationalise arrangements for Open Questions, and have usually run into difficulty; principally because Members do not wish their right to put unscripted questions to the PM on any subject of their own choosing to be circumscribed. However, the new/

.....



.....

the new proposal seems to me to have certain points in favour of it, not least in the sense that it gives better prospects to Members who have themselves taken the trouble to table Questions.

I should be grateful to know what you think.

Yours ever,  
George.

Speaker

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP,  
10 Downing Street,  
London SW1.



STATEMENT

12 July 1979.  
Pattinson

With permission, Mr. Speaker, I will make a ~~very~~ short Statement about the arrangements for Prime Minister's Questions.

Honourable Members on both sides of the House have expressed dissatisfaction with the number of open Questions which have been tabled recently, although I have not attempted to change the practice in any way.

The present practice is that I accept those Oral Questions, whether open or substantive, which can reasonably and appropriately be directed to me, rather than to a Departmental Minister.

Over the years that criterion has proved impossible to define more precisely. Clearly, detailed constituency matters ought to be dealt with by the appropriate Minister. But I expect to answer substantive Questions which raise issues of general significance and national interest if honourable Members wish to ask them. I feel, however, that I must retain the right exercised by all my predecessors to transfer a Question where it seems to me appropriate to do so.

So far in this Session 624 Oral Questions have been put down to me and I have not transferred a single one.



Parliament /

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister's Questions

The Leader of the House appeared this afternoon to make his statement about the effects of the IPCS dispute on the running of the House. He was criticised from both sides for not going into the details of the dispute, and it may well be that Mr. Channon has to make a further statement tomorrow to satisfy the House about the action which is being taken.

The concentration on the IPCS issue meant that no-one raised, rather to my surprise, the format of your Question Time. I am sure that you should do so tomorrow, and my spies tell me that Mr. Callaghan's staff are already doing their research on the history.

Subject to your agreement, we could tell the Speaker's office that you would like to arise on a brief point of order at the end of your Questions, to say that you would be prepared to take a larger proportion of sensible substantive oral questions.

Are you content to handle it in this way?

I don't think we  
need to do it  
that way - I will  
reply if anyone raises it.  
MS  
MS

9 July 1979





10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

9 July 1979

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

You told me this morning that you thought it likely that the Chancellor of the Duchy will be asked in the House this afternoon about the format of Prime Minister's Question Time, given the comments made by Members last Thursday and his commitment to convey those views to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister would have come to the House this afternoon herself, but will not be able to do so because she will be attending the funeral of John Davies. She would be content for the Chancellor of the Duchy, if pressed, to say that:

"The Prime Minister is prepared to answer a larger number of substantive, as opposed to indirect, oral questions if hon. Members wish to table them. She will therefore accept such questions if they are ones that can reasonably be addressed to her. She will, however, transfer to the responsible Minister any substantive oral questions which ought by their nature to go to a Departmental Minister - such as detailed individual cases".

I am sure that the Prime Minister will have to deal with this topic herself tomorrow, and she is willing to do so. It would be best if the Chancellor of the Duchy did not go too far into the details of what the Prime Minister is prepared to do, given that she will have to give them tomorrow.

Please let me know if you would like further guidance.

I have already told the Clerk at the Table of the Prime Minister's views, and he has undertaken to pass them on to the Speaker.

I am copying this letter to Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

N. J. SANDERS

John Stevens, Esq.,  
Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.



NJS o/R

Support will discuss  
do let's widen  
within the P.M. questions  
not - detailed questions  
shall be proposed  
the proposed  
with in and  
cabinet  
Minister.

PRIME MINISTER

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

As I told you, there were lengthy exchanges in the House this afternoon after you had left about what you had meant by saying on Tuesday that you would be prepared to answer "any Question", and what might be done to improve the balance of Prime Minister's Question time.

You said when we talked afterwards that you wanted to widen the scope of Prime Minister's questions, and you suggested that you might offer to answer literally any Question that was put to you.

Mr. St. John Stevas was asked in the House to provide a statement on Monday about what was intended. Mr. Callaghan bumped into me after all this had happened and said that he hoped that there would be some early clarification. He added that he had thought that you had meant on Tuesday that you would be prepared to answer any supplementary which was put to you - and I am sure that he put this suggestion to me as a way out if you want to take it.

You asked me to look into the history of Prime Minister's Questions and to let you have some more information about what had happened in the past. I should not conceal from you that in so doing I am drawing heavily on <sup>(factual)</sup> advice which was given to Mr. Callaghan in 1977, which was the last time when an experiment with the format of Prime Minister's Questions was made. The conclusion which I draw from the papers I have looked at, and the consultations I have been able to make with my predecessors and others, is that you would be well advised not to go beyond the formula which was adopted on that occasion. It is set out as an annex to the Report of the Sessional Committee on Procedure and is at Flag A. You will see and remember that Mr. Callaghan offered to take a larger number of substantive Questions while reserving the right to decide which ones he

/would transfer.



would transfer. He undertook to enter into the spirit of this offer and expressed the hope that Members would do the same.

As you will also remember, the result was not a success. Our records indicate that you yourself disliked the change because it was accompanied by the Speaker being more restrictive about the number of supplementaries he called to indirect Questions. The system was therefore allowed to lapse and we have got to where we are now.

I do think that it would be unwise to move from the present position to giving carte blanche to Members to ask whatever they like, for several different reasons. The first is that it would open up obvious opportunities for them to invite you to override departmental Ministers on points which properly ought to go to them. The second is that you would find yourself subject to a barrage of detailed constituency Questions which had not been referred to departmental Ministers, but were put straight to you. The third is that it would open up the opportunity for the Opposition to table large numbers of Questions each week on a topic of the greatest possible embarrassment to the Government, thereby ensuring that Question time was as difficult an occasion as it possibly could be. The fourth is that Members might well table very large numbers of written Questions to you on all topics under the sun.

I attach a separate note setting out some of the history of all this. You will see from it that these issues have been raised a number of times in the past, and that no satisfactory solution has ever been found. I would counsel against going the whole hog immediately; and would suggest instead that you might make it known that you would be prepared to answer a wider range of Questions but not those which manifestly were inappropriate for the Prime Minister to answer.

If you wanted to follow such a course, you could announce it by making a short statement yourself which could be followed

/immediately



immediately by an amplification by the Speaker. But before doing so, we would have to give some thought to the question of whether we should consult the Opposition and give them prior notice of your intentions.

I would be very glad to discuss all of this with you.

MS

5 July 1979



THE RECENT HISTORY OF PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

X) There is a good deal of information on this topic in the 1977 Report of the Sessional Committee. I think it is also worth letting you have an extract from a paper which was prepared for your predecessor, on which I cannot improve:

For many years Prime Minister's Questions began at Question No. 45. In 1960, it was decided to take them at No. 40. In 1961 this system was abandoned in favour of Prime Minister's Questions being taken at a specific time - at 3.15 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Before the early 1950s, the Prime Minister answered Questions on any of the first four days of the week, though Questions were answered on his behalf if he was not in the House. But Sir Winston Churchill decided in the early 1950s that in general - there were exceptions - he would not go to the House to answer Questions except on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This practice was adopted by his successors, and was recognised in the changes agreed in 1961 when, in return for Prime Minister's Questions coming on at 3.15 p.m. without fail on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Questions to him on other days were to be given no priority whatsoever on the Order Paper.

Looking back over the experience of the last thirty years, there has been a profound change in the nature of Prime Minister's Question time. To illustrate the old system, and the kind of Questions which were taken in the past, we have arbitrarily taken Prime Minister's Questions for periods of three Parliamentary weeks in February 1948, February 1953, February 1956 and February 1959. Copies of these oral exchanges are at Flab B, in case you wish to look at them to get the flavour. Insofar as it is possible to draw conclusions, I think one can say that:

- (i) there were far fewer Questions (for instance Churchill answered 11 Questions in 3 weeks, at a time when Questions which were not reached accumulated for the next Question time);

/(ii)



- (ii) but they were substantive Questions which in general related to the Prime Minister's own activities and responsibilities;
- (iii) there was perhaps a greater willingness for the Prime Minister to accept "marginal" Questions which would have been transferred by later Prime Ministers to the responsible departmental Minister, particularly so far as foreign affairs were concerned. This - though not so much with Attlee - may have reflected the tendency of Churchill, Eden and MacMillan to concentrate their attention on foreign affairs and, indeed, Britain's greater prominence in world affairs. But the Prime Minister was able to be relatively more relaxed about accepting Questions because Members did not in general attempt to abuse the system and seek to hold the Prime Minister responsible for all aspects of his administration, which is implicit in the attitude of some Members now; and
- (iv) in general, Prime Minister's Question time was not used simply to score points off the other side in the way it is now.

But already by 1959 there were signs of significant change which by the early 1960s were well established. These changes in Prime Minister's Questions have come not so much from different procedures as new attitudes in the House to Question time, though they were possibly facilitated by the change to regular times for Prime Minister's Questions in 1961. Prime Minister's Question time became an integral part of the party battle in the House and one of the main, possibly the principal, occasions for the gladiatorial battle between the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister. This change meant that the main aim of Prime Minister's Question time ceased to be to seek information of statements of Government policy but to score points off the other side.

This new role for Prime Minister's Question time has had political significance because it is the principal means by which a Prime Minister can show mastery over the Opposition and its Leader - or vice-versa - and this in turn has an influence on the Parliamentary standing of the Government, the morale of its backbenchers and so on. But it has also led to the Prime Minister's Question time becoming unsatisfactory in the eyes of many. Complaints are made about the difficulty of putting down to the Prime Minister substantive Questions which are not subsequently transferred, the resulting prevalence of



"formula" Questions which bear little relation to the MP's real Question which he will put in his supplementary, the use of Questions merely to score points and slow progress made in Question time.

Various Select Committees on Procedure have considered the problems associated with Question time. They have not often addressed themselves to the specific problem of Prime Minister's Question time; the most recent and extensive consideration was given by the Select Committee in 1971/72 (a copy of the relevant part of the report is at Flag C). The Committee made no proposals which would have significantly changed the system, and your predecessors have not volunteered any such changes.



312  
PUBLIC SERVICES  
PERSONNEL (TRAINING)

45. Viscountess Davidson asked the Prime Minister, in view of the responsibilities which have been undertaken by the Government, under the Education Act, the Health Act, the Children's Bill and the Criminal Justice Bill, now under discussion, what steps the Ministries of Health and Education and the Home Office are taking to secure the training at Universities and other teaching centres for adequate personnel to work the Acts.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Attlee): The considerable expansion in the capacity of Universities, which has already taken place and will continue in the future, is designed to secure an adequate supply of graduates in various fields of employment, including the public services. Measures have also been taken for increasing training facilities, for example, through the emergency training scheme for teachers and the Ministry of Health's Scheme for post-graduate medical, including specialist, education and courses for training nurses, sanitary inspectors, physiotherapy teachers and remedial gymnasts. Special courses at Universities and other centres are available for child care workers and probation officers, and it is intended to arrange other courses later.

Mr. Kenneth Lindsay: Could the right Gentleman pass on to the Lord President of the Council the importance of encouraging the social sciences, as well as the physical sciences, because a number of measures in Bills which are now being considered will be inoperative unless we have an even larger number of these trained people?

The Prime Minister: I am sure my right Friend was listening intently.

Lieut. Commander Gurney Braithwaite: What is a remedial gymnast; does he differ in any way from any other gymnast?

The Prime Minister: I think he is very different indeed.

Mr. George Thomas: Would the Prime Minister also bear in mind the necessity for much further financial assistance for those who are going into the medical profession, in order that this shall not be a dead shop so far as children of working people are concerned?

The Prime Minister: That is another question, which should be addressed to my right hon. Friend the Minister of Health.



4 FEB 1948

**MEMORIAL SCROLL  
(DUPLICATES)**

45. **Mr. Lipson** asked the Prime Minister if he is aware that the memorial scroll granted to the next-of-kin of a member of the forces killed in the World War of 1939-45 is issued to the widow of the deceased, if there is a widow; that, in such circumstances, the parents have no claim; that this has given rise to some disappointment; and whether he will reconsider the matter.

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Attlee):** I have recently had the problem examined and approval has now been given to a recommendation for the issue of a duplicate Scroll in such circumstances to parents who notify the Ministry of Pensions of their desire to receive this.

**Mr. Lipson:** Is the Prime Minister aware that the action which he has taken is very much appreciated?



THURS 12 FEB 1948

MON 16 FEB 1948

### SCIENTISTS AND TECHNICIANS (GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS)

45. **Mr. Ellis Smith** asked the Prime Minister to what extent an investigation is made into the political records of scientists, technicians and engineers before appointments are made in Government factories; what is the purpose of the investigation; and how far M.I. 5 is involved in the investigation or consideration before the appointments are made.

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Attlee):** I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr. Haire) on the 5th February.

**Mr. Gallacher:** Can the Prime Minister give the number of people employed under the direction of M.I. 5—is it 10,000 or 30,000?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Member must not draw on his experiences of another country.

### CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION

46. **Mr. De la Bère** asked the Prime Minister whether he will consider setting up a Royal Commission for the purpose of conducting a research into the operations of the Central Office of Information on parallel lines to the inquiry that is being conducted by the Royal Commission on the Press.

**The Prime Minister:** No, Sir.

**Mr. De la Bère:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this is not merely a question of what is sauce for the goose being sauce for the gander? Is he aware that an appalling amount of public money has been expended and is being expended by the Central Office of Information?

**The Prime Minister:** Obviously, it is a bird of quite a different feather of which the hon. Gentleman has now got hold.

### PRODUCTION (RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES)

45. **Mr. Lipson** asked the Prime Minister if he has discussed with the T.U.C. the abolition of restrictive practices in view of increasing production; and what progress has been made to bring this about.

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Attlee):** I presume that the hon. Member's Question refers to practices covered by the Restoration of Pre-War Trade Practices Act, 1942. This matter has been discussed by my right hon. Friend, the Minister of Labour and National Service, with the National Joint Advisory Council, and on their recommendation the fixing of the appointed day under the Act has been deferred until the 31st December, 1948.

**Mr. Lipson:** Are there not other restrictive practices delaying production, and would it not be just as well to discuss them too, in view of the necessity to increase production and the needs of the time?

**The Prime Minister:** Perhaps the hon. Member will put down a Question on that to my right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour?

### MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (SALARIES)

46. **Mr. Hugh Fraser** asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the Government's recent appeals to both sides of industry to forgo their claims to higher salaries, wages and profits, and as a lead and example, he will propose to the members of this House a general or proportionate reduction of their salaries or emoluments.

**The Prime Minister:** No, Sir. It is no part of the policy laid down in the White Paper to reduce wages or salaries.

**Mr. Fraser:** Surely the Prime Minister is aware that it is asking for something like a miracle to happen on both sides of industry to expect prices to come down? Surely in that case something in the nature of an act of faith is necessary from his House to encourage the country? If prices do come down, then no one will be any the worse off.

**Mr. Stanley Prescott:** Is it not a fact that there is no obligation on any hon. Member to draw his full remuneration, unless he so desires?



MON 19 FEB 1948

**CENTRAL OFFICE OF  
INFORMATION**

19/2

45. Mr. De la Bère asked the Prime Minister on which aspects of the work of the Central Office of Information he answers in this House, and on which aspects questions should be addressed to the Lord President of the Council and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Attlee):** As I explained in my statement of 7th March, 1946, my right hon. Friend the Lord President of the Council is charged with general supervision of the machinery which was set up to secure the proper integration of the information policy of Departments and to co-ordinate inter-departmental action both at home and overseas. Treasury Ministers are responsible to Parliament for the Vote of the Central Office of Information, and also deal with matters affecting the staffing, efficiency and methods of the Office. Publicity policy on the other hand is the responsibility of the Departmental Minister concerned in each case.

**Mr. De la Bère:** Will the Prime Minister impress on his right hon. Friend the urgent need to separate the world of fact from the world of sham, and is he further aware that the C.O.I. urgently needs a complete overhaul?

**The Prime Minister:** In reply to the first part of the supplementary question my right hon. Friend is very well aware of the distinction. As to the second part, I do not agree with the hon. Member.



10TH FEBRUARY 1953

**NATIONAL SERVICE  
(GOVERNMENT POLICY)**

45. **Mr. Shinwell** asked the Prime Minister whether the Government have considered a review of the National Service Acts, particularly with a view to a reduction in the period of service.

46. **Mr. Yates** asked the Prime Minister if he is aware that the National Service Act comes to an end during 1953; and if he will take steps to review the obligation of, and the need for, compulsory National Service, with a view to its eventual abolition.

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Winston Churchill):** Questions on the National Service Acts should normally be addressed to the Minister of Labour and National Service, but as these two Questions raise major issues of policy I will deal with them myself. No reduction in the period of National Service can be contemplated at the present time.

**Mr. Shinwell:** In view of the fact, which no doubt the right hon. Gentleman recognises, that the Acts come to an end before the end of this year, are the Government undertaking a review of the position? When will they be in a position to make an announcement on the subject?

**The Prime Minister:** The future policy on National Service will be dealt with on the White Paper on Defence which it is hoped will be published next week. Thereafter there will be a defence debate in which the whole matter can be raised.

**Mr. Shinwell:** I am very grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his statement. Do I understand from what he has just said that in the Defence White Paper the Government will state their intentions about the National Service Acts?

**The Prime Minister:** I thought that the right hon. Gentleman would like to be reassured upon that subject. I said that there will be no change, and that no reduction in the period of National Service can be contemplated at the present time.

**Mr. Yates:** Is the Prime Minister aware that when the period of National Service was increased to two years a specific promise was made to the House that it would be reduced as soon as practicable and that it was not to be regarded as a feature of the British way of life? Does he not think that the country is entitled to adequate notice in order that this matter can be reviewed, and would it not, in accordance with his own policy, be an excellent step towards setting the people free by removing the shackles of conscription?

**The Prime Minister:** I cannot think of anything that would be more disastrous for us than at this moment to reduce the two years' period of National Service. I am sure it would spread despondency throughout free Europe and would make even more difficult than they are many of our relations with the United States.

**Mr. Shinwell:** But regarding the problem solely from the standpoint of military expediency, and not looking at it as a matter of principle, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he did not say in October of last year that a third world war seemed unlikely, and in view of that statement is there not some reason for reviewing the position and bringing about a possible reduction in the period?

**The Prime Minister:** No, Sir. If it be true, as we all earnestly hope, that the danger of a third world war has receded—and that is a matter which no one can declare with certitude—it is largely due to the exertions made by this country, by the United States and by our allies in Europe to place ourselves in a position of defence; and if at what may be a critical and delicate moment in world history we were suddenly to make a pull-back of this kind, it might do harm far outside anything we can think of.



12TH FEBRUARY 1953

**INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS**

Mr. Dodds asked the Prime Minister, following his visit to the United States of America, he will now endeavour to arrange a meeting with Joseph Stalin in an effort to lessen the tension in international affairs.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Winston Churchill): I have nothing to add to the reply which I gave to the hon. Member

for South Ayrshire (Mr. Emrys Hughes) on Monday, 9th February.

**Mr. Dodds:** But that is not good enough. Does the Prime Minister recall the banner headlines of the "Evening Standard" which read:

"Talks with Stalin call transforms the Election"?

Has the right hon. Gentleman no desire to keep faith with the millions of people who believe in his sincerity? Does he not by now appreciate that if he is to have any restraining influence on the present American Administration, he will have to have a more independent mind and have a talk with Stalin?

**The Prime Minister:** I have nothing to add to the reply which I have just given to the hon. Member.



18TH FEBRUARY 1953

## ANGLO-FRENCH TALKS

45. Mr. Wyatt asked the Prime Minister whether he will make a statement on his recent official conversations with the Prime Minister of France.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Winston Churchill): My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made a statement to the House on the subject of these conversations on 16th of February, to which I do not desire to add.

Mr. Wyatt: Has the Prime Minister seen a report in "The Times" today which makes it quite clear that the fear of the French Government, and indeed that of the European Army, depends upon the answers which his Government give to the French proposals for a closer association with the European Army? Will he not remember that he himself invented the idea of the European Army at Strasbourg and suggested that we should be a member of it? Will he not summon forth the imagination which caused him once to suggest union with the French nation?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman seems to be more desirous of imparting information than of receiving it. Anyhow, I have nothing to give him.

18TH FEBRUARY 1953

SOUTH-EAST ASIA  
(DEFENCE PACT)

46. Mr. Wyatt asked the Prime Minister whether he has any further statement to make on the association of Britain with other members of the Australian, New Zealand and United States defence pact for the defence of South-East Asia.

The Prime Minister: Not at the present time.

Mr. Wyatt: Has the right hon. Gentleman made it clear to the United States Government that it is quite intolerable that there should be a defence pact with New Zealand and Australia in Canada and South-East Asia from which our country, which is bound to go to war if either of those nations is attacked, is excluded?

The Prime Minister: I do not think I ought to embark upon a complicated discussion of this kind at Question Time. The hon. Gentleman will find that a great deal of this matter was settled by the Government of which he was, I believe, a Member.

Mr. Wyatt: Why cannot the right hon. Gentleman give us some information? If we are not to get it at Question Time, when can we get it, if we do not have a debate on the subject?

The Prime Minister: A great deal of information is given out in the House of

Commons from time to time, and I do not see why any complaint should be made on that subject.



230 FEBRUARY 1953

#### DESERTERS (CORONATION AMNESTY)

45. Sir T. Moore asked the Prime Minister whether he will recommend a general amnesty to war-time deserters in connection with the Coronation celebrations.

46. Lieut.-Colonel Lipton asked the Prime Minister whether he will now consider the question of an amnesty for deserters.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Winston Churchill): Her Majesty's Government have decided that, in the circumstances referred to by the hon. and gallant Member for Ayr and as a special measure which will not be regarded as a precedent for the future, there will be no further

considerations of members of the Armed Forces who deserted from the Services between 3rd September, 1939, and 15th August, 1945. Men who wish to take advantage of the amnesty will be required to report themselves in writing to a Service authority. They will then receive a production certificate and will be transferred to the appropriate Reserve to which men were transferred on demobilisation. Men who claim the benefit of the amnesty will not be prosecuted for offences consequential upon desertion, such as subsequent fraudulent enlistment, or the possession of identity documents in a false name, but the amnesty will not cover other offences against the criminal law.

Full details will be announced in due course of the steps which men will be required to take and of the consequential measures which will be applied to men who have been convicted of desertion and are still serving, but any men who are awaiting trial or serving sentences for desertion during the 1939-45 war will be released from custody.

Sir T. Moore: Does my right hon. Friend appreciate that though this generous decision will, I suppose, be welcomed with mixed feelings throughout the country, it will, at the same time, restore thousands of men once again to family and community life and thereby, perhaps, give them an opportunity to justify this clemency?

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that while his statement today—which is much more satisfactory than the answer he gave me on 29th January, 1952—will require a little study, it will be appreciated by all those who have long felt that this eight-year old man hunt should have come to an end long since?

Mr. Langford-Holt: Can my right hon. Friend say to how many men it is estimated that this amnesty will apply? His hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for War stated the other day that there were 10,000 deserters. Is it a fact that the numbers involved under this proposed act of clemency will be in the neighbourhood of only 2,000 to 3,000?

The Prime Minister: I should like notice of questions of detail.



230 FEBRUARY 1953

#### DESERTERS (CORONATION AMNESTY)

45. Sir T. Moore asked the Prime Minister whether he will recommend a general amnesty to war-time deserters in connection with the Coronation celebrations.

46. Lieut.-Colonel Lipton asked the Prime Minister whether he will now consider the question of an amnesty for deserters.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Winston Churchill): Her Majesty's Government have decided that, in the circumstances referred to by the hon. and gallant Member for Ayr and as a special measure which will not be regarded as a precedent for the future, there will be no further

amnesties of members of the Armed Forces who deserted from the Services between 3rd September, 1939, and 15th August, 1945. Men who wish to take advantage of the amnesty will be required to report themselves in writing to a Service authority. They will then receive a production certificate and will be transferred to the appropriate Reserve to which men were transferred on demobilisation. Men who claim the benefit of the amnesty will not be prosecuted for certain offences consequential upon desertion, such as subsequent fraudulent enlistment, or the possession of identity documents in a false name, but the amnesty will not cover other offences against the criminal law.

Full details will be announced in due course of the steps which men will be required to take and of the consequential measures which will be applied to men who have been convicted of desertion and are still serving, but any men who are awaiting trial or serving sentences for desertion during the 1939-45 war will be released from custody.

Sir T. Moore: Does my right hon. Friend appreciate that though this generous decision will, I suppose, be welcomed with mixed feelings throughout the country, it will, at the same time, restore thousands of men once again to family and community life and thereby, perhaps, give them an opportunity to justify this clemency?

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that while his statement today—which is much more satisfactory than the answer he gave me on 29th January, 1952—will require a little study, it will be appreciated by all those who have long felt that this eight-year old man hunt should have come to an end long since?

Mr. Langford-Holt: Can my right hon. Friend say to how many men it is estimated that this amnesty will apply? His hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for War stated the other day that there were 10,000 deserters. Is it a fact that the numbers involved under this proposed act of clemency will be in the neighbourhood of only 2,000 to 3,000?

The Prime Minister: I should like notice of questions of detail.



24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1953**FOOD PRODUCTION (PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH)**

45. **Mr. Emrys Hughes** asked the Prime Minister, in view of the importance of increasing food production in Britain, if he will publish a full report of his speech to the National Farmers' Union on 17th February as a White Paper.

**The Prime Minister:** It would be unusual to publish speeches in this way, but I am sending the hon. Member a copy of the speech he refers to.

**Mr. Hughes:** In view of the universal interest amongst farmers, and the gigantic target the Prime Minister set them, could he explain, for the benefit of the farmers, how they are going to achieve this very elastic target if men are taken away for military service?

**The Prime Minister:** If I were to attempt to do justice to that question I should be severely straining the usual procedure at Question time.

**Mr. Peart:** In view of reports of the Prime Minister's speech, will he instruct the Minister of Agriculture to produce a really positive agricultural policy, in view of the absence of one?

**The Prime Minister:** I think the Minister of Agriculture is doing extremely well. I am sure he does not need to take any advice from the party opposite.

**Mr. H. Morrison:** The Prime Minister is being very dictatorial.

24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1953

46. **Mr. Peart** asked the Prime Minister what steps he is taking to improve the organisation of his Government with a view to reaching their recently announced objective of 60 per cent. above pre-war food production.

**The Prime Minister:** This subject might well be appropriate to a debate on agriculture. No changes are proposed in the organisation of Her Majesty's Government.

**Mr. Peart:** Is the Prime Minister aware that, despite his previous answer, there is evidence that agriculture has not had the priority it should have had over the past 12 months, and would he, if the Minister of Agriculture is doing well, put him in the Cabinet, as the Minister of Agriculture was in the previous Administration?

**The Prime Minister:** I should be very glad to send the hon. Gentleman also a copy of the speech which I delivered, but I really could not undertake to accept his advice as to what Ministers should or should not be members of the Cabinet.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that one of the most effective steps that can be taken to increase food production is to pass legislation to bring the common land of this country into cultivation to give more food, and, further, will he appoint a commission to go into the question of the 16 million to 17 million acres of rough grazing which exists in Great Britain?

**Mr. J. T. Price:** When the Prime Minister is considering this matter very fully, would he also consider the statement reported to have been made yesterday by a member of the Cabinet, namely, that economic planning was "all boloney" and either confirm that is his opinion or deny it?

**The Prime Minister:** I should prefer to have an agreed definition of the meaning of "boloney" before I attempted to deal with such a topic.



25TH FEBRUARY 1953

N.A.T.O.-A.N.Z.U.S.  
CO-ORDINATION

46. Mr. A. Henderson asked the Prime Minister whether he will make a statement on the steps taken to secure co-ordination between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Australian, New Zealand and United States Pact Organisation.

**The Prime Minister:** I am not in a position to make any statement on this subject at the present time.

**Mr. Henderson:** I appreciate what the right hon. Gentleman has said, but has his attention been drawn to the public statement made only a few days ago by Lord Ismay, stressing the need for

co-ordination between these two international organisations and stating that the business of N.A.T.O. could only be done on a global basis? Would he agree that that is a correct statement of the position and may we take it that this suggestion is regarded as a matter of urgency and importance, even though the right hon. Gentleman cannot make a detailed statement today?

**The Prime Minister:** I have not yet seen the statement of Lord Ismay but, as read out by the right hon. and learned Gentleman, it sounds very good. I like it. These matters are being very carefully considered and I think there would be a very general consensus of opinion in this House on what we should like to happen. Whether it will happen or not, I cannot tell.

25TH FEBRUARY 1953

CORONATION OATH  
CHANGES

45. Mr. E. Fletcher asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the changes that were made in the Coronation oath in 1937, and in view of the further changes that have since been rendered necessary, he will before the Coronation introduce legislation to amend the Coronation Oath Act of 1689.

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Winston Churchill):** As this answer is of some length, it would be convenient if I might with your permission and that of the House read it as a statement at the end of Questions.



1956

OFFICIAL REPORT:

VOLUME

COLUMN

13TH FEBRUARY 1956.

**WASHINGTON AND OTTAWA  
(DISCUSSIONS)**

45. Mr. Warbey asked the Prime Minister the outcome of his discussions with President Eisenhower regarding the suspension or limitation of hydrogen bomb tests.

**The Prime Minister (Sir Anthony Eden):** I would ask the hon. Gentleman to await the statement I shall be making in a few minutes.

**Mr. Warbey:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance that he will deal adequately with this important matter in his statement? I ask him this because there was no mention of it at all in the communiqué and the declaration.

**The Prime Minister:** I am certainly not prepared to give any undertaking that the hon. Gentleman's definition of "adequately" and mine are the same.



14th February 1956

### NATIONALISED INDUSTRIES (PRICE STABILISATION)

51. Mr. Nabarro asked the Prime Minister, in view of the need for price stability, and the lead given in implementing this policy by recent pronouncements of private enterprise cement firms and one nationalised board, namely, the South of Scotland Electricity Board, whether he will now call a conference of the heads of nationalised boards, to be presided over by himself, with a view to evolving a price stabilisation formula and agreement, for all nationalised industries during 1956.

**The Prime Minister:** I hardly think that all the different conditions could be dealt with by a single formula or by the procedure my hon. Friend suggests.

**Mr. Nabarro:** Can my right hon. Friend say what response, if any, other than in the case of the one relatively minor nationalised concern, has been made to the appeal in his Bradford speech, for is it not manifest that until the nationalised industries, which are basic industries, make a contribution to his policy, nothing whatever can be achieved?

**The Prime Minister:** The investment requirements of the nationalised industries have, quite properly, been discussed with the heads of the nationalised industries, like other investment requirements. Although I understand the motive behind my hon. Friend's Question—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Yes, I do; it is a perfectly proper one—I do not think it will be possible to apply one flat and universal rule to all nationalised industries, which have very many differing features among them.

**Lieut.-Colonel Lipton:** Could not the Prime Minister, in addition to the nationalised industries referred to by the hon. Member for Kidderminster (Mr. Nabarro), have a look at British Petroleum, which is a nationalised industry, making a considerable profit, in which the Government have a majority holding of shares? Will he please have a look at that?

**The Prime Minister:** I think the Government are doing pretty well out of the shares.

14th February 1956

### INFLATION (CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH)

48. Mr. Lewis asked the Prime Minister whether the recent speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the National Production Advisory Council on Industry on the question of inflation represents the policy of Her Majesty's Government.

**The Prime Minister:** My right hon. Friend made it clear that the speech was a diagnosis and not a statement of policy.

**Mr. Lewis:** Is the Prime Minister aware of the fact that in that diagnosis the Chancellor stated that during 1954 retail prices rose  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times as fast as in the previous year, that imports rose by 15 per cent., which was three times as much as exports—[HON. MEMBERS: "Quoting."]—and that our reserves fell by about a quarter? Yes, I am quoting. Is the Prime Minister aware of the fact that the housewives want to see the hole in their purse mended, the hole in their husbands' pocket mended, and the pound really worth something? When will the Government do something about that?

**The Prime Minister:** I understand that there is shortly to be an economic debate, in which perhaps a repetition of the speech which we have just heard will be appropriate.



14TH FEBRUARY 1956

#### WASHINGTON DECLARATION

47 and 49. Mr. Zilliacus asked the Prime Minister (1) whether he will give the dates, titles and authors of the documents and manifestos in which, according to the Declaration of Washington, Communist rulers have announced their intention to spread Communism over the whole world by military, among other, means; and whether he will publish the relevant passages from these documents and manifestos as a White Paper;

(2) which are the peoples who, according to the Declaration of Washington, have been forcibly incorporated in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; the names of the ten once independent nations which, according to the Washington Declaration, are compelled to work for the aggrandisement of the Soviet State; and whether he will give an assurance that Her Majesty's Government will continue to conduct their relations with all the East and Central European Members of the United Nations consistently with the obligations of the United Nations Charter.

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Gentleman has misquoted the Washington Declaration.

The hon. Member must be well aware of the facts of Communist doctrine and propaganda, and I see no need on this occasion to reproduce them all in a White Paper. The hon. Member must also be aware of the names of the former Baltic States and of the satellite States.

I can see no need for any further assurance that Her Majesty's Government will conduct themselves consistently with their obligations under the United Nations Charter.

**Mr. Zilliacus:** On the former point, may I ask if the Prime Minister denies that, according to the Declaration of Washington, numerous documents and manifestos exist in which the Communist leaders have proclaimed their intention to spread Communism throughout the world by military, among other, means? That is not an exact quotation, but that is the meaning of it. If the Prime Minister does deny that, will he also deny that such statements exist, because they do not exist? That is the first point.

**The Prime Minister:** I want to quote from the Declaration, and not from the hon. Gentleman's interpretation of it. What it says is slightly different, but very importantly different. Our Declaration says:

"The Communist rulers have expressed in numerous documents and manifestos their purpose to extend the practice of Communism by every possible means until it encompasses the world."

I think that is an accurate statement of fact. We then go on to say that to this end they have used military and political force in the past.

**Mr. Zilliacus:** Does "every possible means" include military means or not? That is what I want to know to begin with. On the second point, is it not a fact that under the Charter we are pledged to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of members of the United Nations, and not to interfere in their internal affairs? Is this an obligation which applies also to the States of Eastern Europe?

**The Prime Minister:** The world would be a considerably happier place if some for whom the hon. Gentleman is now protesting would follow the practice against which he is inveighing.

**Mr. Nicholson:** Is not this innocence and ignorance of otherwise intelligent people absolutely bewildering?

**Mr. Daines:** Does the Prime Minister recognise that Russian actions speak far louder than their words?



14 TH FEBRUARY 1956

46. Mr. Langford-Holt asked the Prime Minister what further steps he proposes to take to emphasise and secure the implementation of the Tripartite Agreement of 1950 on Israel.

The Prime Minister: I would refer my hon. Friend to the statement I made yesterday.

Mr. Langford-Holt: In view of the fact that the Prime Minister said yesterday that there was a danger that both sides did not fully understand the implications of the Tripartite Declaration—and anybody who has been out there clearly knows that there is a failure to understand—is my right hon. Friend able to say when the negotiations which he indicated yesterday are in progress between the signatories to the Declaration will be concluded?

The Prime Minister: No, I could not say that. There are discussions for the purposes which I described yesterday, and I have no reason to suppose that their conclusions will necessarily be made public.

Mr. Gaitskell: May I ask the Prime Minister whether it is his intention, possibly after consultation with the United States and France, to make any official reply to the statement of the Soviet Government on the Tripartite Declaration?

The Prime Minister: I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman. His question does not actually arise from the Question on the Order Paper, but I will gladly consider it. Of course, I have not had an opportunity of consulting my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary in detail on the matter, but I will certainly consider it.



14TH FEBRUARY 1956

## ISRAEL AND ARAB STATES

45. Mr. A. Henderson asked the Prime Minister whether he will make a statement on his attempts to bring about direct negotiations between Israel and her Arab neighbours; and whether such negotiations are now to take place.

**The Prime Minister (Sir Anthony Eden):** I would refer the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the statement I made yesterday.

**Mr. Henderson:** In view of the statement issued by the Soviet Foreign Office and the allegations contained in it, would the Prime Minister make it clear that the policy of Her Majesty's Government in relation to the Middle East, including the 1950 Tripartite Declaration, is entirely consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Charter?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, Sir; the declaration of 1950 is wholly in harmony with the terms of the United Nations Charter. In fact, so far as I know, I have never hitherto heard anybody cast doubt on that fact.

**Mr. Shinwell:** Does the Prime Minister appreciate that his statement yesterday in regard to the situation in the Middle East was not as clear as it ought to have been? Would he be good enough to state quite categorically whether it is the intention of the signatories to the Tripartite Declaration only to prepare to take action in the event of aggression—that is, after the event—or whether they propose to take any kind of positive action before an event takes place, in order to prevent it taking place—in other words, to prevent aggression?

**The Prime Minister:** So far as the 1950 Declaration is concerned, the right hon. Gentleman knows well that our position has been, remains and will be that we will carry out the terms of the 1950 Declaration. I do not think I can possibly go beyond that or put a gloss upon it.

16TH FEBRUARY 1956

## SECURITY (CONFERENCE OF PRIVY COUNCILLORS)

46. Mr. Emrys Hughes asked the Prime Minister what recommendations for economies in the cost of the security departments of the Foreign Office and other Government Departments have been made by the Conference of Privy Councillors that has been inquiring into security matters.

**The Prime Minister:** As I told the House on Monday, we are now considering the steps to be taken on this Report. If any of these can be made known consistently with the public interest, they will be reported to the House.

**Mr. Hughes:** Is the Prime Minister aware that the latest reports of the Secret Service accounts show that last year we voted £5 million, and that the Secret Service was so embarrassed by our generosity that they gave £190,000 back; and does he not think it is time for a scrutiny of the activities of this department by the Committee on Public Accounts?

**The Prime Minister:** Not by the Committee on Public Accounts. The practice to which the hon. Gentleman refers is by no means unique in history.

**Mr. F. J. Bellenger:** Can the Prime Minister say how much of this Privy Councillors' Report concerns security matters—which obviously cannot be dealt with in the House—and other matters which are really affecting public opinion in this country, as, for example, the recent statements of the two gentlemen who disappeared from the Foreign Office, which seems to indicate that the Civil Service, or at any rate the Foreign Service part of it, is not being operated to the benefit of the public interest?

**The Prime Minister:** I am told by my right hon. Friend that this Report is being studied; it is being examined. It is an important document, and when I have myself had an opportunity to examine the recommendations of the Report I should like to make a statement to the House; but the right hon. Gentleman will understand that I could not anticipate that now.



20TH FEBRUARY 1956

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS  
(STATEMENTS)

45. Mr. Lewis asked the Prime Minister if he is aware of the growing practice of various Departments of issuing official and semi-official statements confirming or denying matters which are the subject of Parliamentary Questions and debates; and whether he will instruct Departments that these should not be issued pending being dealt with in the House.

**The Prime Minister (Sir Anthony Eden):** It is an accepted principle that while Parliament is in session important matters are announced by Ministers to Parliament. I am not aware of any growing practice that derogates from this principle. I could not accept the proposition that the presence of a Motion or Question on the Order Paper automatically makes it impossible for anything to be said outside on the same subject.

**Mr. Lewis:** While thanking the Prime Minister for the general tone of his reply, may I ask him whether he is aware that last Tuesday Questions were placed on the Order Paper by hon. Members on both sides of the House; on Wednesday evening the Treasury, to whom the Questions were addressed issued a public statement which was, in effect, an answer to the Questions; and yet on Thursday the Leader of the House stated that the Treasury was thinking of making a statement, which, in fact, it did make on the Friday; and by adopting that method the rights of hon. Members were abrogated as a result of the action of the Treasury? Will the right hon. Gentleman look into this matter if I give the actual details?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I will look into it. I thought the hon. Gentleman was on another hare, about something said by Foreign Office spokesmen, but since it is this one perhaps he will let me have the details.

**Mr. H. Wilson:** While we all understand the Prime Minister's unwillingness to make a general rule on this point, was it not a rather strange occurrence that there should be the statement of the Treasury spokesman about building licensing and import licensing, not only because these Questions were on the Order Paper, but because the Chancellor was about to make a statement to the House? Was not this an unusual procedure?

**The Prime Minister:** I will look into it. I was not conscious of what was behind the Question.

16TH FEBRUARY 1956

## UNITED NATIONS

45. Mr. Beswick asked the Prime Minister what measures he proposed or discussed with President Eisenhower for the strengthening of the authority of the United Nations organisation.

**The Prime Minister (Sir Anthony Eden):** Her Majesty's Government are always in favour of strengthening the authority of the United Nations, but no particular measures to this end were discussed with President Eisenhower.

**Mr. Beswick:** Is the Prime Minister aware that the most hopeful and best received part of the speech of the Foreign Secretary on 24th January was when he broke away from balance of power politics and its possibilities and expressed his hopes of more positive United Nations action, as on the Arab-Israeli border; and ought it not to be possible for this country to give some specific and constructive lead in this matter?

**The Prime Minister:** I have frequently dealt with that question, and so has my right hon. Friend. I thought the hon. Gentleman was asking about wider propositions. Certainly the House knows quite well what we have suggested.

**Mr. Beswick:** Is the right hon. Gentleman not aware that, as a matter of fact, the House does not know; that what the House was told this week was that it was not a matter for this country to make specific proposals; and that I am now asking the right hon. Gentleman if he will take the initiative in these matters?

**The Prime Minister:** We have taken the initiative in these matters; they are United Nations matters, and therefore, though we may say we are quite ready to receive any suggestions, it must be in accordance with what the Secretariat-General and their officers concerned themselves require or suggest.



22 FEB 1956

**TRADES UNION CONGRESS  
(MEETING)**

45. **Mr. Lewis** asked the Prime Minister if, in view of the concern felt by the Trades Union Congress over the Government's recent announcement concerning the economic situation, he will arrange to meet the Trades Union Congress as early as possible to discuss the Government's proposals and to hear the views of the Trades Union Congress.

**The Lord Privy Seal (Mr. R. A. Butler)** : I have been asked to reply.

It is—and has been—my right hon. Friend's intention to meet members of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress at some convenient moment soon.

**Mr. Lewis** : While thanking the Lord Privy Seal for that reply, may I ask him to convey to the Prime Minister the feeling that the T.U.C. General Council is very concerned? If he can arrange for the Prime Minister to see the General Council as speedily as possible, I am sure they will convey to him some home truths on behalf of the trade union movement of this country.

**Mr. Butler** : I do not doubt that my right hon. Friend is aware of the General Council's anxieties. He has already had an indication of them. I am equally certain that if there is to be an exchange there will be an exchange of realities. This may lead to the national good, and that is the desire of my right hon. Friend.



28TH FEBRUARY 1956

**ATOMIC ENERGY  
(PEACEFUL USES)**

48. **Mr. A. Henderson** asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of President Eisenhower's offer to supply uranium to other countries, he will propose consultation between the United States Government and Her Majesty's Government in order to promote international co-operation in the financing and construction of atomic reactors in Asian and African countries.

**The Prime Minister:** I am grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman for giving me this opportunity to welcome President Eisenhower's latest imaginative offer to supply uranium for the development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. How the countries of the world, individually or in association, can best make use of this offer is a question which would need most careful thought.

Meanwhile, a start has already been made in the Colombo Plan and Bagdad Pact as well as in bilateral arrangements between our two countries and certain countries in Africa and Asia to help them in training in the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

**Mr. Henderson:** Does the Prime Minister's reply mean that Her Majesty's Government are to follow the action of the United States Government and make supplies of uranium available to other countries for research and development purposes? If not, will not this country be placed at a serious disadvantage in competition with the United States?

**The Prime Minister:** The American offer to make uranium available to the countries which do not produce it is extremely generous: I think that is perfectly correct. We have been working closely with the United States in such matters as technical help for the countries which produce uranium. As to our being able to make supplies available, however, the right hon. and learned Gentleman will know that these supplies are scarce. We are not placed like the United States, and I am afraid that I cannot hold out hopes that we may be able to follow them in that field.

**Mr. E. Fletcher:** Will the Prime Minister confirm that Her Majesty's Government will be prepared to give technical and, if necessary, financial help to countries in Asia and Africa to enable them to benefit from the economic use of nuclear energy?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, we have been doing that and have been discussing that with the United States. We have certain plans to help what are called the under-developed countries in Africa and Asia to form a nucleus of trained technicians. We think that that is their first need, because until they have that, they will not be able to make much use of the raw material or other instruments placed at their disposal.

**Mr. J. Griffiths:** While welcoming this offer, as the Prime Minister has done, may I ask whether it would not be wise at this stage, at the beginning of this new era, to consider ways and means of channelling these supplies through the United Nations to all countries, rather than by doing that through bilateral agreements?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not think that that is excluded because, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, this all forms part of the offer which the President of the United States made to the United Nations some considerable time ago.



28TH FEBRUARY 1956

## HYDROGEN BOMB

46. Mr. Warbey asked the Prime Minister whether he is now in a position to make a statement on the possibility of any country making test explosions of hydrogen bombs in the megaton range without their being detected.

**The Prime Minister:** If I were to answer this Question I should have to give information which it would not be in the public interest to give. I am, therefore, not prepared to make a statement. 6

**Mr. Warbey:** Is the Prime Minister aware that last week he said that he would look into this matter, and he asked for a Question to be put down, but that now he gives no answer? Is he aware that public opinion is worried primarily only about the explosion of very big bombs with vast radio-active fall-outs? Is it not completely nonsense to suggest that such vast explosions could be made anywhere, without being detected? Will he stop looking for fresh excuses for doing nothing, and will he get on with the job?

**The Prime Minister:** I answered the hon. Gentleman perfectly politely last week by saying that I would make inquiry as to whether I could answer his Question, because I was doubtful whether it was in the public interest that I should. I have since taken advice, and in the public interest I should not answer it; and no provocation by the hon. Member will cause me to depart from that decision.

28TH FEBRUARY 1956

## GOVERNMENT (POLICY DECISIONS)

45. Mr. Swingler asked the Prime Minister if he is aware of the widening gap in time between the submission of reports to the heads of Departments of State and the reaching of decisions on the recommendations made; and if he will draw the attention of Ministers to the need to combat this tendency and to reach early decisions at all levels of government when proposals have been submitted.

**The Prime Minister (Sir Anthony Eden):** I certainly do not accept the view that Her Majesty's present Government take longer than any of their predecessors to reach important decisions of policy, whether on recommendations of advisory bodies or otherwise.

The second part of the Question does not, therefore, arise.

**Mr. Swingler:** Is not the Prime Minister aware of the increasing number of subjects which are alleged to be under comprehensive review in Government Departments? Is he not aware that Ministers are constantly evading questions by alleging that subjects are under comprehensive review? Will not the Prime Minister draw the attention of some Ministers to some subjects, such as compensation for mining subsidence or local government reform, which have now been under comprehensive review for more than five years? It is not time we had some decisions?

**The Prime Minister:** To take the first of the hon. Member's points, which, I agree, is important, it has been under review since 1949, including two and a half years of Labour Government.—  
[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] That is quite true.



1st MARCH 1956

**PAKISTAN  
(PASHTU-SPEAKING AREAS)**

48. **Mr. Mott-Radclyffe** asked the Prime Minister in view of the official claims advanced in certain quarters on behalf of Pashtunistan, if he will give a formal assurance that Her Majesty's Government acknowledge Pakistan as the successors to the responsibilities which Her Majesty's Government previously exercised in the Pashtu-speaking areas of undivided India.

**The Prime Minister :** The view of Her Majesty's Government, which was also the view of our predecessors in office, is as follows. In 1947, Pakistan came into existence as a new, sovereign, independent member of the Commonwealth. Her Majesty's Government regard her as having, with the full consent of the overwhelming majority of the Pashtu-speaking peoples concerned, both in the administered and non-administered areas, succeeded to the exercise of the powers formerly exercised by the Crown in India on the North-West Frontier of the sub-Continent. Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom fully support the Government of Pakistan in maintaining their sovereignty over the areas East of the Durand Line and in regarding this Line as the international frontier with Afghanistan. Her Majesty's Government are confident that there is no outstanding question between Pakistan and Afghanistan which cannot be settled by peaceful means on the basis of the legal position as I have now stated it. They have throughout been in close consultation with the Government of Pakistan and are convinced that Pakistan is determined to seek a peaceful solution.

**Mr. Mott-Radclyffe :** May I ask my right hon. Friend whether it is not a fact that after the transfer of power in 1947 the majority of the tribal leaders in this area openly expressed the wish to be regarded as part and parcel of Pakistan, and to be administered, in a loose sense, by Pakistan?

**The Prime Minister :** I do not know about the last part of my hon. Friend's supplementary question, but according to my information there are no significant

sections of the population of these areas which are in any way dissatisfied with the present status as Pakistan citizens. Indeed, all the evidence that we have is the other way.

**Mr. Gaitskell :** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that it would be the desire of my right hon. and hon. Friends to be associated with his statement, which, as he said, accords with the policy of the Labour Government?

**The Prime Minister :** I am much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman.

1st MARCH 1956

**NATIONALISED INDUSTRIES  
(WAGES)**

47. **Mr. Gresham Cooke** asked the Prime Minister whether he will now call a conference of the heads of the nationalised boards, to be presided over by himself, with a view to obtaining agreement on a common wage policy to be followed by all nationalised industries, both during the present phase of economic restraint and subsequently.

**The Prime Minister :** The nationalised industries, like other industries, are responsible for dealing with their own wages questions. It is, however, of the greatest importance that all concerned with these questions should exercise their responsibility with a full knowledge of economic considerations affecting the national interest. That is one of the reasons why with my colleagues I am having meetings with representative leaders of industry. One of these will be with the nationalised industries.

**Mr. Gresham Cooke :** May I express the hope—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] that—

**Mr. Speaker :** Question Time is not the time for expressing hopes.

**Mr. Gresham Cooke :** Is my right hon. Friend aware that this meeting with the nationalised industries will command a great deal of approval in the country? Is he also aware that there is a section of trade union opinion which thinks that the nationalised industries should pay better wages than industry generally? Would he express the view to the heads of the industries that that opinion is wrong?

**The Prime Minister :** The whole matter is governed, of course, by the nationalisation Acts, which arranged for the establishment of negotiating machinery for the settlement of the terms and conditions of employment in the industries. I do not think that I want to comment upon that.



5 FEB 1959

#### ANTARCTICA

45. **Mr. Biggs-Davison** asked the Prime Minister what further consultations he has had with President Eisenhower about the latter's proposal for a treaty on the legal status of Antarctic territories.

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Harold Macmillan)**: Consultations about President Eisenhower's proposal concerning Antarctica have been taking place through normal diplomatic channels. The proposal did not envisage any provision relating to the legal status of Antarctic territories, except that this should remain unchanged for the duration of the treaty.

#### EURATOM

46. **Mr. Mason** asked the Prime Minister if he will now make a statement about the recently concluded negotiations on the United Kingdom-Euratom Agreement; why it has been so long delayed; and to what extent this will enable British manufacturers of atomic power stations to compete fairly with the Americans in the Euratom market.

**The Prime Minister**: The Agreement was signed yesterday and the text was published as a White Paper. Having regard to the nature of the questions

involved, I do not think that the negotiations were unduly prolonged.

The prospects for sales of British reactors in the Euratom market will depend on commercial considerations. The established achievements of the Calder Hall prototypes, and the developments incorporated in the later commercial designs now available for export, should give British manufacturers a good prospect of success in Euratom countries.

**Mr. Mason**: Does not the Prime Minister realise that the Americans have already made great inroads into Euratom, in that they have poured in millions of dollars and have also imported into Euratom subsidised nuclear fuels? Is not the complacent and rather miserable attitude of the Government towards our own atomic energy industry strangling it at birth? What are the prospects within this agreement of a Ministerial Committee emerging whereby we can go from this form of co-operation to a closer association with Euratom?

**The Prime Minister**: In answer to the first part of the hon. Member's supplementary question, of course the position of the Americans is quite different from ours. Owing to the low cost of generating electricity in the United States from their natural resources, they are, of course, not so advanced in this matter as we are. In answer to the last part of the supplementary question, I have made it clear in my discussions, as has my right hon. Friend, that while the first stage is to consider this matter further, I am hopeful that some Ministerial investigation can be made. On the other hand, we have to consult our colleagues in the rest of the O.E.E.C. countries, and that is why we did not make a statement yesterday.

**Mr. Robens**: Whilst it may very well be true that we are much further forward in this sphere than the Americans, is the Prime Minister aware that not only are the Americans making great inroads, but they have, in fact, secured far more contracts for atomic power stations on the Continent of Europe than we have and that we are unlikely to secure more because the Americans are able to give the first year's fuel free of charge? Does the right hon. Gentleman regard that as fair competition, and are we able to stand up to that sort of thing?



10 FEB 1959

### THE PRIME MINISTER AND MR. DULLES (DISCUSSIONS)

43. Mr. Lewis asked the Prime Minister whether he will make a statement on his recent official discussions with Mr. Dulles; to what extent these discussions included matters pertaining to his pending visit to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and whether, in view of these talks, he will now announce the date of his departure to Moscow.

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Harold Macmillan):** The discussions with Mr. Dulles covered a wide range of subjects including my forthcoming visit to Moscow, the date of which I announced on 5th February.

**Mr. Lewis:** We express our regret at the illness of Mr. Foster Dulles. May we have an assurance from the Prime Minister that he in no way associated himself with the statement alleged to have been made that, before negotiations commence, threats of war are being used regarding Berlin? Does not the right hon. Gentleman feel it would be better if we were to say that before any question of war is discussed we should get together and try to reach some understanding?

**The Prime Minister:** I am sure the whole House will join in wishing Mr. Dulles a speedy recovery from his illness. The Government stands upon the declaration made on behalf of the N.A.T.O. Powers regarding the matter of Berlin.



Governor, as I understand it, and the assumption is that the rulers will co-operate, it does not mean that they have been approached? May I ask specifically whether or not any approach about this town has been made to the native rulers and whether they are co-operating in the project?

**Mr. Amery:** I do not think the hon. Member can have heard my reply. I said that the initiative in this lies with the Federal Government, and the Federal rulers can rely on the help of the Governor. The initiative is theirs and not ours.

### GAMBIA

#### Economic Expansion

38. **Mr. Sorensen** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies how much public and private capital has been lost in Gambia since 1945 arising from abortive public and private economic enterprise; what further examination will take place into the best means of ensuring economic expansion in the Colony; and to what extent traditional and indigenous economic activities have expanded with the growth of population.

**Mr. J. Amery:** The main loss in the public sector was due to the failure some years ago of the Colonial Development Corporation's poultry and rice development schemes. It was about £1.3 million. I have no information regarding losses by private enterprise. The policy of the Gambia Government is to concentrate on improving communications and agriculture.

On the last part of the Question all indications are that national production has kept pace with the growth of population.

**Mr. Sorensen:** Is not it true that private enterprise has lost quite as much as the Corporation did some years ago, and may we at least have an assurance that the Government are paying attention to the needs of this small Colony and that, whatever failures there may have been in the past, they will not deter the Government from making new efforts on a sounder economic basis in the future.

**Mr. Amery:** With regard to the first part of the hon. Gentleman's supplement-

ary question, I have no statistical information on the losses sustained by private enterprise, but I entirely agree with the hon. Gentleman that we very much wish to see economic development in the Gambia.

### SOMALILAND

#### Constitution

43. **Mr. Brockway** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies what reply has been given to the official representations made by the Somali National Front, the National United Front of British Somaliland and the Somali Youth League for constitutional changes, particularly in relation to the attainment of independence by Somalia in 1960.

**Mr. J. Amery:** The reply is embodied in the statement made by my right hon. Friend at Hargeisa on 9th February, the text of which was given in my reply to the hon. Member for Essex, South-East (Mr. Braine) on that day.

**Mr. Brockway:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, while we welcome the fact that within three months of the last constitutional changes new constitutional changes have been announced in Somaliland, we would ask whether he is satisfied that even now the changes will go far enough to meet the demands of the people of Somaliland for self-government and for union with their fellow-countrymen across the Italian and French borders?

**Mr. Amery:** My right hon. Friend would not have legislated as he did if he had not been so satisfied.

### NORTH-EASTERN AREA (INDUSTRIAL BUILDING)

45. **Mr. Short** asked the Prime Minister how many new factories are likely to be established in the North-East as a result of Government plans made in the light of evidence submitted to him during his recent visit to the area.

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Harold Macmillan):** My visit was not intended to make specific proposals but to inform myself. I should add that twenty-nine extensions to Government factories in the North-East Development Area have been authorised in the last few weeks and are



Another case is still under consideration. There is also a considerable amount of privately-financed industrial building going on, and further work is expected to start soon.

**Mr. Short :** Is the Prime Minister aware that there has been a considerable deterioration of the situation since he visited the North-East? Is he aware that in the four towns he visited, Newcastle has 2,600 unemployed, Middlesbrough more than 3,000, Sunderland 2,200 and even Stockton, his old Parliamentary seat, 1,500? Further, is he aware that there are 50,000 people unemployed in the North-East now and that this is a matter of some importance? Is he aware that 4.3 per cent. of our men are unemployed, and does not he feel that these steps that the Government have taken to meet the situation are totally inadequate? Why does not the Prime Minister use the information he got when he was in the North-East to take action to alleviate the situation?

**The Prime Minister :** In addition to the twenty-nine extensions to which I have referred and which will provide work for 2,700 people, 74 privately-financed industrial buildings, totalling 4.7 million sq. ft., are under construction, which will create approximately 1,800 additional jobs. In addition, two large schemes, the South Durham scheme and the Vickers-Armstrongs (Shipbuilders) Ltd. scheme, are under construction, with about 3,000 jobs likely. Also, 53 private schemes, to employ an additional 2,000, have been given location approval but construction has not yet started.

**Mr. P. Williams :** Does not my right hon. Friend agree that the most important thing both for the North-East and the whole country is that international trade should recover to the extent that basic major industries can recover, and therefore that the first priority should be existing industries rather than the encouragement of new industries?

**The Prime Minister :** That is why we are doing all we can, both by international methods and the extension of our export credits, to improve international trade.

**Mr. Shinwell :** While we on this side of the House and everybody concerned welcome any steps taken by the Government

to alleviate the position, does not the Prime Minister understand that what has already been suggested touches only the fringe of the problem and that a great deal could be done by the provision of finance for constructing hospitals and schools and reconstructing the roadways in the North-East? Could not something more be done in that direction in order to mitigate the harsh evils of unemployment?

**The Prime Minister :** Since about July last year continual increases have been made in the public sector of expenditure. When we come to discuss what is proposed for public expenditure for next year, the right hon. Gentleman should be satisfied that that, too, will have very substantial increases.

#### THE PRIME MINISTER (VISIT TO SOVIET UNION)

46. **Mr. Zilliacus** asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the difficulties with the Common Market Plan and the need for expanding trade, he will, in Moscow, explore the possibility of reaching agreement for economic co-operation in Europe on the basis of the proposals first made by the Soviet Government to the Economic Committee for Europe of the United Nations in April, 1956, and repeated in 1957.

**The Prime Minister :** The main purpose of the visit is to have an exploratory exchange of views on world problems. The talks will be confidential and I am not prepared to disclose in advance what particular points will be raised by Her Majesty's Government.

**Mr. Zilliacus :** While we quite understand the point made by the Prime Minister, may I ask whether he will bear in mind the importance of all-European economic co-operation in connection with the expanding of trade, in the present situation? In that connection, may I inquire whether something can be done on the basis of these proposals, which were favourably received by the Economic Commission for Europe?

**The Prime Minister :** I will certainly bear in mind any contribution to this problem, including contributions made by the hon. Gentleman.



47. **Mr. Zilliacus** asked the Prime Minister whether he will indicate the recent developments, international or other, that induced him to take the initiative, now, to signify his acceptance of the standing Soviet invitation, first tendered to and accepted by his predecessor in April, 1956.

**The Prime Minister:** I made a full statement to the House on 5th February, and I do not think that any further clarification is required.

**Mr. Zilliacus:** Is the Prime Minister aware that there is a very widespread impression that there is a connection between the term of office of the Government and the date of his acceptance of the invitation for this visit? Will he give more specific reasons why he is going now?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Gentleman should not necessarily apply to other people his own standards of conduct.

48. **Mr. S. Silverman** asked the Prime Minister whether, on the occasion of his visit to Moscow, he will consider with Mr. Khrushchev the possibility of a solution of the German problem along lines similar to those of the Austrian Peace Treaty.

49. **Mr. Rankin** asked the Prime Minister whether, in his conversations at Moscow he will explore the possibility of uniting Germany by other means than by free elections.

50. **Mr. Swingler** asked the Prime Minister if, in his conversations in Moscow, he will discuss with Mr. Khrushchev the possibility of negotiating a German Peace Treaty on the lines of the Austrian Peace Treaty.

**The Prime Minister:** I would refer the hon. Gentlemen to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mr. Swingler) on Tuesday last.

**Mr. Silverman:** Does not the Prime Minister agree that in the case of Austria the withdrawal of all foreign troops and the Treaty by which Austria undertook not to form part of any military alliance on either side has greatly profited Austrian independence and prosperity as well as the cause of peace in Europe? Is there any real reason why the principles applied to Austria so successfully should not be

applied to the much bigger and more serious problem of Germany?

**The Prime Minister:** I understand the point the hon. Member is making, but I would remind him that in Austria there were free elections.

**Mr. Rankin:** Is the Prime Minister aware that, since he gave the two replies to which he has referred, in *The Times* of today there is a statement which says that Dr. Adenauer is now thinking in terms of a *de facto* recognition of Eastern Germany in return, of course, for concessions? In view of that statement, would the Prime Minister consider discussing with Mr. Khrushchev the possibility of creating a body which could speak for both parts of Germany on external affairs and, later on, would he also think of discussing that with Dr. Adenauer when he goes to Western Germany?

**The Prime Minister:** That, of course, is an entirely different question from the one on the Paper.

**Mr. Swingler:** Would the Prime Minister agree that there is no purpose in his visit to Moscow unless it be to discuss with Mr. Khrushchev proposals which have some chance of acceptance on both sides—in the West and in the East—and that the proposal which has most chance of acceptance is some form of disengagement plan which involves the exclusion of at any rate a large part of Central Europe from the rival military blocs?

**The Prime Minister:** That again is a different question from those I am answering, but I can understand that if discussions are to be fruitful all kinds of points of view must be put forward and, as the hon. Member says, we must try to reach something which will be satisfactory to both sides.

**Mr. J. Hynd:** Will the Prime Minister make clear, in view of the supplementary question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. S. Silverman), that the Austrian solution involved Austria remaining outside military alliances entirely, by the free decision of Austria itself? Would he agree that that would be a suitable principle to apply in this case?

**The Prime Minister:** I think the hon. Member was quoting some words I used when I said that I do not see how a



country could be free unless it was free to make its own foreign policy. These are very difficult matters. We must try to treat them objectively and I do not want to get tied down to this or that point of view; nor especially, if I may say so, do I want to get into the rivalry of the various Motions on the Order Paper from both sides of the Opposition.

51. **Mr. Grimond** asked the Prime Minister if, during his visit to Russia and any subsequent visits to other countries, he will discuss the limitation of the number of countries making and testing nuclear bombs.

**The Prime Minister:** I have already told the House that I should prefer not to indicate beforehand which specific subjects we would wish to discuss in Moscow.

**Mr. Grimond:** While appreciating that, may I ask if the Prime Minister would agree that, while it may be necessary for the West as a whole to keep the nuclear deterrent until there is a disarmament agreement, it is very alarming if increasing numbers of countries on both sides of the world are to arm themselves with these bombs, which is quite unnecessary to preserve the present balance?

**The Prime Minister:** I think the most urgent question is to see whether we can reach a satisfactory conclusion of the Geneva Conference.

52. **Mr. Harold Davies** asked the Prime Minister what further consultations he had with President Eisenhower, as a preliminary to his proposed Moscow visit, on the question of disengagement in Central Europe.

**The Prime Minister:** As I have frequently told the House, such consultations as I have with President Eisenhower are private and confidential.

**Mr. Davies:** Does the Prime Minister agree that millions of people in Britain would like to see a British Government, whichever party were in power, speaking for Britain and not always having to consult on its policy before its representatives undertake a very important diplomatic trip? That is true of American people. Millions of Americans would like to see a British Government taking a lead different from that taken by some members of the State Department.

**The Prime Minister:** If the hon. Member recalls the statement I made about ten days ago, he will know that I made it clear that my initiative to visit Russia was taken on my own responsibility and I informed our Allies of it.

#### BRITISH TRADE FAIR, LISBON

53. **Sir L. Plummer** asked the Prime Minister what plans he has for visiting the British Trade Fair to be held in Lisbon next May.

**The Prime Minister:** None, Sir. But my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade has accepted an invitation to be present at the opening.

**Sir L. Plummer:** Is the Prime Minister aware that his Answer will give considerable satisfaction to a number of people in this country who share his detestation of totalitarian government and that they will be happy that on this occasion he is not to grace Portugal with his presence? Has he any fear that if he did go to Portugal he, like another right hon. Member of this House, would be declared *persona non grata*?

**The Prime Minister:** I think it very important that we should have this fair. Our relations with Portugal are very good. Our exports to Portugal in 1958 totalled £22½ million. I should like to congratulate the Federation of British Industries on its initiative in making arrangements for this fair.

**Mr. Bevan:** Would not the right hon. Gentleman agree that it would be most unfortunate if our participation in the fair indicated any respect or admiration by us for constitutional behaviour in Portugal?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not understand that point of view. Portugal is our oldest Ally. It is a member of N.A.T.O., by an arrangement made by the Foreign Secretary in a previous Government. Apart from that, we are always being urged to try to increase trade without regard to ideological differences.

**Mr. Bevan:** Does the right hon. Gentleman regard Portugal as a bulwark of the free world?



**The Prime Minister :** I think the right hon. Member is not facing the issue I put to him. We are having a perpetual demand to increase trade. Trade is one thing and ideological points of view may be another.

**Mr. McAdden :** Would my right hon. Friend explain why it is thought right not to go to a totalitarian Government such as Portugal, whereas it is thought thoroughly right and praiseworthy to go to a totalitarian Government in Soviet Russia?

**The Prime Minister :** It was that logical dilemma which my hon. Friend has made clear that I was trying to hint at.

**Mr. Shinwell :** Might not it be that after the Prime Minister has visited totalitarian Russia he might be inclined to change his mind about visiting totalitarian Portugal?

**The Prime Minister :** I should very much like to go to Portugal. My only trouble is that I am not sure whether I shall have the time to do so in May.

**Mr. Shinwell :** May we now take it as quite firm that the General Election will take place in the month of May?

**The Prime Minister :** I think it is more likely that we shall be engaged during the month of May—at least I hope so—in very important negotiations in regard to Europe.

## COLONIAL TERRITORIES

### Gambia and British Cameroons

54. **Mr. John Hall** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies to what extent it is now Government policy that the Gambia and the British Cameroons should be absorbed into adjacent French territories; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. J. Amery :** We have no such policy as regards the Gambia, though we would naturally welcome closer co-operation in cultural and economic matters with the neighbouring French Territory.

As regards the Cameroons I would invite my hon. Friend's attention to the reply which I gave yesterday to the hon. Member for Eton and Slough (Mr. Brockway).

**Mr. Hall :** Is my hon. Friend aware that I found it a little difficult to hear what he said? Will he assure the House that should there be any intention to change the present status of either the Gambia or the British Cameroons by their association with any other Territories, the populations of those Territories will have an opportunity to express their own views about it?

**Mr. Amery :** Yes, indeed.

## CYPRUS

**Mr. Bevan** (by Private Notice) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any statement to make about his negotiations with the representatives of the Greek and Turkish Governments regarding the future of Cyprus.

**The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs** (Mr. Selwyn Lloyd) : I had a long meeting last night with the Foreign Ministers of Greece and Turkey to discuss the future of Cyprus.

As the House knows, discussions have been going on for some time between the Greek and Turkish Governments about this matter. The discussions began informally in New York after the last United Nations debate on Cyprus. I was informed, during the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation meeting in Paris, last December, by Mr. Averoff and Mr. Zorlu of the wish of their two Governments to continue those discussions. I was told by them of the basis upon which they would be continued, and we have been kept informed throughout of their progress. On 11th February agreement was reached between the two Governments in Zurich.

Her Majesty's Government have always maintained that the only hope for a final solution of the Cyprus problem lay in agreement between the Greek and Turkish Governments and the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. We therefore warmly welcome the fact that the Zurich agreement has been made.

The two Foreign Ministers came to London to tell me its precise terms. These are, of course, in addition to matters affecting the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, vital British interests in this island, responsibility for which rests with



**Mr. Amory:** As to the first part of the hon. Friend's observations, apart from his other distinctions, his name will be honourably linked with dustbins. As to the second part of the question, I am sorry that I must not anticipate my next statement.

**Mr. Hector Hughes** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the total amount collected for Purchase Tax on gramophone records.

**Mr. Amory:** Just under £6 million in the financial year 1957-58.

**Mr. Hughes:** In view of the great educational value of many gramophone records, would the right hon. Gentleman consider reducing or abolishing the tax on educational records and put these records in the same category as books?

**Mr. Amory:** I am giving very careful consideration, of course, to all aspects of these difficult problems.

#### Post-war Credits

**Mr. Gower** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the approximate cost of reducing the ages for the payment of post-war credits by 10, 15, and 20 years, respectively.

**Mr. Amory:** About £176 million, £258 million and £330 million.

#### BAGDAD PACT

**Mr. Rankin** asked the Prime Minister to what extent the declaration by the Minister of Defence at the Bagdad Pact and Ministerial Council, to the effect that Great Britain remained pledged to hold all the military obligations of the Bagdad Pact, including those directed to the defence of the territories of the Bagdad Pact countries against subversion, represents the policy of Her Majesty's Government.

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Harold Macmillan):** I have nothing to add to my reply I gave to the hon. Member for Northfield (Mr. Warbey) and the hon. Member for Leek (Mr. Harold Davies), on 5th February.

**Mr. Rankin:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, in reply to a Question asked on 27th February, 1957, the Minister of Defence stated that defence against

aggression meant that British forces could interfere in a Bagdad Pact country where the ruler described any popular uprising as being due to Communist subversion? Does the Prime Minister remember that he himself proclaimed exactly the same doctrine to justify intervention in Jordan on 17th July last year? Do the replies to which he referred mean that the Government still reserve that right to interfere in the affairs of Turkey, Iraq and Pakistan at the request of the rulers of those countries?

**The Prime Minister:** In every case, of course, every consideration has to be given to the particular circumstances. The purpose of the Pact is to promote, so far as it is possible, a sense of stability and security.

**Mr. Gaitskell:** Does the Prime Minister still regard the Bagdad Pact as the basis of the Government's Middle East policy, as it was once said to be? Does he not feel, in view of developments in Iraq, that it would be wise to make plain that this Pact is now really a northern tier agreement directed only against the possible danger of aggression from the north?

**The Prime Minister:** I think it would be a very great mistake if we were to do anything at the present time to weaken the sense of confidence of the countries concerned, who are members, with us, of the Bagdad Pact.

**Mr. Gaitskell:** That does not answer my question. Until now, it has been Her Majesty's Government's policy to regard the Bagdad Pact as the basis of their policy in the whole of the Middle East. Would it not be advisable—if not this afternoon, on some early occasion—to make plain that the situation has changed and they now look upon the Bagdad Pact as more limited in its objectives?

**The Prime Minister:** Of course, the situation has changed; but it is one of the bases on which we must rely.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE (SCOTTISH BUSINESS)

**Mr. Rankin** asked the Prime Minister if he will move to extend the order of reference of the Select Committee on Procedure to enable it to



consider particularly the desirability of increasing the extent to which Scottish business is conducted in Scotland.

**The Prime Minister :** I am doubtful whether it would be appropriate for the Select Committee to consider such wide proposals as the hon. Gentleman has in mind.

**Mr. Rankin :** In the light of that Answer, and bearing in mind his former answer to me, will the Prime Minister appreciate that the Scottish Labour Party has given great consideration to this problem and believes that there is a solution which can be achieved without violating the economic integrity of the United Kingdom or involving Parliamentary separation? Will the right hon. Gentleman again consider the advisability of referring the matter to a Speaker's Conference, as the Scottish Labour Party has suggested?

**The Prime Minister :** There are various methods. There was the Royal Commission, which the hon. Gentleman at one time suggested, which met some four years ago. The results of its work were very helpful. There have been other changes since then as regards the Scottish Grand Committee. I think that it would, perhaps, be well to see the report of the Select Committee on Procedure before reaching any further judgment.

#### DEFENCE (NUCLEAR ATTACK)

47. **Mr. Swingler** asked the Prime Minister, in view of Her Majesty's Government's policy with regard to the evacuation of the civil population in the event of war and to the defence of bomber and rocket bases, what steps he is taking to co-ordinate the responsibilities of the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the Minister of Defence in these matters.

56. **Mr. Mikardo** asked the Prime Minister, since it is the Government's policy to defend only air and rocket bases on the ground that the country as a whole cannot be defended against nuclear attack, to what extent he has co-ordinated the policy and responsibilities of the Home Department and the Ministry of Defence in this matter.

**The Prime Minister :** The responsibilities of the Departments concerned with defence against a possible nuclear attack on this country are clearly defined and the policy is fully co-ordinated.

**Mr. Swingler :** How is it possible to reconcile these policies? Is it not a fact that the Home Secretary is engaged, in a very meagre way, in preparing Civil Defence against what is euphemistically called conventional air attack, while the Minister of Defence is engaged in threatening nuclear retaliation against any and every form of attack? How does the Prime Minister reconcile these policies?

**The Prime Minister :** There is nothing irreconcilable. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary carries out his part of the duties in close co-ordination with those of the Defence Minister.

#### THE PRIME MINISTER (VISIT TO SOVIET UNION)

48. **Mr. Zilliacus** asked the Prime Minister to what extent, in discussions during his proposed visit to Moscow, he is prepared to reconsider his policy on united Germany being free to enter the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, on the maintenance of the Bagdad Pact, on armed intervention against alleged subversion in any country at the request of its Government, and on the negotiation of political settlements before accepting any substantial measure of international disarmament.

**The Prime Minister :** I made a full statement to the House on 5th February, and I do not think that any further amplification would be helpful.

**Mr. Zilliacus :** Is it not a fact that the Soviet position on these matters is very well known and, whereas the Soviet Government would reach agreement on the basis of the proposals for disengagement and for co-operation in the Middle East advocated by the Opposition, there is no hope of agreement unless the basic positions of the Government are modified? Is the Prime Minister prepared to use them as bargaining counters when he goes to Moscow?

**The Prime Minister :** The hon. Gentleman says that he speaks—I do not know.



on what authority—for the Soviet Government. I propose, if I am able to do so, to speak to the Soviet Government.

52. **Mr. Lewis** asked the Prime Minister whether, during his forthcoming discussions with Mr. Khrushchev, he will seek an assurance that, in any proposed talks or agreement concerning Germany leading to an eventual peace treaty, such treaty will contain adequate clauses to secure the removal of any known Nazi judge or general from office, in either East or West Germany, in accordance with the Potsdam Agreement, and a joint commission to investigate the charges and allegations that there are now in office in West Germany 596 jurists who served in Hitler's Special Courts.

**The Prime Minister** : I cannot anticipate what matters may be raised at these discussions.

**Mr. Lewis** : Without asking the Prime Minister to anticipate, may we ask whether or not he agrees that it would be a good thing if these former Nazis, who are alleged to be in both East and West Germany, were removed from these State positions and quasi-State positions? Will the right hon. Gentleman bear that in mind if he has the opportunity of raising this question?

**The Prime Minister** : Yes, Sir. But that is not the point raised in the Question. The responsibility for judicial appointments in the Federal Republic is, of course, a matter for the German authorities. That has been the position since 1949, but Her Majesty's Government retain an interest in this matter and it is one about which I feel sure the Federal Government recognise their responsibilities.

55. **Mr. Hector Hughes** asked the Prime Minister if he will specify the topics he intends to discuss with the Ministers of the Russian Government during his forthcoming visit to Russia.

**The Prime Minister** : I am not prepared to disclose in advance what particular topics will be raised by Her Majesty's Government during these talks.

**Mr. Hughes** : Is the Prime Minister aware—and, of course, he is—of the close inter-relation between culture, trade, industry and international relations? Will he, therefore, seek to encourage

greater intercourse between Russia and the West in these matters?

**The Prime Minister** : I am aware, of course, of the importance of this question.

**Mr. Woodburn** : Is the Prime Minister responsible in any way for the suggestion that he will bring back £1,200 million worth of orders from Russia?

**The Prime Minister** : No, Sir. I think the right hon. Gentleman must have been reading the newspapers.

#### ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY (STAFF)

49 and 50. **Mr. Albu** asked the Prime Minister (1) how many heads of divisions, or scientists at similar level, have left Harwell during each of the last two years ;

(2) what has been the increase in numbers of senior scientific and technical staff and senior administrative staff, respectively, at Harwell over the last two years.

**The Prime Minister** : These are matters of day-to-day management of the Atomic Energy Authority in which I do not regard it as my duty to intervene.

**Mr. Albu** : Is the right hon. Gentleman not aware that there have been very serious losses of senior scientific staff at Harwell recently which are causing very great concern? Further, is he aware that it is said that these losses are due to the fact that the establishment is now dominated by the accountancy and administrative staff, the scientists no longer being able to get on with the job of research?

**The Prime Minister** : No, Sir. There are, of course difficulties, and there are movements, some of which have value, between industry and the universities. But there certainly has been a very great advance under the present arrangements for the management of atomic affairs by the independent authority.

#### PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (SELECTION OF CANDIDATES)

51. **Mr. C. Pannell** asked the Prime Minister whether he is aware of the recent application in this country of novel procedures for the selection of candidates for Parliamentary elections ; and if he will



cause a Speaker's Conference to be called to consider the implications of such procedures.

**The Prime Minister :** No, Sir.

**Mr. Pannell :** Does the Prime Minister understand that I am referring to the advent of primary elections in Bournemouth, East and Christchurch, under rules, of course, which would disfranchise the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford (Sir W. Churchill) if he were a constituent there? Does the Prime Minister not think that this sort of thing, taken in conjunction with what has happened in Belfast, North, has imported into British public life a feature which really demands more than superficial examination?

**The Prime Minister :** No, Sir. I think that the constitutional position is quite clear. Anybody can become a candidate for Parliament provided that he fulfils the necessary conditions laid down by law. I think that the House as a whole would agree that those criteria are not very exacting.

#### FOREIGN SECRETARY (SPEECH)

53. **Mr. Zilliacus** asked the Prime Minister whether the speech by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, at Glasgow on 7th February, alleging that the recent Soviet proposals on Berlin contain a threat to Western communications with that city, represented the policy of the Government.

**The Prime Minister :** Yes, Sir. What my right hon. and learned Friend said was that the Soviet Note of 27th November contained a unilateral denunciation of what we considered to be their obligations with regard to our right of access to Berlin.

**Mr. Zilliacus :** Without justifying this unilateral action, may I ask whether it is not a fact that the Soviet Government have proposed to keep the communications open, merely replacing Soviet officials with East German officials? Could not the threat be overcome by merely treating these East German officials as Soviet agents?

**Hon. Members :** Why?

**The Prime Minister :** The Question asked whether I approve of and agree

with the speech which my right hon. and learned Friend made. I said that I did, and all the more so because the Soviet Note had unilaterally denounced what we regarded as being one of their obligations. That is a matter which has to be discussed and threshed out.

#### EMPLOYMENT

57. **Mr. Hamilton** asked the Prime Minister whether he will now pay an official visit to areas where the percentage rate of unemployment is six or more.

**The Prime Minister :** It would not be possible for me to pay such a visit in the near future. But Departmental Ministers are at present engaged on a series of visits to places with a serious unemployment problem and are reporting on the results of their investigations.

**Mr. Hamilton :** Is the Prime Minister aware that, while we fully realise that he would be fully occupied in visiting all such places, nevertheless if he had accepted this suggestion when I made it some months ago his job would have been very much lighter than it will be if he makes these visits now? Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake to go, if he has the opportunity, and explain to these people that they have never had it so good?

**The Prime Minister :** What we are trying to do, and what I think the whole House would like us to try to do, is to concentrate on trying to relieve these areas which have a special problem of their own.

**Mr. Gaitskell :** In view of the statement that Ministers will be reporting to the Prime Minister on their visits to these areas, can we expect a new statement on Government policy to bring work to this part of the country?

**The Prime Minister :** This matter is continuously before the House, and there are opportunities, if the right hon. Gentleman wishes to take them, to debate it as well as discuss it by question and answer.

#### NON-AGGRESSION PACT

58 and 59. **Mr. Harold Davies** asked the Prime Minister (1) if he now intends to follow up the suggestion that he has



REFERENCE  
OVERLEAF

made of a non-aggression pact with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ;

(2) if he is now prepared to make an agreement with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics guaranteeing that neither country would use the hydrogen bomb against the other.

**The Prime Minister :** I said before and I still feel that if a non-aggression pact can help to reduce tension, I am in favour of it. But I went on to say that it is deeds not words that matter.

**Mr. Davies :** I am grateful to the Prime Minister for the first part of his Answer, but on the second question, concerning the use of the hydrogen bomb one against the other, may I ask whether he does not think that the world would breathe a sigh of relief if we in Britain at least tried to make that kind of agreement with any other country in the world? Is the right hon. Gentleman not aware that men and women are tired of old men in uniform following stupid cold war policies?

**The Prime Minister :** I think that what the world wants is to try to create political conditions which will reduce the tension and the danger.

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Lord Privy Seal (Mr. R. A. Butler) :** I have a short statement to make on business.

Conversations have taken place through the usual channels and it is now considered that it would be more convenient for the debate on Foreign Affairs to take place on Thursday of this week rather than on Wednesday.

In consequence of this change, the business on Wednesday will be the completion of the Committee stage of the House Purchase and Housing Bill.

**Mr. Gaitskell :** We were glad to agree to this proposition so as to make it possible for Ministers to spend the whole time on Wednesday in trying to get a final settlement of the Cyprus problem. We hope that, in consequence, it will be possible for both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary to take part in the debate on Thursday.

**Mr. Butler :** I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for the manner in which Her Majesty's Opposition accepted this suggestion, which I think will fit in with the national interest.

### MARLBOROUGH HOUSE

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Harold Macmillan) :** With permission, Mr. Speaker, I will now make a statement about the offer made by the United Kingdom Government at the Montreal Conference, in September, to provide a house for Commonwealth meetings held in London. As the House will remember, this suggestion was welcomed by the Conference.

Her Majesty the Queen, who has shown a close personal interest in this project, has graciously offered to place her Palace of Marlborough House at the disposal of the United Kingdom Government so that it may be available for this purpose. I have expressed to Her Majesty our deep sense of obligation and gratitude and I have received messages from the Prime Ministers of other Commonwealth Governments welcoming this generous offer.

It is a generous and imaginative gesture on the Queen's part to make a royal palace available for this Commonwealth purpose. While it is so used, the Royal Family will no longer have at their disposal a house which has traditionally been the house either of the Queen Mother or the heir to the Throne. I feel confident that if, when the time comes, no other suitable residence is in the disposition of the Crown, a future Parliament will think it right to make appropriate provision for the Prince of Wales to have a home of his own.

The accommodation at Marlborough House will be both ample and suitable for Commonwealth meetings in London. Its main purpose will be to serve as a meeting place for Commonwealth Prime Ministers whenever they assemble in London. It can also accommodate other Commonwealth conferences, the meetings on economic matters which it was agreed at Montreal to co-ordinate under the name of the Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council, and meetings of the Commonwealth Economic Committee and other similar bodies.

The staff of the Commonwealth Economic Committee can be housed there and



told that the local education authority is at the moment revising its earlier plans for the third. If the hon. Member has any particular project to which he wishes to draw my attention, I should, of course, be glad to hear from him.

#### Agriculture (Further Education)

44. **Mr. Wilkins** asked the Minister of Education whether he has now considered the Report of the Committee on Further Education for Agriculture provided by local authorities; and if he will now make a statement.

**Sir E. Boyle:** My right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, on behalf of both our Departments, has sought the views of the interested organisations on the proposals contained in the Report. My right hon. Friend will not be in a position to make a statement until these views have been received and considered.

**Mr. Wilkins:** While thanking the hon. Gentleman for that reply, and appreciating that not much time has elapsed since the Report was presented, may I ask whether, to allay the fears in the minds of certain interested people, he can give an assurance that this matter has not been shelved?

**Sir E. Boyle:** No, Sir, it has not. The difficulty is that only a few of the interested organisations have submitted their views so far, but we certainly recognise that this is important.

#### Teachers (Superannuation Regulations)

53. **Dr. King** asked the Minister of Education if he will amend the pensions regulations so as to offer a superannuated teacher who, in the present emergency, goes back to teaching greater financial inducements than at present obtain.

**Sir E. Boyle:** No, Sir. It is a principle of public service superannuation schemes generally that the income of a pensioner re-employed in his previous employment should not be greater than the salary he was receiving on retirement. It would not be right to treat teachers differently.

**Dr. King:** Will the Minister give serious consideration to the representations already made to him by one education authority that there are old teachers who

are willing to do part-time work in the present critical shortage of teachers, but that the amount of work they can do is limited by the factor he has just mentioned?

**Sir E. Boyle:** Yes, Sir. The trouble there is that the change suggested could mean that teachers would do less teaching service after 60 years of age than they do now. I will write to the hon. Gentleman explaining the difficulties that arise here.

**Mr. M. Stewart:** Would the Minister agree, however, that the shortage of teachers is our biggest single problem in education at present and that he ought, therefore, to look at this with a fresh mind?

**Sir E. Boyle:** I think we should look at every question bearing on the shortage of teachers with as fresh a mind as possible, and we devoted some time to this point in the recent debate.

#### CYPRUS

46. **Mr. Patrick Maitland** asked the Prime Minister whether he will make a statement about Cyprus.

48. **Brigadier Clarke** asked the Prime Minister why it has been decided to negotiate with Archbishop Makarios, whereas in the past it has been clearly stated that no negotiations with him would be opened until he denounced violence.

**Mr. R. A. Butler:** I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend hopes to intervene in the debate this evening and to deal then with the position on Cyprus.

**Mr. Maitland:** While thanking my right hon. Friend for that reply, may I ask Mr. Speaker, whether I shall have an opportunity of a supplementary question this evening?

**Mr. Butler:** The answer rather depends on you, Mr. Speaker.

**Brigadier Clarke:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that many people in this country regard Archbishop Makarios as a murderer and wonder why British Ministers negotiate with him? Does my right hon. Friend realise that Archbishop



541  
 Mr. ... is a British subject, who should be taken back to Cyprus, tried and, if found guilty, shot?

**Mr. Butler:** These are questions of opinion, but I think that my hon. and gallant Friend, in his supplementary question, should refer back to the statements made by my right hon. Friend the Colonial Secretary on 28th March, 1957, and by the Prime Minister on 19th June, 1958, in which he will see exact statements made in relation to the future and position of the Archbishop.

**Mr. Gaitskell:** Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the Prime Minister is likely to be able to make this statement?

**Mr. Butler:** I left it open because I thought that if it were possible to make a statement early in the debate the Prime Minister would come in at some hour about 7 p.m., but if we are not ready to do so, as the conference is now proceeding, it would be later. What my right hon. Friend wishes to do is to intervene on the subject during the debate and give the House the latest information.

#### GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

47. **Dame Irene Ward** asked the Prime Minister whether he is aware, that in spite of the need to increase production and reduce costs, the action, examples of which have been sent to him by the hon. Member for Tynemouth, of Government Departments such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Fuel and Power, the Board of Trade, and the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, nullifies individual efforts; and if he will call an inter-departmental conference of the Departments concerned with a view to eliminating these delays.

**Mr. R. A. Butler:** I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has brought to the notice of the appropriate Ministers the matters raised by my hon. Friend. I do not think that an inter-departmental conference on matters so diverse would really help.

**Dame Irene Ward:** While thanking my right hon. Friend for that Answer, may I ask whether he agrees that the general public are getting frightfully bored about constantly being encouraged to greater

productive efforts when it is impossible to make appointments with the nationalised industries—gas, electricity or any of the others—when there are less and less buses, slower and slower trains, and when all their efforts to comply with the requests made, quite rightly, by the Government are vitiated? Will my right hon. Friend try to ensure that things are improved?

**Mr. Butler:** There are two main parts of my hon. Friend's Question. One relates to Government Departments, in respect of which inquiries have already been put into effect as regards waiting lists at hospitals, outpatients and other difficulties. Certain of my hon. Friend's complaints were directed to the General Post Office. The questions about telephones and the opening hours of post offices have already been taken up. In regard to the nationalised industries, some of the things to which my hon. Friend has referred are day-to-day matters of administration by the industries concerned, so it would be as well if she could take them up with those industries. For the rest, I can assure my hon. Friend that I have read all the correspondence and that the Prime Minister wishes the matters to be energetically pursued on my hon. Friend's representations.

#### CIVIL DEFENCE (POLICY)

50. **Mr. S. Silverman** asked the Prime Minister what steps he has taken to co-ordinate the civil defence policies of the Home Department with those of the Ministry of Defence, so as to obviate the selection, as evacuation areas, of counties containing bomber and rocket sites.

49. **Mr. Baird** asked the Prime Minister what steps he has taken to correlate the civil defence policy of the Home Department with that of the Ministry of Defence, in view of the latter's policy of concentrating active defence measures on air and rocket bases.

**Mr. R. A. Butler:** I have been asked to reply.

I would refer the hon. Members to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mr. Swingle) and the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Mikardo) on Tuesday last.



**Mr. Silverman:** I have read that Answer, but has the attention of the right hon. Gentleman been called to the reply given to me by the Minister of Defence on 11th February? I will quote one sentence only from it—

“Therefore we could not honestly say to the people of this country that in the present state of scientific knowledge there is any effective means of defending the country as a whole.”—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 11th February, 1959; Vol. 599, c. 1174.]

Does this mean, therefore, that it is the policy of both Departments to transfer as many of the civil population of this country as they can to the immediate neighbourhood of the sites, which must necessarily be the prime object of the enemy's attack?

**Mr. Butler:** No, Sir. There was a Question down to me by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North-East (Mr. Baird) which I was going to answer verbally but which will be published in the OFFICIAL REPORT. In that Answer I shall state that a re-examination of the question of evacuation is taking place with the local authorities. That would be some consolation to the hon. Gentleman if he thought we were going to adopt a policy such as he suggested, because such consultation would undoubtedly result in a more commonsense solution than that which he suggests.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONERS

51. **Dr. King** asked the Prime Minister what reply he has given to the Public Service Pensioners Council to its request for improvements in the pensions of public service pensioners.

**Mr. R. A. Butler:** I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has had no recent representations from the Public Service Pensioners Council. I understand, however, that it has made an approach to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and that arrangements are being made for my hon. and learned Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury to receive a deputation.

**Dr. King:** While thanking the right hon. Gentleman for that sympathetic

reply, may I ask him if he is aware that there are pensioners in the country who are too old to qualify for full National Insurance benefits and that old superannuated public servants today draw superannuation which is fantastically different from that earned by people in the same occupation who are much younger? Will he, therefore, give sympathetic consideration to the representations made by the Public Service Pensioners Council?

**Mr. Butler:** Yes, Sir, and I hope that the Council will bring out points such as this when it meets my hon. and learned Friend.

**Sir G. Nicholson:** Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind that there is already accord amongst all Members of this House that there should be some measure of justice for these elderly people, and that this would be the barest justice, because the pensions they are drawing now have very much smaller purchasing power than they had at the time when they were originally planned?

**Mr. Butler:** Yes, Sir. That is why my hon. and learned Friend is to receive a deputation.

#### TRADE AND COMMERCE

##### Dutch Bulbs

60. **Captain Orr** asked the President of the Board of Trade to what extent it is possible, under the present regulations, for the import quota on Dutch bulbs to be avoided by the device of importing them by way of the Irish Republic.

**The President of the Board of Trade (Sir David Eccles):** The present regulations do not permit imports of Dutch bulbs in excess of the quota, and I have no evidence that these regulations are being evaded by shipment via the Irish Republic.

##### Fish (Exports)

61. **Mr. Hector Hughes** asked the President of the Board of Trade if he will specify the weight, value and kind of fish landed in British ports which were exported to Commonwealth and foreign countries, respectively, during each of the last ten years, indicating from which parts of Great Britain they were exported.



QUESTIONS TO THE PRIME MINISTER

20. Since 1959 Prime Minister's Questions have been taken from 3.15 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, in place of the previous arrangements whereby they began at No. 40 and, before that, at No. 45. A consequence of this development is that more time is devoted to Questions to the Prime Minister than to any other Minister, and it may be that the establishment of Prime Minister's Questions as a set occasion on two days a week has contributed to the undoubted increase in the desire of Members to address Questions to him.\* Questions tabled for answer by him relate not only to the Prime Minister's own actions and direct responsibilities in his co-ordinating function as head of the Government, but also to Departmental matters which Members consider to be so important that they should be answered by the Prime Minister. It has been the practice of Prime Ministers to transfer these Departmental Questions to the appropriate Ministers for answer by them.

NB, this change was not in fact implemented until 1961.

PW  
6/11

21. The response of some Members to the transfer of Questions which they wish to put to the Prime Minister has been to devise Questions of a kind that cannot easily be transferred, and then to seek to make their point in a supplementary Question. An example of such a device is a Question asking the Prime Minister if he will make an official visit to a particular town. If the visit asked for were, for example, to a military establishment or to a hospital, it would invite transfer. By being deliberately vague a Question provides no evidence of an appropriate Minister to whom it can be transferred and, by the same token, no indication of the supplementary Question with which the Prime Minister will be asked to deal. The Question is sufficiently meaningless to allow the Member to ask any supplementary Question he considers to be topical on the day it is reached. Your Committee believe that there is a general feeling in the House that such a situation is unsatisfactory.

22. The principal cause of discontent amongst Members appears to be the contrast between the difficulty in tabling a straightforward Question to the Prime Minister which will not be transferred, and the ease with which almost any proposition can be put to him in the form of a supplementary Question. The desire of some Members, however, that any Question they address to the Prime Minister should be answered by him is not one that Your Committee consider can reasonably be met.

23. Your Committee have considered what other remedies might be possible. The Principal Clerk of the Table Office drew attention (Ev., p. 56) to the practice in the Canadian House of Commons whereby Questions may be put without notice, and an extempore exchange takes place between Members and Ministers on such issues as are considered important by the Members called. While such a procedure cures the difficulty of the orderliness of the Question on the Paper by removing the need to have one at all, Your Committee consider that it would not be likely to improve the effectiveness or Parliamentary control of the executive. For the House to make the best use of its opportunity to question the Prime Minister of the day it must give him the chance to provide considered and properly-researched answers to its questioning. Supplementary Questions already provide an occasion

\* See, e.g., H.C. Deb. (1970-71) 810, c. 805.



for a battle of wits, which the House enjoys. To introduce a wholly extempore Question period would be to surrender to the tendency to trivialise Prime Minister's Question time, which Your Committee deplore. Furthermore, they believe that such a system would place an unfair burden on Mr. Speaker in selecting who should be called to ask Questions.

24. To the extent that "vague" Questions displace Questions genuinely concerned with the Prime Minister's responsibilities, it might be considered that an appropriate way of reducing the discrepancy between the original Question and the supplementary would be by a stricter application of the rules of relevance. For reasons adduced by the Principal Clerk of the Table Office (Ev., p. 55), and for the same reason that supplementary Questions frequently do go wider than the answers theoretically permit—that is to say that a supplementary Question cannot be ruled out of order until it has been asked, and that to refuse a Minister a reply would not normally be reasonable—Your Committee do not believe that the Chair should be asked to apply different standards to supplementary Questions to the Prime Minister than are applied to other supplementary Questions. A small change which might assist the House and the Prime Minister in supplementary Questions would be for Members asking about a Minister's speech, or for a speech by the Prime Minister to be placed in the Library, to include in their Questions a precise indication of the subject-matter in the speech to which they wish to refer. If Members wished to raise the implications of the speech as a whole, they would be free, as now, simply to refer to the speech in general terms. Your Committee commend this change of practice to the House.

25. Your Committee observe the frequency with which the Prime Minister's Question time is largely occupied by supplementary Questions and answers arising from identical questions placed on the Order Paper by a number of Members. They believe that it would improve the effectiveness of this period of Parliamentary business if Mr. Speaker made it clear that he would not necessarily call for a supplementary Question every Member who had placed an identical Question on the Order Paper. This would enable more subjects to be answered in the time available. In this connection, they draw attention to a practice instituted by Mr. Speaker Hylton-Foster in 1965. In the light of evidence that Members were deliberately tabling Questions similar to ones already on the Paper, he said that he proposed, while doing his best to preserve a fair balance, to regard Members whose Questions had late numbers, when Questions were answered together, as having no more reason to catch his eye for a supplementary Question than Members who had no Questions on the Paper. (H.C. Deb. (1964-65) 708, c. 1281.) Your Committee have no doubt that many identical Questions are tabled on the same day without being deliberately based on Questions already on the Paper. They nevertheless feel that it is unreasonable for every Member who has his Question answered with others (on 15th June 18 such Questions were answered together) to expect to be called to ask a supplementary, and they hope that Mr. Speaker will exercise his discretion in limiting the number of supplementary Questions arising from identical Questions irrespective of when the Questions were originally tabled.

26. The rules for Questions do not permit the asking of a Question to which an answer has been refused in the current Session (May, p. 327). Your Committee would regret any extension beyond its present limited use of this power to block Questions by means of refusal to answer, and they believe that any tendency to do so would be likely to result in a competition in ingenuity amongst Members anxious to evade its effects.

27. Apart from the changes in practice indicated above, Your Committee are unable to propose any procedural changes that would relieve the current pressures on Prime Minister's Question time. To the extent that these pressures reflect the wish of the House increasingly to hold the Prime Minister responsible for all aspects of the work of his Administration, they could only be relieved by an extension of the time available for him to answer. Your Committee do not consider that the House would wish such an extension made at the expense of the time for Ministers with departmental responsibilities. They therefore recommend that for an experimental period the time of Prime Minister's Questions on Tuesdays shall be extended by fifteen minutes until 3.45 p.m.



Inches 1 2 3  
Centimetres 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

# Colour Chart #13

Blue Cyan Green Yellow



## Grey Scale #13



**A** 1 2 3 4 5 6 **M** 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 **B** 17 18 19

