

PRIME MINISTER'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Prime Minister is working at No 10 this morning.

At 1530 she will have talks with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, Mr Brian Talboys, who is currently visiting EEC capitals.

At 1630 there will be a meeting of Ministers; at 1830 the PM will attend the Lobby party.

IN THE HOUSE

Two statements:

S/S Agriculture on the Council of Ministers (Agriculture) Meeting (press conference at 1700 in MAFF taken by S/S).

S/S Industry on Post Office Industrial Democracy (for details of content Lobby should contact John Woodrow).

Answer of substance to PQ No 127 from Peter Fraser (South Angus): "To ask the Minister of Transport if he will make a statement on the National Ports Council." This will announce the winding up of a quango.

FUTURE STATEMENTS

Lobby were given - purely operationally - the statements likely to be made in the House between now and 22 December.

NORTH SEA OIL

We told the Lobby that stories were still coming out of Europe - notably Bonn and Paris - that the UK was charging high prices for North Sea oil. We stressed that North Sea oil is a high quality crude and commands a premium on the market. However, the UK does not lead the world market in price, we follow it. We made the point that if Germany and France had to pay spot market prices for the oil they get from the UK they would be paying a considerably higher price. Very little of UK's oil goes on to the spot market - which nobody wants to encourage since it is very expensive. Whenever BNOC buys oil from companies the basis for the transactions is the world market price. We said it would be helpful if the Lobby could get these points across to their colleagues in Europe.

Morning Lobby was repeated.

## ADDITIONAL POINTS

### New Parliamentary Building

The Casson Report had been published today. The Government had not yet considered the Report; it would have to be approved by the House.

### Quangos

In answer to the question whether Departments would continue to announce the demise of quangos on an ad hoc basis, we said there were several exercises:

- i) Manpower economies - announced last week;
- ii) Pliatzky's report on quangos - due in New Year;
- iii) the Rayner studies - on efficiency and waste.

Departments would also continue to announce the winding-up of quangos as they arose.