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CABINET

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THE QUEEN'S SPEECH ON THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Note by the Secretary of State for the Home Department

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1. I attach a draft of The Queen's Speech on the Opening of Parliament which has been revised in the light of the discussion in Cabinet on 23 October and subsequent consultations with the Ministers concerned.
2. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the other business managers stressed the importance of avoiding commitments in the Opening Speech to a legislative programme which the Government might not in the event be able to carry through and of leaving the business managers sufficient scope to propose the dropping of one or more Bills from the programme previously agreed by Cabinet if the pressures of Parliamentary time later in the Session made this inevitable. He has written to the Ministers concerned suggesting the deletion of the implicit or explicit references to the Civic Government (Scotland), the Health and Social Services (Miscellaneous Provisions), Companies, Insurance Companies and Jurisdiction and Foreign Judgment Bills. Since these consultations are not yet complete, the attached draft includes the relevant references to these Bills in square brackets on page 5. I hope, however, that my colleagues will agree that some or all of the references should be deleted on the understanding that this does not imply that the Bills will necessarily be omitted from the legislative programme for next Session.
3. There are three points outstanding:
  - a. The reference to Sri Lanka in the passage on State Visits (page 1) is still in square brackets. I hope we can remove the square brackets or delete the reference at Cabinet on 30 October.
  - b. The passage on help to the unemployed on page 3 of the draft Speech will need to be looked at in the light of our decisions on the relevant public expenditure programme.

c. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland may now be able to produce a revised text for the reference to Northern Ireland on page 4 of the draft Speech. A final version should be settled this week, if necessary by making the reference a more generalised one.

4. I invite colleagues to consider the points raised in this memorandum and, subject to any necessary further amendments, to approve the draft Opening Speech.

W W

Home Office

28 October 1980

CONFIDENTIAL

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH ON THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT  
NOVEMBER 1980

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

I take great pleasure in the current State Visit of His Majesty the King of Nepal, and look forward to visiting later this month Belgium, the Commission of the European Communities, and the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

I look forward with equal pleasure to visiting Norway, Australia, New Zealand [and Sri Lanka], and to being present in Melbourne on the occasion of the next meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

My Government believe that the best hope of lasting peace lies in the effective maintenance of Western security. They therefore attach great importance to defence and to contributing fully to the North Atlantic alliance. They will continue to press for the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and for a political settlement acceptable to the Afghan people. Despite events in Afghanistan and Cambodia, they will continue to seek more stable East-West relations, will adopt a constructive but realistic approach to the forthcoming Madrid review meeting, and will continue to work for effective measures of arms control.

My Government support the efforts of the European Community to work towards a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab/Israel dispute. They view with grave concern the present conflict between Iran and Iraq and will continue to work with other governments for an end to hostilities. They will continue also to support the United States' Government in their efforts to find an early and peaceful solution to the prolonged illegal detention of the United States' diplomatic hostages in Iran.

Negotiations to find an internationally recognised settlement in Namibia in accordance with the United Nations' plan will continue.

My Government reaffirm their strong commitment to the European Community. They look forward to the accession of Greece on 1 January 1981 and to the prospect of further enlargement. They will play a full part in discussions to improve the common agricultural policy and restructure the community budget. They will continue to work for agreement on a revised common fisheries policy. Legislation will be introduced to amend the law about the Boundary Commissions' reviews of the European Parliament constituencies.

My Government confirm their commitment to the Commonwealth and the United Nations, and will continue to play a constructive role in their activities.

My Government recognise the serious economic problems that affect both developed and developing countries and will continue to work with other countries and international organisations in seeking to alleviate them.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Estimates for the public service will be laid before you.

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

The need to bring down the rate of inflation and create conditions for a sustainable growth of output and employment remains the prime concern of my Government. To that end they will take all steps necessary to maintain firm monetary and fiscal policies.

Plans for public expenditure will take account of the need to restrict the claims of the public sector on the nation's resources. Special attention will continue to be given to the encouragement of new businesses and to measures to permit small firms to expand and prosper.

My Government, recognising the hardships and worries of those suffering unemployment, will proceed urgently with an expanded programme of employment and training measures for the unemployed, particularly the young. Proposals will be put before you for improving industrial training in the longer term and for supplying those skills which will be needed when industry moves out of the current recession.

Further proposals will be brought forward to reduce the scope of nationalised and state industry, and to increase competition. My Government will take steps to permit wider participation in the fortunes of the British National Oil Corporation. Measures will also be laid before you to replace public involvement in transport industries with further opportunities for private investment; and to reorganise the Post Office, to encourage better performance in postal services and to introduce greater competition in telecommunications.

Legislation will also be introduced to amend the financial arrangements for the National Enterprise Board, the Scottish and Welsh Development Agencies, and the Development Board for Rural Wales; and to provide for a capital reconstruction of the British Steel Corporation.

My Government will continue to ensure that the nation's energy resources are appropriately developed and efficiently used. Legislation will be introduced to assist the conservation of energy and to impose a levy on the British Gas Corporation for specified gas purchases.

In Northern Ireland my Government will work towards further improving security and creating the conditions for sound economic growth. They will bring forward proposals for involving locally-elected representatives in the administration of Northern Ireland.

My Government are firmly committed to the maintenance of law and order in all parts of the United Kingdom. They will introduce legislation to improve the criminal law including repeal of the suspected person offence and will develop plans for giving effect to the proposals in the recent White Paper on young offenders.

A Bill will be introduced to change the law on nationality on the lines of the White Paper published last July.

Legislation will be brought forward to facilitate the education of children with special needs.

Measures to improve the law in Scotland relating to education and to local [and civic] government and to protect wives' home rights will be laid before you.

My Government will propose measures to improve road safety.

Pensions, war pensions and other social security benefits will be increased on 24 November and reviewed again next year. Legislation will be brought forward to place a duty on employers to provide sick pay for their employees during the early weeks of sickness.

[Legislation will be introduced to enable improvements to be made to the health and social services.]

Legislation will also be laid before you to promote the conservation of wild life and countryside.

[Measures will be brought forward on company law and insurance; and also to amend the law relating to the assumption of civil jurisdiction by courts in the United Kingdom and for the reciprocal enforcement of foreign judgments in civil and commercial matters.]

A Bill will be introduced to reform the law of contempt of court.

Other measures will be laid before you.

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

I pray that the blessing of the Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.