



PRIME MINISTER

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME 1979/80

I shall be reporting orally to Cabinet on Thursday on the state of the Legislative Programme, but it might help you to know in advance how matters now stand.

2. Legislation Committee has today approved the following Bills for immediate introduction when Parliament returns -

- Industry
- Shipbuilding
- European Communities (Greek Accession)
- Isle of Man
- Insurance Companies
- Consular Fees

The following Bills should be approved when the Committee meets next week -

- Education
- Civil Aviation
- Protection of Official Information (if the question of nationalised industries can be settled quickly)
- Protection of Trading Interests
- Papua New Guinea, Western Samoa and Nauru.

We shall therefore have a considerable volume of new legislation before Parliament by the end of the first week after the Recess, and sufficient business to keep the House of Commons fully occupied for the next three or four weeks.

3. Looking at major Bills which are further ahead -

- Local Government Planning and Land

and, depending on policy decisions which have still to be taken,

- British Aerospace and
- Ports (Finance)

should be ready for introduction during the first half of November.

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The Bills on -  
Trades Unions  
Social Security  
Transport  
National Heritage Fund and  
Health Services

should be ready in time for a second reading before Christmas, and the Housing Bill should be ready for publication before Christmas. Departments are working on the basis that the Coal Industry, Submarine Pipelines, Wildlife and Broadcasting Bills will also be ready for publication before Christmas. Whether this will be possible depends on how soon the outstanding policy issues are settled and the drafting instructions prepared, and on the demands which they make on Parliamentary Counsel. A Bill will be ready on Rhodesia if it is needed.

4. The Chief Whip and I will do everything possible to ensure that all these Bills are passed by the dates on which they are needed for Royal Assent. The Lord President and Chief Whip, Lords, will do the same in their House. There is no reason to suppose that we shall not be able to get all of them through by the end of the session, provided that some of the major Bills can start in the House of Lords. In particular, we intend to introduce the Local Government, Planning and Land Bill and the Protection of Official Information Bill in that House. But we must be prepared for difficulty with some of those that are needed for early Royal Assent. Because of their financial importance I shall give first priority to the Industry Bill, followed by Education, Transport and British Aerospace. Bills such as Housing, Local Government Planning and Land, Trades Unions and Social Security are, of course, essential politically but Royal Assent is not needed so urgently.

5. Some Bills will undoubtedly have to be guillotined in the House of Commons. The Chief Whip and I would prefer, if possible, not to have any guillotine motions before Christmas because of the effect they will have on the Opposition's tactics generally - in the Lords as well as in the Commons - but we need not consider details at this stage. We shall be able to make a better judgement when we see the mood of the Opposition once Parliament returns and we can judge the progress of the most vital Bills in Committee. I shall keep in touch with the Ministers concerned, and will consider the matter with them when the time comes.

6. I am sending copies of this minute to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (in view of what I have said about financial importance in paragraph 4), to the Lord President and the Chief Whip, and to Sir John Hunt.

NStJS.

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16 October 1979

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