

CONFIDENTIAL

WBPM
MS



CABINET OFFICE
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23 May 1979

01-233 7645

Dear Private Secretary

GOVERNMENT BILLS SUITABLE FOR OFFERING TO PRIVATE MEMBERS
IN 1979/80 SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

I am writing to invite Departments to suggest suitable bills for offering to private Members who are successful in the ballot which will take place tomorrow, Thursday 24 May.

To be suitable for this purpose a bill should normally be short, simple, non-financial and largely uncontroversial. We have identified a very small number of bills from the bids I received from Departments last week as possible candidates for this procedure and these are listed in the attached Annex. I should be grateful to know from the responsible Department whether these bills can be offered to Private Members. It is also highly desirable that Departments should identify further possible private Members' bills so that the Whips can have a reasonable list to offer to Members. It may, for example, be possible to identify individual provisions which have been proposed as part of a Government miscellaneous provisions bill, but which could instead be taken through the House by a private Member. This would have the additional advantage of reducing the size of the Government bill.

I am afraid that there is not much time to draw up a list. As you know, collective policy clearance must be obtained before the title of the bill may be handed to a private Member and although the bill need not be drafted before the Member gives notice of presentation, the contents must be sufficiently clear to enable Parliamentary Counsel to draft the long title in time for the bill to be presented. The last day for presentation this Session is Wednesday 27 June. Departments with bills which could be offered to a private Member should therefore take urgent steps to secure policy clearance from the appropriate Committee and drafting authority from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Perhaps I could also remind you that negotiations with Members who are successful in the ballot - of whatever party - are the responsibility of the Whips' office. They will co-ordinate approaches to the various Members and requests from them; Departments should not contact individual Members

/themselves

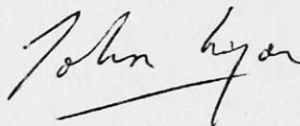
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister (For Information)

themselves. If Ministers are approached by a Member successful in the ballot, they are asked to let the Whips' office know as soon as possible. As soon as policy clearance for the bill has been obtained, Departments should send a short description of the Bill to the Whips' office.

Because the timetable is so tight, I must ask you to send me comments on the attached list and suggestions for additional bills by 5.00 pm on Tuesday 12 June.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to all Departmental Ministers and to Charlotte Egerton, Murdo MacLean and Brian Shillito.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Lyon". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

J M LYON

1979/80 SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

BILLS WHICH MIGHT BE SUITABLE FOR OFFERING
TO PRIVATE MEMBERS SUCCESSFUL IN THE BALLOT

Department	Bill	Length	Comment
1. FCO	Papua New Guinea, Western Samoa and Nauru (Miscellaneous Provisions)	Short	Early approval required. Bill could be ready for introduction soon.
2. Home Office	Registration of Electors	Short	Instructions to Counsel could be sent very soon after approval given.
3. Lord Chancellor's Interest Department		Medium	Plans for policy approval would need to be advanced. Law Commission draft available.
4. Lord Chancellor's Matrimonial Homes Department	(Rights of Occupation)	Short	Plans for policy approval would need to be advanced. Draft Bill available.
5. Trade	Home Safety	Very Short	Plans for policy approval would need to be advanced.