

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

C(82) 10

COPY NO

83

13 April 1982

CABINET

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME 1982-83

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Home Department

1. The Queen's Speeches and Future Legislation Committee (QL) have considered the proposals made by Departments for a total of 80 Bills for next Session's legislative programme and have where necessary discussed them with the Ministers concerned. This memorandum seeks the Cabinet's agreement to the Committee's recommendations. Further details of the Bills concerned are given in C(82) 11.
2. 1982-83 will be the last full Session of the present Parliament, and the legislative programme which we bring forward will be crucial to the stance which we adopt in the run-up to the next General Election. If the possibility of an Election in the autumn of 1983 is to be kept open, we need to be quite sure that we can complete our programme comfortably by the Summer Recess of that year. Although our programme for 1981-82 has been considerably shorter than in earlier Sessions of the present Parliament - a fact which has been generally welcomed in both Houses - we are still faced with the prospect of a substantial spillover in the Lords next autumn. These considerations led the Committee to start from the assumption that we were looking for a programme of about 15 Bills (excluding Finance, Consolidation, Scottish, Second Reading Committee and contingent Bills); that was the number agreed by the Cabinet at the beginning of the present Session. We also agreed that we should only select Bills which could confidently be expected to be ready for introduction at the beginning of the Session or, exceptionally, by the end of November at the very latest. We recognised the importance of legislation to promote our main strategic objectives, particularly in the field of privatisation, and at the same time we sought to give the programme a substantial social content. Finally, we needed to include a good stock of Bills suitable for Lords introduction, so as to minimise the risk of end of Session congestion in that House.
3. Against this background, the Committee have decided to recommend the 17 Bills listed in Annex A for the main programme. Although this is not a long list, it is by no means a light one. We estimate that 11 of the Bills will be controversial, most of them highly so; and we can expect the Opposition to use

every means at their disposal to obstruct progress. The inclusion of the Data Protection Bill in this list is in part conditional upon the reactions to the White Paper which we are about to publish, and colleagues will wish to take a final decision later on whether it is in fact necessary and desirable to bring forward legislation on this subject. The proposed Water Bill is confined to raising the borrowing limits of the water authorities, and does not include the wider provisions on the reorganisation of the water industry proposed by the Secretary of State for the Environment. The Committee are satisfied that major additions to the recommended programme could only be accommodated at the expense of equivalent deletions.

4. Annex B lists six contingent Bills which could become essential in certain circumstances. In addition, the Secretary of State for the Environment has reminded us that the Cabinet has yet to take a decision on the timing of legislation on the reform of the rating system; and the Secretary of State for Transport cannot rule out the possibility of a Transport Bill being needed to deal with public transport subsidies and with the finance of British Rail.

5. Annex C lists 10 Bills for inclusion in the programme on condition that they are ready for introduction at the beginning of the Session and the Opposition then raise no objection to their being dealt with under the Second Reading Committee procedure in the House of Commons. Second Reading Committee Bills cannot be accorded a high drafting priority, and it is essential that instructions should be sent to Parliamentary Counsel very early if they are to have a reasonable prospect of being ready in time.

6. The three Scottish Bills listed in Annex D should all be suitable for Second Reading in Scottish Grand Committee.

7. I must again emphasise the importance of Departments maintaining or improving the timetables for the preparation of their Bills as set out in C(82) 11. Because of the leave season, Parliamentary Counsel is unlikely to be able to start drafting before September Bills for which instructions are not received until late July; and that may well mean that the Bills concerned may not be ready by the beginning of the Session. The Lord President of the Council must be informed immediately if there is any failure to meet the timetable for the despatch of instructions.

8. I invite colleagues to:

a. Approve the list of programme Bills at Annex A.

b. Note the contingent Bills listed in Annex B, and agree that they should be brought forward if necessary.

- c. Approve the list of Second Reading Committee and Scottish Bills in Annexes C and D respectively.
- d. Accept the need for all Departments to adhere to the stated timetables for the preparation of Bills for which they are responsible.

W W

Home Office

13 April 1982

(L) = suitable for Lords introduction

ANNEX A

BILLS RECOMMENDED FOR INCLUSION
IN THE MAIN LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME
1982-83

Essential (3)

Mobile Homes (L)

Water

Carriage by Railway (L)

Programme (14)

Agriculture (L)

Museums Etc (L)

Further Education (L)

Dock Work Regulation

Gas Safety

Electricity and Nuclear Installations (Amendment)

Housing and Building Control

Commonwealth Development Corporation (Amendment)

Health and Social Services (Miscellaneous Provisions) (L)

Police and Criminal Procedure

Data Protection

Telecommunications

Shipbuilding Industry (Disposals)

Conwy Tunnel (Miscellaneous Provisions)

CONTINGENT BILLS RECOMMENDED FOR
INCLUSION IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME
1982-83

Contingent (6)

Agriculture (Levies on Livestock Producers)

Milk

Equal Pay Amendment

European Communities (Portuguese and Spanish Accession)

Law of the Sea Convention

Channel Link

BILLS RECOMMENDED FOR INCLUSION IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME
1982-83 ONLY IF SUITABLE FOR SECOND READING COMMITTEE PROCEDURESecond Reading Committee (10)

- Plant Varieties and Seeds Act 1964 (Amendment) (L)
- Dental (L)
- Civil Aviation (Eurocontrol) (Amendment) (L)
- Registration of Yachts (L)
- Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (L)
- Marriage (Invalids and Detained Persons) (L)
- Rights of Reverter (L)
- Currency and Banking (L)
- Miscellaneous Financial Provisions (L)
- National Savings (L)

ANNEX D

SCOTTISH BILLS RECOMMENDED FOR INCLUSION IN THE LEGISLATIVE
PROGRAMME 1982-83

Scottish (3)

Electricity (Financial Provisions) (Scotland)

Mental Health (Scotland) (L)

Divorce (Jurisdiction) and Legal Aid (Scotland) (L)