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CABINET

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME 1980-81

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Home Department

1. The Queen's Speeches and Future Legislation Committee have considered the proposals for Bills which Ministers have put forward for next Session's legislative programme. This memorandum seeks Cabinet agreement to the Committee's recommendations.
2. My colleagues will be well aware of the difficulties we have been experiencing with this Session's programme. We want to avoid similar problems next Session. More generally, we need to lighten the load of legislation on Parliament which many of our supporters believe to be excessive. We need, therefore, to plan a programme of about 25 main Bills - excluding finance, consolidation and Scottish Grand Committee Bills, and Bills that are likely to be suitable for Second Reading Committee. We have the prospect of two more full Sessions during the course of this Parliament which should enable a place to be found for those Bills which have been put forward this time but which cannot be accommodated in next Session's programme.
3. The Committee have sought to construct a balanced programme, reflecting the Government's main objectives. We have given priority to those Bills which will help to secure reductions in public expenditure and manpower, or which otherwise assist our economic policies. This will clearly form a major theme of next Session's Queen's Speech. At the same time, we have tried to find room for some Bills which will forward our social policies. We have taken into account the proposed timetables for Bills, giving weight to those which seem likely to be ready for early introduction. We have attempted to balance the more controversial measures with others which might expect a less troubled passage, particularly if they seemed appropriate for introduction first in the House of Lords.
4. We recommend the inclusion in the legislative programme for next Session of the Bills listed in Annex A. They include 10 "Essential" Bills which must be enacted during the Session, and 16 "Programme" Bills, including the Education (Scotland) Bill. We also recommend a further

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five Bills for inclusion in next Session's legislative programme, in the expectation that they will be suitable for Second Reading Committee procedure in the House of Commons.

5. In addition, we must provide for a number of "Contingent" Bills, some of which may well become Essential. These are listed in Annex B. My colleagues will note particularly that legislation for new constitutional arrangements in Northern Ireland is likely to be needed. This would take up a substantial amount of time on the floor of the House of Commons. It may also be necessary to introduce a Criminal Justice Bill to relieve conditions of overcrowding in the prisons and make changes in the law relating to young offenders.

6. The Scottish Bills put forward for next Session, other than the Education Bill, should be suitable for Scottish Grand Committee in the House of Commons. They are listed in Annex C. We recommend that the Secretary of State for Scotland, in consultation with the Lord President of the Council and the Lord Advocate, should decide the programme of Bills to be secured through that procedure.

7. There are five Bills which we have not included in the programme, but which could be introduced if Legislation Committee were satisfied at the time that they stood a good chance of being acceptable for Second Reading Committee procedure in the House of Commons. These are at Annex D.

8. I am circulating separately a paper (C(80) 27) giving details of the Bills shown in the Annexes.

9. I must remind colleagues who have Bills in the programme that it is essential for policy clearance to be sought and drafting authority obtained at the very earliest opportunity. Parliamentary Counsel must be given a reasonable time in which to draft Bills. This did not always happen in the present Session. If, for any reason, the timetables which colleagues proposed for their Bills cannot be met, they should inform the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster at once, so that he can consider the effect on the programme. It is particularly important that Bills that have been promised for the beginning of the Session should be ready in good time; and that as many of these as possible are started in the House of Lords, so helping to even out their burden over the Session.

10. I invite my colleagues to:

- a. agree the list of Essential and Programme Bills set out in Annex A;
- b. note the Contingent Bills in Annex B, and agree that they should be brought forward if necessary;

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c. agree that the Scottish Bills in Annex C and the further Second Reading Committee Bills in Annex D should be brought forward as appropriate;

d. ensure that early action is taken to secure policy approval and drafting authority for the Essential and Programme Bills, in order to facilitate the efficient management of Government business in Parliament next Session.

W W

Home Office

9 May 1980

Legislative Programme 1980/81Essential

Armed Forces
 Energy Conservation
 Wildlife and Countryside
 Anguilla
 Health and Social Services (Miscellaneous Provisions)
 Industry (No 2)
 Iron and Steel
 Contempt of Court
 Companies
 Insurance Companies

Programme

Forestry (Sale of Land)
 Fisheries (Miscellaneous Provisions)
 House of Commons Members' Fund and Parliamentary Pensions (Transfers)
 Education (Special Educational Needs)
 Employment and Training Act 1973 (Amendment)
 Petroleum and Continental Shelf
 Gas Rental Levy
 Radio-Chemical Centre
 Local Government and Planning
 Social Security
 European Assembly Elections (Amendment)
 Nationality
 Telecommunications
 Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) (Amendment)
 Education (Scotland)
 Transport
 *Jurisdiction and Foreign Judgments
 *Supreme Court

Programme (Continued)

- *Town and Country Planning (Minerals)
- *International Organisations (Amendment)
- *Parliamentary Commissioner (Consular Complaints)

*Bills expected to be suitable for Second Reading Committee in the House of Commons.

Contingent Bills

Law of the Sea Convention

Comprehensive Test Ban

British North America Acts 1867-1964 (Amendment)

Belize Independence

Criminal Justice

Deep Seabed Mining

Northern Ireland

Common Fund

Scottish Grand Committee Bills

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland)

Civic Government (Scotland)

Matrimonial Homes (Rights of Occupancy) (Scotland)

Town and Country Planning (Scotland)

Social Work Amendment (Scotland)

Police (Scotland)

Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Scotland)

Roads (Scotland)

National Library of Scotland (Amendment) (Scotland)

Additional Bills which may be acceptable for Second Reading Committee procedure

Corn Returns (Amendment)

Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions)

Disposal of Former Russian Assets

Diplomatic Privileges (Special Missions)

Merchant Shipping