

PRIME MINISTER



I think 4 November is  
a bit ambitious. We  
will let the Palace know  
that 4 and 11 November  
are the likely runners.

PRIME MINISTER

*Handwritten note:*  
Handwritten initials: "Handwritten ms."

## STATE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

*Handwritten:*  
mjs  
2/15

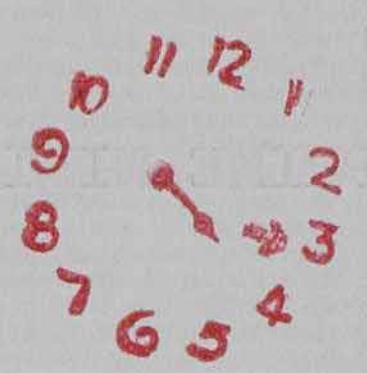
1. I have been considering with the Lord President the possible dates for the State Opening of Parliament.
2. We need to be absolutely sure that all Government business for the present session will have been completed and Parliament will have been prorogued in adequate time before the date which we suggest for the Opening of the new session. At present it looks as if Parliament could be prorogued by 31 October. This would allow a State Opening on Tuesday 4 November. There would then be a shorter interval between prorogation and opening than in some recent years but there seems no advantage in losing a week.
3. The Lord President tells me that there nevertheless remains a possibility that all our Bills and, in particular, the local Government Bill, will not be through the House of Lords by the end of October. It may therefore be necessary, as the Cabinet was warned when we discussed the programme for the rest of the current session in March (paragraph 9 of C(80) 22), to have a longer spillover. If so, the session would continue into the first week of November. (The House of Lords will already be required to resume sitting on 6 October and the alternative of further shortening the summer recess would not, I understand, be acceptable to our supporters in the Lords.) If Parliament cannot be prorogued until the first week of November the State Opening would need to be deferred until Tuesday 11 November.
4. We should be able to make a better estimate of the chances of completing the programme by the end of October within the next few weeks. (By the end of June we should have a better idea of the Opposition tactics in the Lords and of the way our support there is holding up.)
5. In the meantime it might assist the Palace in planning the Queen's programme if your office could advise them that the State Opening is likely to be on either Tuesday 4 or Tuesday 11 November.
6. I am copying this minute to the Home Secretary, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President of the Council, both Chief Whips and to Sir Robert Armstrong. I am not, however, giving it any wider circulation.

*Handwritten signature:*  
NStJS.

N St J S  
22 May 1980



22 MAY 1980



1. I have been consulting with the Lord President the possible dates for the State Opening of Parliament.

2. It would be desirable to have the State Opening of Parliament in the week commencing 21 October. This would allow a State Opening on Tuesday 21 October. There would then be a shorter interval between opening and adjourning than in some recent years but there seems no advantage in doing so.

3. The Lord President tells me that there nevertheless remains a possibility that all our bills end, in particular, the Local Government Bill, will not be through the House of Lords by the end of October. It may therefore be necessary, as the Cabinet was warned when we discussed the programme for the next of the current session in March (paragraph 2.2.10 (ii)), to have a longer adjournment. If so, the session would continue into the first week of November. (The House of Lords will already be required to resume sitting on 6 October and the alternative of further shortening the summer recess would not, I understand, be acceptable to our supporters in the Lords.) It is therefore not possible to proceed until the first week of November if the State Opening would need to be delayed until Tuesday 11 November.

4. It would be desirable to make a better estimate of the chances of completing the programme by the end of October within the next few weeks. (By the end of June we should have a better idea of the opposition tactics in the Lords and of the way our support there is holding up.)

5. In the meantime it might assist the House in planning the Queen's programme if your office could advise them that the State Opening is likely to be on either Tuesday 4 or Tuesday 11 November.

6. I am enclosing the minutes to the Home Secretary, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President of the Council, both of which refer to the State Opening. I am not, however, giving it any wider circulation.

22 May 1980