



Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street, London SW1

E fnw

B. 14/5

PRIME MINISTER

RATES

I have seen a copy of Michael Heseltine's minute of 8 September to you about legislation to control local authority expenditure.

As I will not be able to attend the meeting of E Committee on 16 September I would like to take the opportunity of commenting on his proposed timetable for this legislation in the new Session.

I think it is fair to say that we are faced with one of the heaviest ever early Session programmes, with intense pressure on us to get Bills through as quickly as possible. I have repeatedly warned QL Committee of this problem.

At present there are nine Bills (including the Canada Bill) which require early Royal Assent and of these only one is considered suitable for introduction in the Lords.

With State Opening on 4 November, and allowing for the conventions of the House, the earliest date for a Second Reading would be 16 November. This leaves very little time in which to get the urgent Bills underway before the Christmas recess. In addition, the further complication of the introduction of a Canada Bill whose Committee and remaining stages would need to be taken on the Floor means, therefore, that there is no possibility of the Committee stage of Michael Heseltine's Bill being taken on the Floor.

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For these reasons, it is my view that it would be absolutely impossible to comply with the timetable Michael Heseltine has outlined for this Bill, without a guillotine. If, on the other hand, E Committee decide that it is essential for the Bill to be enacted within this timescale, then I think there will need to be a drastic reappraisal of the Bills currently in the 1981/82 programme.

I am copying this to the recipients of Michael Heseltine's minute.



MICHAEL JOPLING

14 September 1981