



PRIME MINISTER

DRAFT GREEN PAPER ON TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY

I was invited at E Committee on 14 October (E(82)21st Meeting) to circulate a draft Green Paper on future industrial relations legislation, and to put forward proposals regarding the time of its publication.

2 I now attach a draft of the Green Paper and would welcome comments from colleagues.

3 The Green Paper deals with the three main topics agreed upon at our meeting on 14 October. These are: elections of trade union leaders, mandatory strike ballots, and the political activities of trade unions, in particular the working of the Trade Union Act 1913.

4 As I made clear at E, the Green Paper is not intended to put forward firm legislative proposals. Its purpose is to set out the material necessary to ensure an informed discussion of all the difficult issues raised before decisions are taken on legislative steps. The Green Paper does however contain a clear message that something needs to be done to make trade unions more democratic and their leaders more responsive to the views of the membership.

5 If we are to publish the Green Paper before Christmas, the best time would be during the second week of December, that is on 8 or 9 December. The alternative would be to publish when Parliament reassembles in January. I am leaving the final decision until I can see whether early December will be the most propitious time for publication. This, however, means that it is necessary

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to have comments from colleagues not later than Monday 29 November to give time to finalise the text and for printing. Whether or not the Green Paper is published before Christmas, there would be sufficient time for consultations to enable the Government to announce its intentions in early summer so that, if necessary, legislation can be introduced in the 1983-84 session of Parliament.

6 May I remind colleagues of the need to treat the draft Green Paper confidentially in the meantime, and to ensure that it is not disseminated widely in Departments.

7 I am copying this to colleagues who attended the meeting of E Committee on 14 October and to Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr Sparrow.

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18 November 1982

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Incl Pol:

Legislation