



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

PERSONAL

1 March 1983

Dear Jeffrey

Thank you for your letter of 8 February asking for my first thoughts for an election Manifesto on my area of responsibility.

... I attach a first draft. It is rather longer than you asked for, but, given the wide range of Home Office responsibilities it is difficult to compress it further at this stage.

I have not included anything on Civil Defence. I suggest that I should agree a passage with Michael Heseltine for inclusion in the section on defence. Similarly, something more on Magistrates' Courts could usefully be included in the Lord Chancellor's section, and if you agree I shall discuss this with him.

There will also certainly need to be a passage on Sunday Trading, but this is something we shall have to discuss collectively.

John
Willie

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP

HOME
OFFICE

POLICE AND THE FIGHT AGAINST CRIME

The public's first protection is the size of the police force. We have increased police numbers to record levels by recruiting over 9,000 extra policemen since 1979 in England and Wales. We now have a strong, well-paid police service and our immediate task is to ensure that their deployment is as effective as possible. The full benefits of our changes will become increasingly apparent as the new recruits to the police forces become more experienced and fully trained.

Thousands of these extra policemen are already back on the beat, where the public wish to see them, instead of isolated in panda cars. We shall continue to expand training for the police.

Beating crime cannot be for the police alone. The whole community must assist and the co-operation of schools and parents is especially valuable. This co-operation between the police and the community they serve needs to be based on close consultation between them. To help the police bring criminals to justice and win the support of the public we have introduced the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1983.

To give the courts tougher and more flexible powers we have put the Criminal Justice Act 1982 on the statute book. This Act emphasises the responsibility of parents for juvenile crime and the justice of compensation for the victims of crime. We propose to continue to support the imposition of community service orders to require offenders to compensate the community. We shall increase further the number of compulsory attendance centres to which the courts can send young hooligans to deprive them of their prime leisure time.

We shall give increased support to the invaluable work of the Probation Service.

PRISONS

We regard the availability of sufficient prison places as an essential part of our policy to maintain law and order, and protect the public. If the courts impose a sentence of imprisonment then it is the duty of the prison service to provide the places necessary.

To ensure this can be done we have already embarked on a major programme of prison building and refurbishment. Ten new prisons are to be built, providing another 4,800 places, and three have already been started. £150 million has been spent on repairs, maintenance and refurbishment in existing prisons. At a time of restriction of recruiting in the Civil Service, we have recruited more prison officers and shall continue to do so.

OBSCENITY

There is an increasing public concern over offences against public decency which often have links also with serious crime. We propose to introduce specific legislation to deal with the most serious of these problems such as the dangerous growth of violent and obscene video cassettes.

ANIMALS

Since 1979 we have been working to achieve full European agreement on the treatment of animals and, as a result of this, there is now a European Convention on the Protection of Animals. We welcomed this agreement and immediately introduced a White Paper on Animal Welfare to foreshadow changes in the law. We now propose to introduce legislation to update the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876.

IMMIGRATION AND RACE RELATIONS

We are opposed to racial discrimination wherever it occurs and are determined to see that there is real equality of opportunity. We have continued to encourage the improvement of language training in schools and factories and will see that neither race, colour nor creed is a bar to employment or reduces the chances of training or re-training.

For there to be good community relations there has to be effective immigration control, and since 1979 immigration for settlement has dropped sharply to the lowest level since control of immigration from the Commonwealth first began in the early 1960s. By passing the British Nationality Act we have created a sound basis for control in the

future: and we will continue to pursue policies which are strict but fair.

BROADCASTING AND CABLE T.V.

With the development of Cable Television and Direct Broadcasting by Satellite, the individual person's choice over what he watches will increase. We shall introduce a Bill to provide for the future of Cable Television based on the proposals of our recent White Paper.