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CABINET

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THE QUEEN'S SPEECH ON THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Memorandum by the Lord President of the Council

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I attach a draft of The Queen's Speech on the Opening of Parliament in the form in which it has been agreed by the Queen's Speeches and Future Legislation Committee (QL). The text will have to be submitted to The Queen on Thursday 16 June.

2. The draft takes as its starting point our Manifesto and the legislative programme provisionally agreed by the Cabinet on 14 April. It also takes account of the Bills which fell at the Dissolution. We shall have to reconsider the legislative programme in the light of events since April, and so the draft Speech does not seek to mention every measure which might become part of the programme but only measures which we can now see will clearly be introduced.

3. There are a number of points which I should draw to the attention of my colleagues -

a. The reference to Hong Kong in paragraph 5 is designed to reassure opinion there about the firmness of the Government's commitment.

b. Paragraph 12 does not refer specifically to measures for the introduction of private finance into British Airways and the National Bus Company, since such measures were not among the programme provisionally agreed by the Cabinet in April. But the wording of the paragraph is general enough to cover such measures if the Cabinet later decides to include them in the revised programme.

c. It is envisaged that legislation to abolish the Greater London Council and the Metropolitan County Councils will be introduced in the second Session of this Parliament. Paragraph 18 is not intended to imply a Bill in this Session.

d. The Secretary of State for Education and Science has asked that the second sentence in paragraph 24 should be placed in square brackets; he wishes to explain to the Cabinet the tactical problem which it raises. QL thought that if the sentence is to remain in the Speech it would need to be clarified.

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4. I shall submit proposals later for the full legislative programme for the Session. Meanwhile, we need to introduce a number of Bills quickly so as to make the best use of Parliamentary time before the Summer Adjournment. The only Bills which are likely to be ready immediately are some of the Bills which fell at the Dissolution, some essential Bills and some Second Reading Committee Bills. The introduction of such Bills would not pre-empt future decisions on the programme as a whole.

5. I invite my colleagues to approve the draft Speech attached to this memorandum, and to agree to the introduction of Bills in the categories mentioned in the preceding paragraph as soon as they are ready.

W W

Privy Council Office

14 June 1983

DRAFT

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH ON THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT  
WEDNESDAY, 22 JUNE, 1983

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

1. I look forward with great pleasure to receiving the President of Sri Lanka on a State Visit in October and to paying visits to Kenya, Bangladesh and India in November. I also look forward to being present on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in New Delhi in November.

2. My Government are determined to sustain Britain's contribution to Western defence by modernising the existing independent nuclear deterrent with the Trident programme and by maintaining adequate conventional forces. They will play an active and constructive part in the North Atlantic Alliance.

3. My Government will work vigorously in co-operation with the United Kingdom's allies for balanced and verifiable measures of arms control. They strongly support the United States' proposals for reductions in nuclear forces. They attach particular importance to the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on intermediate range nuclear forces. They stand by the NATO decision to begin the deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles by the end of 1983 as a deterrent to existing Soviet systems. The numbers finally deployed will reflect the outcome of the Geneva talks.

4. My Government will work constructively for the future development of the European Community and will continue to aim at a lasting solution to the budget problem and the control of agricultural spending. They will accord priority to the successful conclusion of negotiations to ensure the early accession of Spain and Portugal to the Community.

5. My Government will continue fully to discharge their obligations to the people of the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar. They will continue talks with China on the future of Hong Kong, with the aim of reaching a solution acceptable to this Parliament, to China and to the people of Hong Kong.

6. My Government will continue their full support for the Commonwealth. Together with their Community partners they will seek lasting solutions to the most urgent international problems. They will play an active and constructive role at the United Nations. They will promote increased co-operation with the Third World. They will maintain a substantial aid programme directed especially at poorer countries and will encourage the flow of British private investment with the same objectives.

7. My Government will work in close co-operation with governments of other countries and with international institutions to nurture international recovery on a sustainable non-inflationary basis. They will urge on their partners the need to preserve an open world trading system.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

8. Estimates for the Public Service will be laid before you.

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

9. My Government will maintain policies designed to increase economic prosperity and to reduce unemployment. They will seek a further reduction in inflation and in interest rates by continuing to maintain a responsible financial strategy based upon sound money and lower public borrowing. Firm control of public expenditure will play an important part in achieving these objectives.

10. My Government will take steps to improve flexibility, efficiency and competitiveness in the economy in order to sustain growth in output and opportunities for employment. Continued attention will be paid to the development and application of new technology. The improvement in training will be sustained. The special employment measures will continue to assist those out of work.
  
11. A Bill will be introduced to give trade union members greater control over their unions.
  
12. Legislation will be introduced to prepare for the introduction of private finance into nationalised industries, including the Royal Ordnance Factories and British Telecommunications, and to establish a regulatory body for telecommunications and reform the Telegraph Acts.
  
13. Legislation will be introduced to reform the organisation of public transport in London.
  
14. Legislation will be brought forward shortly to restore the major tax reductions proposed in the 1983 Budget but not yet enacted.
  
15. My Government will encourage the further development of United Kingdom oil and gas resources, and introduce legislation to abolish royalties in new fields. The disposal of the British Gas Corporation's oil assets will be completed.
  
16. My Government will pursue policies which sustain our agricultural, food and fishing industries. Legislation will be introduced to make more farming tenancies available in England and Wales.

17. Legislation will be brought forward to provide a selective scheme to curb excessive rate increases by individual local authorities, and to provide a general power, to be used if necessary, for the limitation of rate increases for all authorities. Measures to improve the rating system will also be laid before you.

18. Proposals will be prepared for the abolition of the Greater London Council and the Metropolitan County Councils.

19. Legislation will be introduced to extend the right to buy, and to reform the system of building control in England and Wales.

20. My Government will remain steadfast in their support for the services which maintain law and order. A Bill will be introduced to replace the existing law on the prevention of terrorism. For England and Wales, legislation will be brought forward to modernise the law on police powers and to amend the law of criminal evidence and on police complaints procedures. Proposals will be prepared for the establishment of an independent prosecution service.

21. Measures will be brought forward to protect personal information held on computers, and to establish a cable authority and provide a framework for the development of cable systems.

22. A Bill will be introduced to improve family law and its administration in England and Wales.

23. Legislation will be introduced to extend equal treatment for men and women in social security. Further action will be taken to ensure that patients receive the best value for the money spent on the National Health Service.

24. My Government will pursue policies for improving standards of education and widening parental choice and influence in relation to schools. [Legislation will be introduced for the payment of grants to local education authorities in England and Wales.]

25. Measures relating to Scotland will include reforms to the rating system and the reform of the law relating to roads.

26. In Northern Ireland, my Government will continue to give the highest priority to upholding law and order. Through the Northern Ireland Assembly, the people of Northern Ireland will continue to be offered a framework for participation in local democracy and political progress. Support to help the Province overcome its economic difficulties will be maintained.

27. Other measures will be laid before you.

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

28. I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.