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C(83) 19

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30 June 1983

CABINET

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME 1983-84

Memorandum by the Lord President of the Council

The Queen's Speeches and Future Legislation Committee (QL) have considered the legislative programme for 1983-84, and this memorandum seeks the Cabinet's agreement to the Committee's recommendations. Details of the Bills concerned are given in C(83) 20.

2. Earlier this year QL submitted a provisional programme to the Cabinet, and the Cabinet provisionally agreed it on 14 April (CC(83) 12th Conclusions, Minute 4). It was to be reviewed in the summer, partly in the light of progress on the two big local government Bills (one on rating and one on the abolition of the Greater London Council and the Metropolitan County Councils). QL thought that if both these Bills materialised the full provisional programme would be too heavy and would have to be pruned. At that time we were working on the assumption of a General Election in the autumn of 1983 or the spring of 1984, and the situation has of course now changed. We have a rather longer 1983-84 Session, but against that we have to find room for the Bills which fell at the Dissolution, which include the long and difficult Data Protection, Telecommunications, Housing and Building Control, and Police and Criminal Evidence Bills; and we have to have a short Finance Bill before the Summer Adjournment and, in the autumn, an Oil Taxation Bill to enact provisions which were in the Finance Bill introduced before the Dissolution but which had to be dropped. One of the big local government Bills (on rating) will materialise, and an interim measure on the Greater London Council and the Metropolitan County Councils will be necessary. Taking everything into account, QL considered that the Bills to which we are inescapably committed make up a programme no less heavy than the full provisional programme which QL submitted to the Cabinet earlier this year. There are also a number of contingent Bills, some of which will no doubt have to be introduced, and past experience shows that further, unforeseen, requirements for legislation will arise.

3. Against this background, QL have decided to recommend the legislative programme set out in the Annex to this memorandum. The essential Bills must be enacted, for example because of international commitments or because permitted borrowing limits would otherwise be exceeded. The contingent Bills could become essential in certain circumstances. The list of programme Bills is made up of those which fell at the Dissolution and those which were promised in The Queen's Speech, plus an interim Local Government (Greater London and Metropolitan Counties) Bill, which is unavoidable, and the Public Services Transfer

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of Functions Bill, which is also unavoidable if the privatisation programme is not to be delayed. Of the Scottish Bills, Local Government Valuation and Rating (Scotland) and Roads (Scotland) were promised in The Queen's Speech. Housing (Scotland) is a short measure which can be introduced in July, and Inshore Fisheries (Scotland) is a relatively uncontroversial measure which can be introduced in the House of Lords and is suitable for the Scottish Grand Committee. The Bills in the Second Reading Committee list would be introduced only if the Opposition had first agreed to raise no objection to their being taken under that procedure in the House of Commons.

A number of colleagues who proposed Bills for the programme have reluctantly agreed to accept QL's view that room cannot be found for them in the current Session. But there are still points outstanding on a number of other Bills:

- a. The Secretary of State for Employment has pressed the case for a Dock Work Regulation Bill. QL would have been prepared to recommend that this should be added to the programme if it could be introduced in July. But this is not possible, in view of the industrial situation in relation to the Port of London Authority and the industry's talks about industrial arrangements.
- b. The Secretary of State for the Environment has arranged for the Crown Land (Planning Permission) Bill to be included in the list of Bills for offering to Private Members who are successful in the ballot. If this approach proves unsuccessful he may ask for the Bill to be introduced as a Government measure.
- c. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is considering whether the urgency of the need to introduce a successor scheme to regional development grants is such as to require the introduction of the Industrial Development Bill this Session; he is also considering the urgency of the need for the Development of Inventions Bill.
- d. The Secretary of State for Transport attaches importance to pressing on with the British Airways and National Bus Company privatisation measures (the Transport Bill and the Civil Aviation Bill). He would be ready to combine these into a single Bill.
- e. The Secretary of State for Scotland wishes the Tourism (Overseas Promotion)(Scotland) Bill to be introduced this Session, unless it is decided to legislate on a Great Britain basis.

Details of these Bills are in C(83) 20.

5. The point was made at Cabinet on 16 June that in the second Session of this Parliament the Bill to abolish the Greater London Council and the Metropolitan County Councils should be introduced right at the start; and that it would be desirable to avoid a spillover in the autumn of

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1984, so that the 1984-85 Session might start earlier than usual. This makes it all the more necessary not to overload the programme for this Session. It is also extremely important that Departments should maintain and where possible improve on the timetables for the preparation of their Bills as set out in C(83) 20.

6. I invite colleagues to approve the proposed legislative programme set out in the Annex.

W W

Privy Council Office

30 June 1983

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ANNEX

PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME 1983-84

(L) = suitable for introduction in the House of Lords

Essential Bills (7)

1. Coal Industry
2. Social Security
3. Shipbuilding
4. Co-operative Development Agency
5. Companies
6. Merchant Shipping (L)
7. International Monetary Arrangements

Contingent Bills (7)

8. Insolvency Payments
9. Housing (Defects)
10. Australia
11. Territorial Sea
12. Stock Exchange
13. Export Guarantees
14. London Transport Executive

Programme Bills (17)

15. Agricultural Holdings (Amendment) (L)
16. Royal Ordnance Factories
17. Education (Grants to Local Authorities)
18. Trade Union
19. Petroleum Royalties (Relief)
20. Local Government (Rating and Expenditure)
21. Local Government (Greater London and Metropolitan Counties)
22. Housing and Building Control

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23. Local Authorities (Expenditure Powers)
24. Police and Criminal Evidence
25. Data Protection (L)
26. Prevention of Terrorism
27. Cable and Satellite Broadcasting (L)
28. Matrimonial Causes (L)
29. Telecommunications
30. Public Transport (London)
31. Public Services Transfer of Functions

Scottish Bills (4)

32. Local Government Valuation and Rating (Scotland)
33. Housing (Scotland)
34. Roads (Scotland) (L)
35. Inshore Fisheries (Scotland) (L)

Second Reading Committee Bills (9)

36. Animal Health and Welfare (L)
37. Somerset House (Management Powers) (L)
38. Repatriation of Prisoners (L)
39. Foreign Limitation Periods (L)
40. Family Law Reform (L)
41. Occupiers' Liability (L)
42. Insurance Law Reform (L)
43. Fosdyke Bridge
44. Pensions Commutation.