

FROM: THE RT HON MICHAEL JOPLING MP

Jopling MP



Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street, London SW1

2nd September 1981

Thank you for your letter of 26 August about the Croydon North West by-election.

I have noted what you say about the unofficial 3 month time limit; but I should point out that the 3 month period refers to the time elapsing between the vacancy occurring and the moving of the writ, not to the date of the by-election as you suggest in your letter. You will recall that the 1973 Speaker's Conference did suggest that the total period (from the vacancy to the moving of the writ) should not be more than 4 months when certain periods of the year could make the 3 month proposal more difficult. You are quite right in suggesting that factors such as the Party Conferences and also the summer holidays, limit the options on dates. However, I can say that we do intend to deal with the matter well within the period suggested by the Speaker's Conference.

You will also recall that the 3 month proposal has not always been adhered to since 1973: your own Party did not move the writ for Redbridge, Ilford North for almost 15 weeks after the vacancy occurred.

In the light of my assurance and of the precedent, I hope that you will now feel able not to take action, using the powers under the Recess Elections Act.

J Rooker Esq., MP
House of Commons
SW1

from Andrew Bennett MP
and Jeff Rooker MP



26th August 1981

R27/3.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Michael Jopling MP
Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Chief Whip,

Vacancy Croydon North West

We are surprised to see that no one in Government has yet taken the required steps to announce the date of the by-election in Croydon, North West. As Robert Taylor died in mid June the by election should take place by mid September to be within the unofficial three month time limit.

We can see no special circumstances which make for an extension of this time limit, and indeed if it were not for an administrative error on our part we would have written to the Speaker this week. This would, taking into account recent changes in the election law timetable have created an election date almost exactly three months from the death of Robert Taylor.

We realise that there are always many factors in selecting a by election date and the party conferences may be one of these. However such is our commitment to parliamentary democracy we wish to see a move from the Government in the next few days. Failing this we ourselves will use the powers under the Recess Elections Act 1784 (as amended) to secure the rights of the people to elect a representative.

P.S.

We intend to make this letter public.

Yours
Jeff Rooker
MP. Andrew Bennett