

CCMO

01 211 6402

The Rt Hon The Viscount Whitelaw  
CH MC  
Lord President of the Council  
Privy Council Office  
Whitehall  
LONDON  
SW1A 2AT

4 February 1985

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME 1985/86

*will request if nec.*

Thank you for your letter of 31 January.

I am grateful to you for agreeing to recommend inclusion of the Petroleum Bill in the 1985/86 Programme.

I am however very disappointed that you have not felt able to recommend inclusion of the short Atomic Energy Authority Bill as well. The effect of this would be to postpone at least until 1 April 1987 the establishment of a proper Trading Fund for the Authority. Indeed, the management of the Authority could be given no assurance about the date on which such a Trading Fund could begin to operate.

The policy for this Bill has already been approved by E(NI) Committee on 15 October. I am about to circulate to colleagues the text of a statement about the future of the Authority which I intend should be made in Parliament during the next fortnight. That statement will announce our decision to set up a Trading Fund and foreshadow legislation to achieve this. The Bill would be a short and straightforward one, and a draft of instructions to Counsel for its preparation has already been prepared in my Department. We could therefore be ready to introduce the Bill very swiftly indeed.

It would be very damaging to management and staff morale in the Authority if, following a new statement of policy about their future, they were placed in limbo for what would look to them like an indefinite period. I hope very much therefore that you will on reflection be able to find room for this Bill.



I thought it right that my Private Secretary should record in his letter of 11 December two possible legislative commitments arising from the coal industry. I understand why you did not think it right to provide a place for either of the two contingent Bills in question and would indeed be ready to defer any claim for the Opencast Coal Bill. As to legislation on the finances of the coal industry, we expect that a Bill on borrowing powers will have to be enacted in the current 1984/85 session which would make it unnecessary to legislate for that purpose in the 1985/86 session. At some stage there may have to be legislation on the whole structure of the finances of the coal industry but I now think it very unlikely that we should want to cater for that before the 1986/87 session, if then.

If I may, I will take up your kind invitation to attend QL on Thursday 7 February to ask for the inclusion in the Programme of the Atomic Energy Authority Bill.

I am copying this letter to the members of QL Committee, to First Parliamentary Counsel and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

PETER WALKER

ENERGY: Review of UK AEA:  
March 84.

5 FEB 1985

