

Parliament /

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister's Questions

The Leader of the House appeared this afternoon to make his statement about the effects of the IPCS dispute on the running of the House. He was criticised from both sides for not going into the details of the dispute, and it may well be that Mr. Channon has to make a further statement tomorrow to satisfy the House about the action which is being taken.

The concentration on the IPCS issue meant that no-one raised, rather to my surprise, the format of your Question Time. I am sure that you should do so tomorrow, and my spies tell me that Mr. Callaghan's staff are already doing their research on the history.

Subject to your agreement, we could tell the Speaker's office that you would like to arise on a brief point of order at the end of your Questions, to say that you would be prepared to take a larger proportion of sensible substantive oral questions.

Are you content to handle it in this way?

I don't think we
need to do it
that way - I will
reply if anyone raises it.
MS
MS

9 July 1979

STATEMENT

12 July 1979.
Pattinson

With permission, Mr. Speaker, I will make a ~~very~~ short Statement about the arrangements for Prime Minister's Questions.

Honourable Members on both sides of the House have expressed dissatisfaction with the number of open Questions which have been tabled recently, although I have not attempted to change the practice in any way.

The present practice is that I accept those Oral Questions, whether open or substantive, which can reasonably and appropriately be directed to me, rather than to a Departmental Minister.

Over the years that criterion has proved impossible to define more precisely. Clearly, detailed constituency matters ought to be dealt with by the appropriate Minister. But I expect to answer substantive Questions which raise issues of general significance and national interest if honourable Members wish to ask them. I feel, however, that I must retain the right exercised by all my predecessors to transfer a Question where it seems to me appropriate to do so.

So far in this Session 624 Oral Questions have been put down to me and I have not transferred a single one.