

PRIME MINISTER

'H' COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY

The Churchill Bill

Members of the Committee had before them your views on this Bill. In the end, the Committee decided broadly to support the Home Secretary's proposed approach, though it was clear that the Government should take a sympathetic and helpful line on the Bill's Second Reading, that it should play an active part in Committee Stage, and that the Manifesto commitment should not be lost sight of. The Home Secretary would probably need to come back to his colleagues again in the light of the way issues developed. The Lord President's personal view was that the Bill would probably fail in the Lords - opposed by Lord Houghton and others. But 'L' Committee today thought a Bill in some shape or form would reach the Statute Book. A letter from the Lord President's Office reporting the upshot of 'H' and 'L' is attached.

Radioactive Waste

The Committee had earlier decided to go for the Special Development Order procedure to authorise the exploration of four sites - two inland and two coastal (Elstow, Bedfordshire; Fulbeck, near Grantham; South Killingholme, South Humberside; and Bradwell, Essex). But neither of the two coastal sites would be suitable for MOD purposes, and they had concluded that they would need to find their own. The Environment Secretary had in any case decided that the arguments against coastal sites were strong ones. He therefore proposed that three inland sites should be investigated - Elstow, Fulbeck and a third in Oxfordshire or Buckinghamshire. 'H' agreed that he should discuss this with NIREX and a statement should be made shortly. The Secretary of State for Defence will also consider existing defence sites to find a suitable one for his own nuclear disposal purposes. The precise timing of

announcements would need to be considered further. There was
also no decision on the question of how many sites should go
forward to a public inquiry.

MEA

Mark Addison

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