

I just have to
consult this assn

we shall have to set
up a mixed one

Prime Minister

CONFIDENTIAL



Prime Minister 2
The Law Officers say there would be serious
risks in not recognising the ALA and
consulting them where we are obliged
to consult local authorities.

Mr Jenkins intends to explore with the three
traditional local authority associations whether
there are ways of stopping this drift towards "Labour"
and Tory groupings. He is also considering a
legislative remedy. For the moment he will
avoid being drawn on the question of
recognition, and
hopes to be able
to say in September
that legislation
will be
introduced.

ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES

You are aware of the move to set up a new "Association of
London Authorities", composed of Labour boroughs, together
with the GLC and ILEA. You answered a supplementary question
from Geoffrey Finsberg about this on 14 July.

We have been watching developments closely over recent months.
Irwin Bellwin has been in touch with Peter Bowness, who has
been working to try to keep the Labour boroughs in the LBA.
We have also taken steps to ensure that all Departments who
might be approached by the new Association should take the
same line.

The ALA was formally established on 5 July, and we now have
to take a view on how Departments should handle their relations
with the new body. I have received a letter from the Association
- and no doubt so have other colleagues - which asks that
they should be consulted in the same way as the LBA, and should
participate in meetings of the Consultative Council and similar
bodies.

This is clearly a very unwelcome development. However, our
attitude to the new body has to have regard to the legislation
governing our relationship with local government; and, given
the political sensitivities involved, I have sought the advice
of the Law Officers on the issues that are raised by the
establishment of the ALA.

lh
slg



I have now received the views of the Law Officers. Briefly they consider:

(a) that there is no basis for challenging the legality of the new body; and

(b) that we would be seriously open to risk of challenge if we failed to consult the ALA on any issue where, in law, we are under an obligation to consult local government through its representative institutions.

Nevertheless, I am extremely reluctant to contemplate recognising the ALA. To do so would encourage splits in the other Associations, which could well lead to further splits reflecting for example different party factions on the left. This would be no more welcome to the great majority of people in local government (including moderate Labour members) than it would be to us.

Given that consultation must go on, and given the wider implications of the LBA/ALA split, I intend, as a first step, to have discussions with the Leaders of the three main Associations. The first aim here will be to see whether we can find any common ground on measures which would enable the Associations to hold together despite the political pressures - which will, of course, be exacerbated by our policies on rate limitation and abolition of the GLC and MCCs. If this cannot be achieved, then we should have to consider how best to manage a situation in which - as would seem inevitable if we recognised the ALA - we had separate Conservative and Labour Associations for each class of authority.



I cannot now meet the Association leaders before September. I have, however, asked my officials to consider, during August, in consultation with other Departments, the possibility of legislation. This might take the form of statutory provisions which would enable Ministers to specify in the schedule of an Act the bodies representing local government whom they will consult; existing provisions would be amended to relate to this statutory list. It might be possible to add provisions to this effect to the Rating Bill, but a separate urgent Bill might be necessary.

I would hope that legislation on these lines - if it proves to be feasible - would enable us to recognise only the existing Associations, would strengthen the hands of the moderate Labour people, and could demonstrate to our supporters that we do not intend to concede without a fight.

If we legislated and all the Associations split regardless we would in the end be compelled by natural justice to recognise both Conservative and Labour Associations on our schedule. We would however be able to leave off far left splinter groups.

If we do not legislate, we will face a situation where we will be compelled to consult the present Associations, plus the new Labour ones. This would be intolerable. Remaining Labour representatives in the present associations would muffle Conservative voices there; Labour voices elsewhere would be clear. We would probably do better in such circumstances if the Associations broke up decisively into party groups. However we should not then be able to limit in any way who we talked to as we would by means of an Act with a schedule of approved bodies.



There is of course one other option which I include for completeness: we could end the statutory requirement that we consult. I doubt if Parliament would allow us to do so.

It will be necessary in the short term to give an answer to ALA's request for recognition. Given the advice we have received, I see no alternative, pending amending legislation, to recognising them. This unwelcome course would however be more palatable to our friends in local government if, at the same time, we were able to announce an intention to legislate.

In the interim period before an announcement in September, if the results of the interdepartmental consultation are positive, it will be necessary to hold the line that the ALA request for recognition is being considered. It is important that ad hoc recognition is not afforded in this interval and I would be grateful if colleagues could let me know whether they foresee difficulties through imminent statutory consultation requirements.

All this is, of course, the first taste of the confrontation we shall face with local authorities over the next few years.

I am copying this to other members of the Cabinet, to Michael Havers and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Helen Ghosh

PJ

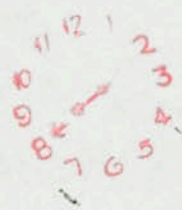
(Approved by the Secretary of State and signed in his absence)

5 August 1983

Local Govt: Relations P/Ho



- 5 APR 1983



OFFICE OF THE
DIRECTOR

GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE
DIVISION

WASHINGTON, D.C.

CONFIDENTIAL



Prime Minister (24) *egno*
Ms 1579

HOUSE OF LORDS,
SW1A 0PW

13 September 1983

The Right Honourable
Patrick Jenkin M.P.
Secretary of State for
the Environment
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London S.W.1

MJ

My dear Patrick:

Association of London Authorities

I have followed with interest the correspondence, beginning with your minute to the Prime Minister of 5th August and resting with the Attorney General's minute to you of 9th September, in which you discuss the problems involved in the setting up of this new body, the risk associated with any failure to consult it where consultation with representative organisations is required by statute, and in particular whether these problems could be resolved by taking action in the courts.

I understand that this question may be discussed in Cabinet next week, when both Michael Havers and I will be in Hong Kong. I am therefore writing simply to say that I wholly endorse the views expressed in his minute of 9th September. It would in my opinion be most unwise to begin an action for a declaration that you were not required to consult the ALA unless you were confident of success; and I see no reason to disagree with Michael Havers' view that the chances of success are in fact slim. It would I think be


/even more

even more unwise simply to fail to consult the ALA, and to await a challenge in the courts on their part which would, inevitably, be chosen to come at a time and on a subject as inconvenient to you as possible.

I think therefore that by far the safest course would be to consult the ALA; you are not, after all, obliged to adopt the views of those you consult.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, other members of Cabinet, the Attorney General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yrs:

O. H.


I was always taught at the Bar — and such I have confirmed by a life time in the Courts — never to initiate litigation without a reasonable prospect of success — Your letter of the 7th Sep: makes it quite clear that you do not regard this condition as fulfilled, and the A.-G. holds, if anything, stronger views than this

CONFIDENTIAL



SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES

Thank you for your letter of 7 September.

2. I am conscious of the difficulty in relation to consultation in which you are placed as a result of the formation of the ALA. As I and the Solicitor General advised in the letter written on our behalf on 19 July, many of your acts (e.g. the Rate Support Grant Settlement) may well subsequently be declared invalid by the Courts if you have not carried out the consultation required by statute. Yet there are no legal grounds for excluding the ALA from those statutory requirements.

3. I note from your letter that you consider that, by a process of elimination, you have to choose between option (b) (your not consulting the ALA and awaiting a legal challenge) or (d) (your seeking a declaration in the Courts that you are not required to consult). I have to say that I regard both of these options as so unattractive as to be virtually non-viable, although of the two I agree that the latter is preferable.

4. As you recognise, the risks of, say, the Rate Support Grant Report being held to be invalid are too great to be lightly contemplated. However, I think the chances of success in the action for a declaration you propose bringing are too small to justify your commencing that action. There is an insufficient basis in law for you to establish that you are not required to consult. This is particularly so in relation to the main body of statutory provision (including the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980) under which you are required to consult local authority associations which are concerned in the subject matter.

Prime Minister

(2)

*The Attorney-General
argues that the Environment
Secretary should not go*

to Court.

Mes 9/9

with mes

CONFIDENTIAL

.../5.



-2-

5. I have discussed this with Treasury Counsel who would put the point even more strongly than the way it was expressed in the letter of 19 July. He considers that it would be difficult to advance a respectable argument in Court in support of the Government's case and that there would be a real risk of the Government being publicly criticised by the Court, in a most damaging way, for having initiated what it must have known to be unmeritorious proceedings. This could reflect upon future Court proceedings involving your Department. Accordingly, whatever the short-term political advantages, I believe it would be wrong for you to commence these proceedings.

6. There is an additional consideration. You are aware that, although you might be able to freeze the position on consultation whilst the proceedings were in progress (provided you could in the meantime avoid doing any act which required consultation), once an adverse decision of the Courts had been obtained you would then have to consult the ALA. Whilst the initial hearing might be taken as an urgent item of vacation business, an appeal would be likely to stretch the timetable beyond that which would enable you to hold back business. I understand that you are in fact currently continuing the process of consultation towards a Rate Support Grant Settlement but are not including the ALA in those consultations. It will in that context become crucial for you to reach an early decision on consultation with the ALA (in the absence of prospective legislation to regularise your position).

7. My comment in paragraph 4 above as to the lack of merits of an action does not apply in relation to consultation under the London Government Act 1963. However, the provision in

CONFIDENTIAL



-3-

this Act is a very special one which refers to an association which appears to be representative of the London Borough Councils. As we recognised in the letter of 19 July, there is an argument that the ALA is not so representative (as it is not open to all the London Boroughs) although we would not rate this argument as having more than an evens chance of success. I do not believe that a challenge limited to this point would assist you in relation to the generality of the problem as discussed in your letter.

8. In the circumstances, I regret that notwithstanding the considerations you put to me I cannot advise that you go to Court upon the basis you envisage.

9. I should finally comment on Lord Cockfield's letter of 26 August. He is right in pointing to the fact that the manner of consultation is not prescribed. The consultation must be genuine but you may discount what any particular consultee may say. I can appreciate that your difficulty is that any consultation will imply recognition. It is not possible to argue that because of common membership (which I understand not to be the fact) consultation is not required.

10. I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister, other members of Cabinet and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Approved by the Attorney General

LAW OFFICERS' DEPARTMENT
9 September 1983

and signed in his absence

CONFIDENTIAL



2 PPS ✓ NO
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

8 September 1983

NBPM

MUS 9/9

2 Patrick,

ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES

Although I was not able to respond before the holidays to your minute of 5 August to the Prime Minister, I know that your officials were advised that postponement of recognition of the Association of London Authorities (ALA) would cause us no immediate difficulties in respect of either statutory or non-statutory consultation.

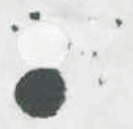
As for the longer term, I share the reluctance of the Lord Privy Seal and others to contemplate legislation to avoid our having to deal with the ALA. Not only would this be misrepresented, as John Biffen suggests, but legislation might well make permanent a split that may heal in time, as the natural joint interests of the London boroughs reassert themselves.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, other members of the Cabinet, Sir Michael Havers and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Law,
L

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin, MP

Local Cont.
Relations,
Pt 16



SEP 1983



Local Govt.
Relations,
pt 16

- 5 FEB 1985

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Veno

(2)



Prime Minister

2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

Mr Jenkin proposes
challenging the ALA

in the courts, rather than

7 September 1983

legislation, or ignoring them and awaiting a challenge

Dear Michael,

from mem.

ms

THE ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES

HLS 919

You will recall that you advised me that there were no general grounds on which I could safely ignore this Association when conducting statutory consultations with associations of local authorities in accordance with the requirements of a number of enactments.

You will have seen the various letters colleagues have sent me about legislation to exclude the Association from the consultation process, following my minute to the Prime Minister of 5 August.

There appear to be five options:

- a. to accept that statutory provisions requiring consultation with associations of local authorities generally require consultation with the Association of London Authorities as well as the other established associations, and to consult accordingly;
- b. to ignore the ALA and risk challenge where I or another of our colleagues exercise a statutory power subject to prior consultation with associations of local authorities without consulting the ALA;
- c. To prod a third party to challenge the status of the ALA in the courts;
- d. To seek a declaration in the courts that one or more of the various statutory provisions requiring me to consult with the associations of local authorities does not require me to consult the ALA;
- e. to legislate away the obligation to consult so far as it may require consultation with the ALA.

John Biffen has pointed to the undesirability of yet another Bill on local authority matters in the present Session. In the light of his comments, and the reaction of colleagues, I am not disposed to press this suggestion for the time being; framing appropriate legislation would be difficult and we do have to bear in mind the possibility that whatever we

do the other local authority associations may break up on political lines. If this happened, our legislation might be ineffective and we would return to our present difficult position.

We are not confident that any third party is prepared to challenge the status of the ALA. Bromley LBC are toying with the idea; but it is not clear that they are going to proceed. I do not think we can realistically wait upon them as the need to decide whether or not we are going to consult the ALA is daily becoming more pressing.

It would be quite unacceptable to our supporters if we were merely to accept that we had to consult a body whose objects were so obviously left-wing as the ALA. To do so would be inconsistent with what the Prime Minister has said in the House on the subject. As I see it, we are then left with two options - either to go for a declaration ourselves or to ignore the ALA and await challenge in the courts by them.

I think we would appear in a better light if we took the initiative. Whatever the legal arguments, the political basis for our action would be the desirability of maintaining the present structure of local authority associations representing all authorities of particular classes, irrespective of their political complexion. I accept that we may well lose the action: but, provided we put our case in the right way, I think that would be better than being taken to court by the ALA and then losing. If we lose, then we may need to look again at the possibility of legislating in the light of the court's judgement.

If we ignore the ALA, we leave it to them to choose the circumstances in which they challenge us. They might well seek to cause the maximum embarrassment by waiting to challenge and upset some particularly important act on the grounds that it had not been made the subject of proper statutory consultation. One particularly worrying possibility is that they would challenge us over a Rate Support Grant Report in a way that forced us to introduce a second report for debate in Parliament. It could be that payments under the report would be invalidated (see s.60 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980).

It does seem to me that the political situation created by the split in the LBA does call for some positive action on the part of the Government. I realise that you have advised against going to court but, for the time being, I see no real alternative. Would you now agree to this in the light of the considerations set out above?

CONFIDENTIAL

A number of consultations with the local authority associations are being held up while this question is under consideration. They cannot be held for more than a few weeks. If you agree, upon reconsideration, that I should take the matter to the courts, I hope that there would be grounds for having this taken as an urgent item of vacation business. The information which we have collected from Departments suggests that we could, on that basis, continue to hold back business where statutory consultation is involved (a further check on the position is being made at official level). If, however, the court will not accept this as vacation business - which would, I understand, mean that we should not get a decision until November - we should have to think again about the handling of consultations.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister and other members of the Cabinet, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

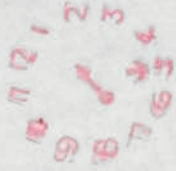
*Your ever
Patric*

PATRICK JENKIN

CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon Sir Michael Havers QC MP

8 SEP 1963



CF Yours?



CC MA
DGE

VC

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

6 September 1983

Dear Geoffrey,

Thank you for your letter of 7 August and for your kind wishes.

Patrick Jenkin has sent me a full note on the matter of recognition of the Association of London Authorities: the position is not without problems which I understand you have discussed with Irwin Bellwin. As he has doubtless told you, we share your distaste for this body but in deciding how to treat their request for recognition, we cannot ignore the statutory obligations resting on Ministers.

Yours
Raymond

Geoffrey Finsberg, Esq., M.B.E., M.P.

HU



2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

My ref: J/PSO/14380/83

Your ref:

30 August 1983

Dear Tim, *private*

Thank you for your letter of 10 August, enclosing a copy of Mr Geoffrey Finsberg's letter of 7 August to the Prime Minister.

You will know, from Mr Jenkin's minute of 5 August to the Prime Minister, of the background to Mr Finsberg's references to the Association of London Authorities. For convenience I attach a further copy. Copies of the Answers to the series of Questions Mr Finsberg asked Departmental Ministers on 29 July, and of his exchange with the Prime Minister herself on 14 July, are also attached for reference purpose.

Mr Finsberg is well aware of Ministers' difficulties over this question: he had a meeting with Lord Bellwin on 27 July at which the Minister briefed him fully on the background, and the series of holding replies he received to his question about the ALA's request for consultation cannot have been a surprise.

The request is, of course, still under consideration while Ministers discuss what should be done.

I attach a draft reply for the Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely
Helen Ghosh

MRS H F GHOSH
Private Secretary

UNITED STATES
POST OFFICE



COMPLIMENT

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DRAFT LETTER FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO SEND TO MR GEOFFREY FINSBERG MP

Thank you for your letter of 7 August and for your kind wishes.

Patrick Jenkin has sent me a full note on the matter of recognition of the Association of London Authorities: the position is not without problems which I understand you have discussed with Irwin Bellwin. As he has doubtless told you, we share your distaste for this body but in deciding how to treat their request for recognition, we cannot ignore the statutory obligations resting on Ministers.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
 Secretary of State for the
 Environment
 2 Marsham Street
 London SW1 3EB

WJ
 3/28

30 August 1983

Jim Patrick.

ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES (ALA)

File with Mrs O.R.
 Your minute of 5 August to the Prime Minister asked about imminent statutory consultations in the context of the ALA's request for recognition.

The Department has no immediate statutory consultation in prospect; indeed, consultations of any sort involving representatives of the London boroughs are comparatively rare. I should perhaps add that the Department does undertake frequent and extensive consultation, mostly non-statutory, with local authority associations. While I agree that subdivision of the associations, and an increase in the number of bodies we have to consult, is an unwelcome prospect, I share John Biffen's view that we should not at this stage seek to legislate to limit the number of bodies we have to consult.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, other members of the Cabinet, Sir Michael Havers and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Kevin Jenkin.

CONFIDENTIAL

Wm
30/8

cc ✓ NO



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

CABINET OFFICE,
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

26 August 1983

MBPM

M/S 31/8

Dear Patrick,

ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES

I wonder whether - in the light of what the Law Officers say in paragraph 13 of their Opinion - the problem may not be overstated.

The Law Officers say that consultation means no more than:

- "a. Making the consultees aware of the matter which is in issue, and
- b. giving them a chance to make their views known."

There is no requirement that there should be meetings or discussions. It is sufficient if the consultees are able to make their views known, for example in writing, or even in a Press statement. This follows, of course, what is done in the case of consultations on Green Papers when all are called to make their views known but few are chosen to discuss the issues with Ministers or officials.

On this basis it is difficult to see what harm would be done by "consulting" the "Association of London Authorities". Indeed treating them as second class citizens for consultation purposes might be more damaging to them, their pride and their dignity than engaging in a public row with them over a refusal to consult.

There is one caveat I would make in relation to the point you make in the last paragraph on page 3 of your minute of 5 August ("if we do not legislate, we will face a situation where we will be compelled to consult the present Associations, plus the new London one"). If in fact when the Labour representatives set up this new body or Association they also remained in the old Association, there is nothing in the Law Officers' Opinion which suggests that we need to consult the new Association, as all the members of the new Association would have been consulted when the old Association was consulted; and it could not be argued that the Secretary of State ought to regard it as "desirable" to consult the same people twice - once through the major Association and again through the minor Association.

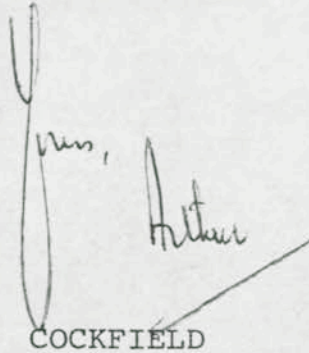
Having regard to the very limited meaning placed by the Law Officers' on the meaning of the term "consultation" and having regard also to the fact that any proposals are bound to be made known to the new Associations through the Press or as a result of a public release of

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

the consultation documents by the Department concerned, and that the Associations, whether recognised or not, will make their views known vociferously through the Press, I greatly doubt whether legislation would in practice achieve anything that we could not achieve without legislation.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister and other members of the Cabinet, Michael Havers and to Sir Robert Armstrong.


COCKFIELD

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

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CONFIDENTIAL

LOCAL GOVT: Relations

Pt 16

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Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel: 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)
01-233 7172 (Llinell Union)

Oddi wrth y Gweinidog Gwladol

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CT/4403/83



LM
23/8

WELSH OFFICE
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel: 01-233 3000 (Switchboard)
01-233 7172 (Direct Line)

From The Minister of State

LMH TF

22 August 1983

Dear Patrick,

ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES

I have now seen a copy of John Biffen's reply to your minute to the Prime Minister of 5 August. Although the immediate problem does not concern us in Wales, general legislation would, and our initial reaction is to support the view that we should avoid legislative action if at all possible.

/ I am copying this to the recipients of your original minute.

Yours ever,

John.

JOHN STRADLING THOMAS

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
LONDON

CONFIDENTIAL

CC/NO



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref: PSO/26069/83

Your ref:

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for the
Environment

Bridgeman₂

19 August 1983

Sean Patrick

Prime Minister

*miss Chatter argues against taking
legislative powers to discriminate
against bodies such as the ALA. Her
main point is at X overleaf.*

ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES

I have seen your minute of 5 August to the Prime Minister and in Tom King's absence on leave I thought it would be useful to offer a preliminary view and to alert you to an immediate, albeit non-statutory, consultation problem.

*WR
23/8*

The establishment of the ALA and the secession of five of its members from the LBA, is already creating difficulties in relation to our White Paper commitment "to consult representatives of the London Boroughs on the development of a joint scheme to be operated when the Boroughs take back responsibility for concessionary fares for the elderly from the GLC". It is vitally important to make early progress towards securing the collective agreement of the London Boroughs at least to the objective, if not the details of a uniform scheme. Otherwise we shall be under strong attack on this issue - strictly a consequence of the abolition of the GLC rather than the establishment of London Regional Transport - in taking our proposals on the latter forward.

So far, to avoid giving de facto recognition to the ALA, we have consulted only the LBA. Peter Bowness - who naturally is not talking to the ALA either - has agreed with me to take matters forward on the basis of consulting the LBA membership as well as the five Boroughs which have seceded on an individual basis. The latter should find it difficult to disagree with the principle of a comprehensive scheme for London's pensioners and to deny co-operation in its development. But if, on the basis of the advice of the Law Officers, formal recognition of the ALA has to be given in the next few weeks, they will have to be brought in. And an announcement of amending legislation in which a threat - whether or not intended - to remove their right to consultation could be construed, would provide their members with a powerful excuse not to co-operate in a joint scheme in which they were to be denied a voice through their representative association.

CONFIDENTIAL

Local Govt Relations Pt 16

It seems to me therefore that taking powers to discriminate between representative local government bodies will create acute problems in relation to executive functions (such as the London concessionary fares scheme and the highways and traffic management functions which will be devolved) where the co-operation of all the Boroughs will be essential. We would also miss out on useful contact on the less contentious issues. I fully accept that giving continued recognition to the ALA might encourage further unwelcome splits in other associations. But measures which might be seen as an attempt to silence the ALA are unlikely to bring the ALA membership back into the LBA fold and may themselves provoke further splits.

X If we cannot talk the other Associations into holding together, I do not think on balance we should take powers to discriminate between rival associations. The mechanics of consultation would become more cumbersome. But we would be under no obligation to take notice of extreme views; indeed there might be advantage in having such views more clearly exposed to be seen for what they are.

/ I am copying this to the Prime Minister, to members of the Cabinet, to Michael Havers and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever

Lynda

MRS LYNDAL CHALKER





ce 270

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

16 August 1983

mf

Dear Patrick,

Prime Minister

To note

A 16/8

ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES

I have seen your minute of 5 August to the Prime Minister about the problems raised by the creation of the Association of London Authorities (ALA).

I must say that I am very concerned at the thought that still more legislation on local authority matters may be needed in this Session. We have, as you know, a heavy programme already, with a number of difficult contingent Bills waiting in the wings. Your rate limitation legislation and the Bill to postpone the elections in the GLC and the MCCs are going to provide considerable opportunity for delay as well as serious discussion on both sides of the House. To add to these a third Bill to amend the consultation process should in my view be ruled out now.

Even to add these provisions to one of your other Bills is going to cause difficulty and add to the problems of securing their speedy passage. It seems to me that your proposals will be misrepresented as enabling Ministers to exclude from the consultation process those authorities (or even classes of authority) with whom they are not in political sympathy. This, it will be said, is hardly a democratic process and would negate the purpose of the consultation process.

Could I, therefore, ask you to consider further the other alternatives of either ignoring the ALA until faced with a legal challenge, or living with them, at least until you see whether the fission process is going to extend to the other local authority associations. If this is a process which is limited to London, (and possibly the Metropolitan counties) legislation on the lines you propose would seem a premature and excessive response to the problem.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, other members of the Cabinet, Sir Michael Havers and Sir Robert Armstrong.

John Biffen

JOHN BIFFEN

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State
Department of the Environment

→

LOCAL GOVT. Relations

Pt 16

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From the Private Secretary

12 August 1983

Dear Helen,

The Prime Minister has now seen your Secretary of State's minute of 5 August about the Association of London Authorities. Mrs. Thatcher has noted the position set out in the minute and has commented that if we do eventually have to consult the Association a rival one will inevitably have to be set up.

I am sending copies of this to the Private Secretaries to the other members of the Cabinet, Henry Steel (Attorney General's Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Tim Flesher
Timothy Flesher

Mrs. Helen Ghosh,
Department of the Environment.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 August 1983

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg M.P.

I should be grateful if you could provide a draft reply for the Prime Minister's signature, to reach this office by 24 August.

Timothy Flesher

Mrs. Helen Ghosh,
Department of the Environment.

bb



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

CH/A

Rg

7th August 1983

Dear Prime Minister

First, may I wish you a speedy recovery and hope that all will go well.

In July you gave me a very robust and helpful answer about the phony Association of London Boroughs - the Labour front organisation - but from the answers I received to a series of questions addressed to Department Ministers on the 29th July on the subject, I am less happy because it does look as if they are not taking the lead which I thought you had given.

I hope you may feel able to persuade them to treat this body with the contempt it deserves.

Geoffrey Finsberg
GEOFFREY FINSEBERG

Rt.Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
Prime Minister
10, Downing Street.
SW1

Mr Head
ACA file

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 29 July 1983

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Ethnic Languages

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what funds are available from his Department for the teaching of ethnic mother tongue languages.

Mr. Dunn: None, directly. Some specific financial support for such teaching is, however, provided both by the Home Office under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 and by the Department of the Environment under the urban programme.

Postgraduate Students

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the average direct cost to public funds of each student aged 22, 23 and 24 years studying full-time for postgraduate qualifications in the latest year for which figures are available; and what was the comparable figure spent on other forms of education for these age groups.

Mr. Brooke: The information requested is not available, because expenditure by universities and other institutions on provision for postgraduate students is not separately identifiable, and is likely to vary widely according to the qualifications and subject concerned.

Polytechnics

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what consideration he is giving to the extension of corporate status to polytechnics outside the Inner London education authority.

Mr. Brooke: My right hon. Friend is currently considering how higher education establishments might best be encouraged to develop links with local industry and in general be more responsive to the needs of the country. An important aspect of this is enabling those institutions without corporate status legally to engage in appropriate commercial activity; various ways in which this might be achieved are under consideration.

School Closures (Liverpool)

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the proposed closures of the Harrington county primary and the Harrison Jones county primary schools in Liverpool.

Mr. Dunn: Liverpool education authority's original proposals to cease to maintain these schools were approved on 6 November 1981. On 17 September 1982 the authority published further proposals the effect of which remained the closure of the two schools, but deferred implementation until August 1983. Under the second set of proposals their pupils would be able to transfer, not as originally planned to a new school in St. James road but to the retained Pleasant street school.

On 21 July 1983 my right hon. Friend approved these proposals with the modification, after consultation with the authority in accordance with section 12(6) of the Education Act 1980, that the retained school would only occupy the Pleasant street building on a strictly temporary basis until the authority provided more suitable, permanent premises.

In making this decision my right hon. Friend considered the authority's request formally communicated to the Department in a letter dated 13 July 1983 to defer the implementation of the proposals until September 1984. However, having regard to all the circumstances, including the fact that the authority had placed itself in breach of section 12(9) of the Education Act as regards the implementation of its original proposals, my right hon. Friend concluded that his modified approval of the September 1982 proposals was in the best interests of the pupils and others directly concerned, notwithstanding the proximity of the end of term.

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will meet a deputation of parents to discuss the proposed closures of the Harrington county primary and the Harrison Jones county primary schools in Liverpool.

Mr. Dunn: A meeting has been arranged for 3 August.

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: The Department has received a request from the Association of London Authorities for consultation on appropriate matters. This request and the legal issues raised are under consideration.

Northern Region

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will have discussions with education authorities in the northern region on education budgets.

Sir Keith Joseph: I have had several recent meetings with representatives of local education authorities, including those from authorities in the north of England, about various aspects of educational expenditure and would expect to have further meetings in the autumn.

Extra-mural Departments

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he proposes to withdraw responsible body status from the extra-mural departments of universities or to effect any change in regard to the non-vocational adult education provision made by such departments.

Mr. Brooke: My right hon. Friend has no plans at present to discontinue direct grants for adult liberal education to the extra-mural departments of universities. Such grants are, however, reviewed regularly as part of the Government's continuing policy of ensuring the best use of resources available.

of ABRC's procedures for formulating advice to my right hon. Friend on the distribution of the science budget, and, more widely, on his responsibilities for civil science with particular reference to the research council system.

Law Students

Mr. Key asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to the number of post-graduate students reading for the final examinations of the Law Society and the Bar who receive awards from local authorities; what proportion this represents of the total number of such students; and if he will take steps to make such awards mandatory for all United Kingdom students.

Mr. Brooke: This year over 6,000 students have taken or are proposing to take the final examinations of the Law Society and the Bar. The extent to which such students are supported by local authority awards is not known. To extend mandatory support to advanced professional and vocational courses in law would represent a commitment to public expenditure which could not be afforded at the present time.

Student Grants

Mr. Cormack asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to announce full details of the rates and conditions of student grants for the academic year 1983-84.

Mr. Brooke: The main rates of mandatory grant and the parental contribution scale for the academic year 1983-84 were announced on 12 May 1983. Details of the remaining supplementary rates of grant were issued a week ago.

Special Schools

Mr. Key asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to secure the representation of parents and teachers on the governing bodies of special schools in accordance with the Education Act 1980.

Sir Keith Joseph: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I are consulting the local authority associations, teacher associations and other interested parties on a proposal to make an order under section 2(11) of the Education Act 1980. The order would apply the

provisions of section 2 and section 3(2) of the Education Act 1980 to special schools maintained by local education authorities in England and Wales, and would have two main effects:

- i. the governing body of every maintained school would have to include elected parent and teacher governors, in accordance with the provisions of Act; and
- ii. the LEA would be required to establish a separate governing body for each of its special schools if it had not already done so. If it wished to establish or retain a joint governing body covering more than one special school, it would have to obtain the approval of the Secretary of State.

Subject to the views of those to be consulted we propose to make the order effective from 1 April 1984.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the hon. Member for Wokingham, (Sir W. van Straubenzee) as representing the Church Commissioners, whether the Commissioners have had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Sir William van Straubenzee: None. The commissioners respond to all inquiries whether from individuals or organisations. The nature of their response depends on the matter raised.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Housing Assistance

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish figures showing the number and percentage of households in Northern Ireland dependent on means-tested housing assistance distinguishing between (a) people below and above retirement age and (b) supplementary benefit claimants and the rest.

Mr. Patten: In December 1982 the latest date for which information is available, the figures were as follows:

Households on means-tested housing assistance

	Supplementary benefit claimants	Others	Total	As a per cent. of all households
Above retirement age	48,200	30,900	79,100	17
Below retirement age	60,700	35,700	96,400	21
Total	108,900	66,600	175,500	38

Blood Supplies

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many units of blood have been supplied to private hospitals by National Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland since May 1979.

Mr. Patten: The information was included in my reply of 27 July 1983.

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if a blood group and antibody screen is carried out by the blood transfusion service before blood is supplied to National Health Service and other hospitals in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Patten: Yes.

contacting and following up those who may have had earlier contact with recently discovered asbestos use are adequate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: There are no central arrangements for making such contacts where it has become known that people may previously have come into contact with recently discovered asbestos during their work and I am doubtful that practicable arrangements could be introduced on a general basis.

Youth Training Scheme

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are currently employed on the youth training scheme, divided by sex and age.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I am afraid the information is not available in the precise form requested. Young people can enter the youth training scheme either as trainees or as employees, but no information is available centrally on the employment status of entrants. The following table provides details of those young people who entered the youth training scheme in the three months ending June 1983, either as trainees or employees.

Age on leaving education	Male	Female	Total
16	12,350	8,400	20,750
17-18	475	350	825
Unknown*	75	50	125
Total	12,900	8,800	21,700

* The school leaving age of those entrants entitled to less than one year's training on the scheme is not held centrally.

Manpower Services Commission

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total budget for the Manpower Services Commission for the current year; how much money is received from the European social fund specifically to fund projects paid for out of the Manpower Services Commission budget in the current year; and what percentage of European social fund monies allocated to the United Kingdom the Manpower Services Commission has received for each year from 1975 to 1983.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The total provision for grant-in-aid to the Manpower Services Commission for 1983-84 is £1.447 million. Allocations from the European social fund are made on a calendar year basis. The European Commission will not announce its decisions on the bulk of applications for support from the social fund in respect of current Manpower Services Commission programmes until later in the year.

The percentage of the total social fund allocation to the United Kingdom allocated in respect of Manpower Services Commission programmes in each of the years 1976 to 1982 was as follows:

	Per cent.
1976	58.0
1977	77.3
1978	73.9
1979	63.3
1980	65.7
1981	68.2
1982	65.3

Figures for 1975 are not readily available in the form requested.

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for Employment whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: I am not aware of any approaches from this body. I shall consider the position in the light of legal advice if any approaches are made.

Victoria Settlement, Liverpool

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what representations have been made against the proposed closure of the Manpower Services Commission funded youth training scheme at Victoria settlement, Liverpool; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many staff and trainees will lose their jobs if the Liverpool Victoria settlement youth training scheme is closed.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Representations were made by one trade union and one member of the public against the proposed closure of the Liverpool Victoria settlement youth opportunities programme scheme. The youth opportunities programme is being replaced by the new youth training scheme this year. The Liverpool Victoria settlement has not put forward a proposal which meets the criteria laid down for the new scheme. 52 staff are under notice of redundancy and the Manpower Services Commission is arranging for approximately 12 trainees likely to be affected by the closure to receive the balance of their programme on other schemes.

Youth Training Scheme (Liverpool)

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he is satisfied with the operation of the youth training scheme in Liverpool; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Yes. I am satisfied with the operation of the Youth training scheme in Liverpool.

Youth Training Scheme (Health and Safety)

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Employment what precise responsibilities are laid upon managing agents contracted with the Manpower Services Commission to provide mode A places under the youth training scheme to ensure compliance with health and safety at work requirements.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Precise statutory responsibilities of managing agents, as of all providers of training under the youth training scheme, are set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act and its relevant statutory provisions.

Managing agents are also bound by their contracts with the Manpower Services Commission to take whatever steps are necessary to secure the health, safety and welfare of all young persons participating in the programme to the same extent and in the same manner as an employer is required to do in relation to his employees under the relevant legislation.

other public bodies, for which he is responsible, which have a member appointed to them to represent disabled people or who have members who are themselves disabled, and, separately, those which do not; and if he will list the names of those so appointed to bodies in the first category.

Mr. Alan Clark: The advisory committee and public bodies for which this Department is responsible are listed in "Public Bodies 1982" which is available in the Library. In many cases details of their membership are not held centrally. The full information requested, where available, could only be provided at disproportionate cost. If the right hon. Member has a query about a particular body, I would be glad to write to him.

Equal Pay

Mr. Greville Janner asked the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to amend section 2A(1)(a) of the Equal Pay Act 1970 (as inserted by article 3(1) of the Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983); and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: I have no plans to amend section 2A(1)(a). I have already written to the hon. and learned Member on this matter.

Construction Industry Training Board

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many redundant apprentices and award holders will become unemployed due to the decision of the Manpower Services Commission not to reimburse the construction industry's training board's management costs; and what is the value of the sum involved.

(2) why the Manpower Services Commission refused to reimburse the construction industry training board's management costs for the special training programme.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Job Release

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people have taken advantage of job release schemes during the last 12 months; and what was the net cost involved.

Mr. Alan Clark: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Lambeth

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for Employment what are the number of registrable accidents recorded for the area covered by the London borough of Lambeth for people on youth training schemes and youth opportunities programme schemes from 1st July 1982 to 1st July 1983.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the rate of infringement, by industry, among wages council employers for the area covered by the London borough of Lambeth over the last year.

Mr. Gummer: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Youth Training Scheme (Leicester)

Mr. Farr asked the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total number of places which it is planned to provide for the city and county of Leicester in the youth training scheme; and if he will give an analysis for each employment office area.

Mr. Peter Morrison [pursuant to his reply, 28 July 1983]: About 3,625 places are planned under the youth training scheme in 1983-84 in Leicester (including Market Harborough and Wigston) and about 2,125 places in the rest of Leicestershire. An analysis of these places by employment office area is not available.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Attorney-General whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

The Solicitor-General: The Law Officers Department has not had any contact with the Association of London Authorities, and I have no reason to foresee any contact.

County Courts

Mr. Field asked the Attorney-General whether the Lord Chancellor is satisfied with the current efficiency of the county court system; what assessment has been made of the length of the backlog before the courts; in which areas the delay is most substantial; and how this is likely to be affected by the reduction of over 300 posts in the bailiff service.

The Solicitor-General: The Lord Chancellor is satisfied that the county courts are functioning as efficiently as can be expected in view of the constraints to which they are subject. However, there are delays in respect of certain areas of the county courts' work; they vary throughout the country. The area of business in which delays have generally increased and where they are considered most serious is the clerical function of issuing process for the initiation of proceedings and for enforcement.

By reducing the number of bailiffs, the Lord Chancellor will be able, while remaining within his Department's staffing limit, to increase the number of staff carrying out these functions, thus helping to stem further delays and keep pace with the increasing volume of cases.

Crown Court

Mr. Field asked the Attorney-General whether the Lord Chancellor is satisfied that the morale of staff in the Crown court service is not being adversely affected by the heavy increase in civil and criminal cases and the substantial backlog of taxation and payments to the legal profession.

The Solicitor-General: I understand that the morale of staff in the Crown court is generally excellent. The staff have displayed great dedication in dealing with the increased caseload, and, in the first five months of 1983,

the number of cases disposed of exceeded the number received by 6 per cent. Apart from the general effect of the volume of work, I am not aware of any evidence that any delay in payments to the legal profession has had any specific effect on the morale of Court staff.

Northern Ireland (Security Forces)

Mr. McNamara asked the Attorney-General on how many occasions, involving what charges, cases have been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions involving the security forces in Northern Ireland, including the Royal Ulster Constabulary and its reserves; and what has been the result of the Director of Public Prosecution's decisions in each case.

The Solicitor-General: I am obtaining the information requested and will be writing to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Legal Aid

Mr. Best asked the Attorney-General whether Her Majesty's Government intend to introduce another payments on account scheme to ensure that barristers and solicitors undertaking civil legal aid work receive some payment on account for work already done.

The Solicitor-General: Since my right hon. Friend the former Solicitor-General announced a scheme for 1982-83, full and constructive discussions have been taking place between officials of the Lord Chancellor's Department and representatives of the profession on ways or improving control of the cost of civil legal aid and about arrangements for payments on account. In the light of these discussions a number of useful measures to improve control of costs will progressively be brought into operation and discussions will continue.

In view of the progress that has been made the Government has decided that there should be a further scheme for payments on account which will operate for the present financial year only. The details are now being settled in discussion with the profession.

Child Witnesses

Mr. Ashton asked the Attorney-General whether he will introduce legislation to provide that children in indecent assault or other sex cases do not have to give evidence in open court when called on as witnesses and that their testimony is ascertained by the judge and counsel and reported in writing to the jury.

Mr. Mellor: I have been asked to reply. I will write to the hon. Member.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Select Committee

Mr. George asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will estimate the number of man hours or days which have been expended within his Department on work related to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee and its sub-committee.

Mr. Whitney: Precise information is not available and could only be produced at disproportionate cost. However,

in addition to the equivalent of 1.6 staff engaged full-time in this work it is believed that in 1983, possibly a further 90 devoted some of their time to servicing the Committee.

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: We are not aware of any approaches from the Association of London Authorities. We will consider any such approach if and when it arises.

Immigration

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, further to the answers given on 21 July, *Official Report*, c. 194, and 25 July, *Official Report*, c. 338, what proportion of those applying to enter the United Kingdom as the fiancé or husband of a British citizen is issued with entry clearance immediately following interview.

Mr. Whitney: The information requested is not readily available. I will write to the hon. Member.

Budget Contributions

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total British contribution to the budgets of the Council of Europe, the Western European Union and the North Atlantic Assembly, respectively, for each of the last five years.

Mr. Whitney: Payments to the Council of Europe secretariat, Western European Union secretariat and Assembly and the North Atlantic Assembly in respect of the United Kingdom share of their budgets have been as follows:

	North Atlantic Assembly £	Western European Union £	Council of Europe £
1982-83	126,602	846,887	4,706,678
1981-82	116,408	817,109	4,138,384
1980-81	107,660	749,738	4,139,929
1979-80	112,512	730,546	4,036,238
1978-79	116,392	667,169	3,966,756

Arms Sales

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which countries in the last five years have not been allowed to purchase (a) arms and (b) paramilitary equipment from the United Kingdom because the Government have not granted an export licence in view of the relevant country's record on human rights and internal repression.

Mr. Luce: It is not our policy to name countries for which arms export licence applications have been turned down. I can assure the hon. Gentleman, however, that the human rights and internal suppression record of the country concerned is among the factors taken fully into account when each application is being considered.

their war disablement. I do not consider that we should be justified in diverting funds from other areas of health care to assist other patients with their travel costs regardless of need.

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps have been taken to enable on-the-spot adjustments to be made to artificial limbs to reduce the number of times amputees must attend limb fitting centres.

Mr. Newton: Each firm providing a service at a limb fitting centre has facilities there for making minor adjustments to its products.

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services who decides which contractor's prosthetist a patient will see at those limbs fitting centres served by more than one manufacturer of lower artificial limbs; and what are the criteria governing such decisions.

Mr. Newton: Prescribing medical officers refer patients to the contractor who in their judgement can best meet their prosthetic needs, having regard to such factors as the type of limb required and the likely delivery time.

Prosthetic Supplies (Imports)

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if prosthesis or prosthetic components manufactured by the West German company Otto Bock have ever been provided through the artificial limb service in England;

(2) in the event of prescription of prosthesis and prosthetic components manufactured overseas, if the prostheses or component is usually fitted by prosthetists of the overseas supplier or by those of a British constructor;

(3) when the last prosthesis or prosthetic component manufactured overseas was supplied by the limb fitting centre at Roehampton; what is was; and who was the employer of the prosthetist who fitted it.

Mr. Newton: Prostheses and prosthetic components made overseas are always fitted by British contractors. Otto Bock products have been provided to a small proportion of patients. The information requested about overseas products recently supplied at Roehampton is not readily available.

Artificial Limb Service

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many of the 36 medical officers in the English artificial limb service: (i) are practising orthopaedic surgeons and (ii) have ever practised as orthopaedic surgeons in the past.

Mr. Newton: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Health Authorities (Funding)

Mr. Higgins asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the district health authorities that on the basis of the resource allocation working party's formula are less than 18 per cent. underfunded.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Allocations to district health authorities are the responsibility of the regional health authorities. The information requested is not routinely

collected centrally because regions adopt different methods of calculating targets, and meaningful comparisons between districts in differing regions are not possible.

Bronchitis and Emphysema

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the nations in Western Europe which classify bronchitis and emphysema as industrial diseases.

Mr. Newton: I am not aware of any nations in Western Europe which classify bronchitis and emphysema as industrial diseases. I understand, however, that some countries, for example, Denmark, may make awards for bronchitis on the basis of individual proof.

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will now introduce legislation classifying bronchitis and emphysema as industrial diseases; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Before a condition can be added to the schedule of prescribed industrial diseases it must be accepted as a risk of occupation and not a risk shared by everyone. It must also be possible for the occupational link to be demonstrated or presumed with reasonable certainty in individual cases. The industrial injuries advisory council's advice is that chronic bronchitis and emphysema have not yet been shown to meet these requirements. The council is keeping the evidence under review.

Local Office Staffs

Mr. Park asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if managers of local offices of his Department will be allowed to supplement their staff to cater for the additional work involved in the uprating of benefit.

Mr. Newton: As in past years, local office managers are authorised, subject to keeping within their allocation under these heads, to employ casual staff and use overtime working if it becomes necessary during the uprating.

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The association's approach to this Department has been a circular letter sent earlier this month to Ministers and others about the founding of the association. The Department of the Environment acknowledged this approach for the Government as a whole, and no reply went from this Department. We will consider any further approach if and when it arises.

Housing Assistance

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish figures showing the number and percentage of households in Great Britain dependent on means-tested housing assistance, distinguishing between (a) people below and above retirement age and (b) supplementary benefit claimants and the rest.

Dr. Boyson: The information requested is set out in the following table, using the latest estimates of the number

Mr. Dover asked the Secretary of State for Defence what savings were made by awarding two hydrographic surveys of the United Kingdom's continental shelf waters to private sector firms in 1982.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The contracts in question were awarded in order to progress urgent surveying work which would otherwise have been delayed owing to the deployment of the Royal Navy survey ships to the South Atlantic. There was no overall saving.

Youth Training Scheme

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 2,500 places made available by his Department for the youth training scheme have been taken up.

Mr. Pattie: Under the rules of the Manpower Services Commission for the youth training scheme, discussions with the unions must take place before a scheme can be introduced. Talks are in progress and I hope that actual entries will begin in the autumn. The scheme is for 2,000 places.

South Pacific (Nuclear Tests)

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will transfer the National Radiological Protection Board survey into cancer deaths among service men who participated in the nuclear tests in the South Pacific during the 1950s to an independent medical body; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: A decision on who will conduct the survey has yet to be made. The independence as well as the competence of likely bodies will be factors in reaching this decision.

Select Committee on Defence

Mr. George asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many man hours or days it is estimated have been expended within his Department on work related to the Defence Select Committee for each year since that Committee's inception.

Mr. Stanley: Apart from the two members of staff who are employed full-time on work connected with Select Committees, a large number of other staff at all levels across the Department are involved from time to time in work arising from the activities of the Defence Committee. Their degree of involvement varies according to the subject under review. An estimate of this effort in the form requested could not be made without disproportionate cost.

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: I have not received any approaches from the Association of London Authorities. I will consider any such approach if and when it arises.

RAF Cottesmore

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of his Departmental review into noise levels for residents living near to Royal Air Force Cottesmore; and whether he will be able to announce assistance with grants for double-glazing of windows.

Mr. Ian Stewart: As my noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces explained in his letter of 21 June 1983, a further noise survey is to be carried out to determine what levels of noise are being experienced now that RAF Cottesmore is fully operational. The survey is due to take place in the autumn of this year.

Of necessity, the results will have to be carefully evaluated and this will take some time. At this stage it is not possible to say when sufficient information will be available to enable decisions to be taken regarding the introduction of a noise insulation grant scheme at RAF Cottesmore. My hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces will write to my hon. Friend when the results of the survey have been received and evaluated.

Falkland Islands (Housing)

Mr. Hordern asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the rent charged by the Falkland Islands Company for a three-roomed dwelling-house in (a) Port Stanley, for use by Members of Her Majesty's forces and (b) in Goose Green.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Ministry of Defence paid the Falkland Islands Company £60 per month each for houses in the Goose Green area. This reflected a fair market rent for the properties in question. Information on rental for property in the Port Stanley area is not readily available. My hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces will write to my hon. Friend.

Arms Exports

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Secretary of State for Defence which countries in the last five years have been allowed to purchase (a) arms and (b) paramilitary equipment from the United Kingdom.

Mr. Pattie: Following is a list of 92 countries with which contracts for military equipment have been signed since 1979, and which were notified to the Ministry of Defence. As such, the list, though substantially correct, may not be comprehensive, because not all private orders, particularly those of a minor nature have to be notified to the defence sales organisation. All exports of military equipment as defined in group 1 of the Export of Goods (Control) Order are of course carefully controlled, and subject to the granting of an export licence by the Department of Trade. It is not, however, possible to provide separate information on sales of paramilitary equipment.

List of countries with which contracts for defence equipment have been signed since 1979

Abu Dhabi	Bahrain
Algeria	Bangladesh
Angola	Barbados
Argentina*	Belgium
Australia	Belize
Austria	Botswana
Bahamas	Brazil

	£
a fodder plant variety (excluding a field bean or field pea variety) or an oil or fibre plant variety	330
(c) Tests for one season for distinctness, uniformity and stability of—	
a vegetable variety	175

The levels of charges are kept under review and I am currently considering the implications of the increased demand for testing of cereal varieties.

Sugar Beet

Mr. Corbett asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what estimates he has received of the likely United Kingdom sugar beet crop; and how this compares with that of each of the last three years.

Mr. MacGregor: It is too early to forecast production from the 1983 sugar beet crop, since weather conditions during the growing and harvesting period have a major effect on output. It is not, however, currently expected to exceed 1 million tonnes — white sugar equivalent. Production in the last three years was as follows:

Campaign year	Million tonnes (white sugar equivalent)
1980-81	1.106
1981-82	1.092
1982-83	1.420

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jopling: I am not aware of any approaches from the Association of London Authorities. I will consider any such approach if and when it arises.

Salmon Conservation

Mr. Golding asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has yet studied the report of the National Water Council on "Salmon Conservation—a New Approach"; what is his response; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer the hon. Member to the replies that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) on 21 July—[Vol. 46, c. 220]—and to the right hon. Member for Barnsley Central (Mr. Mason) on 26 July—[Vol. 30, c. 402.]

Butter

Mr. Gregory asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what subsidised European Community butter sales have been made to confectionery companies in each European Community state, detailing the quantities, states and value (in European units of account and pound sterling) for the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. MacGregor: There are no Community arrangements to subsidise butter used in the manufacture of confectionery products.

Aspartame

Mr. Lester asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what consideration was given by the food additives and contaminants committee to the extent of usage of aspartame in soft drinks when they decided that a health warning to phenylketonurians was not necessary in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Fenner: The independent expert committees took account of all proposed uses of aspartame during the review of sweeteners in food. They have recommended that those concerned with the clinical care of phenylketonurians should be advised of the impending use of aspartame in food. This is being arranged by the Department of Health and Social Security.

Mr. Lester asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will request the food additives and contaminants committee to review the toxicological data on aspartame in view of the fact that the use of this sweetener will be permitted in soft drinks if the draft Sweeteners in food regulations are approved.

Mrs. Fenner: The proposal to permit the use of this sweetener is in accordance with a recommendation by the food additives and contaminants committee, whose recommendation was itself in accordance with one made by the committee of toxicity of chemicals in food, consumer products and the environment following its study of all the toxicological data.

Acesulfam-K

Mr. Lester asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why it is proposed in the draft Sweeteners in Food Regulations to permit the introduction of a new synthetic sweetener, acesulfam-K in the United Kingdom; and what study was made of evidence from Germany.

Mrs. Fenner: After considering all the available evidence relating to acesulfame-K, the Government have been advised by their independent expert committees that its use should be permitted.

Dutch Elm Disease

Mr. Corbett asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much was spent by each local authority in the years 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981 and 1982 on (a) preventive felling and (b) inoculation of elm trees to contain and control the spread of Dutch elm disease; what is his assessment of the success of these measures; and what is the present position in relation to the prevalence of the disease.

Mrs. Fenner: No figures are available of the amounts spent by local authorities in the years since 1976 on attempts to control the spread of Dutch elm disease.

It has not proved possible to stop the spread of the disease, although sanitation measures, including the felling of infected trees and controls on the movement of elm, have slowed its progress in many areas.

In southern England the vast majority of elms have been killed and, with the exception of some parts of east and

	Waited by a person interviewed	Estimated time* a person applying may have to wait
patrial	7	7
first wife and children under 10	4	4
newly married wife	¾	1
Bombay	2½	3
New Delhi	1¾	2

* The estimated waiting time depends upon assumptions about the rate at which applications will be processed, which may not be realised.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many applications for entry clearance by fiancés or by husbands were decided in the Indian subcontinent in the first quarter of 1982 and the first quarter of 1983, respectively; and how many were granted entry clearance, and how many refused;

(2) how many applications for entry clearance by fiancés or by husbands were decided in the Indian subcontinent in the second quarter of 1982 and the second quarter of 1983, respectively; how many were granted entry clearance and how many were refused.

Mr. Waddington: The quarterly numbers of applications for entry clearance by husbands and fiancés for leave to enter the United Kingdom which are granted in the Indian subcontinent are published in table 7 of the Home Office statistical bulletin "Control of Immigration: Statistics". The corresponding numbers of applications refused were 180 in the first quarter of 1982, 130 in the second quarter of 1982 and 180 in the first quarter of 1983. Figures for the second quarter of 1983 are not yet available.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the numbers of people awaiting a decision on an application for entry clearance for settlement—and as husbands and fiancés—in the United Kingdom at the end of the first quarter of 1983 in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

Mr. Waddington: The numbers in the Indian subcontinent awaiting a decision on their application for entry clearance for immediate settlement are published by country in the quarterly Home Office statistical bulletin "Control of immigration: statistics" (table 6 of issue 7/83). The same publication gives for the Indian subcontinent as a whole the number of husbands and fiancés awaiting a decision on their application for entry clearance (table 7); of the 2,800 awaiting a decision at the end of March 1983, 100 were in Bangladesh, 1,600 in India, and 1,100 in Pakistan.

Entry Visas

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many visitors to the United Kingdom whose purpose was to watch World Cup cricket were initially refused entry on arrival; how many of these were from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan; and how many were from the Old Commonwealth.

Mr. Waddington: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Television Licences

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what percentage of persons in each local authority throughout the United Kingdom who are eligible for 5p concessionary television licences receive them;

(2) how many persons living in special accommodation are eligible for 5p concessionary television licences in each local authority throughout the United Kingdom;

(3) what is the total number of 5p concessionary television licences issued by each local authority in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Hurd: About 530,000 people were covered by old persons home licences in force in the United Kingdom on 30 June 1983; information about the local authority area in which these television licences were issued is not readily available. Nor is information available on the number of people eligible for a 5p concessionary licence.

Domestic Fires (Fatalities)

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons died in domestic fires in England and Wales in 1981, 1982 and to the nearest available date in 1983.

Mr. Mellor: A breakdown by location of deaths from fires attended by local authority fire brigades in England and Wales and the United Kingdom is published annually in "United Kingdom Fire Statistics" (table 25 of the issue for 1981), a copy of which is in the Library of the House. There were 635 deaths from fires in dwellings in England and Wales in 1981 and the provisional estimate of the corresponding figure for 1982 is 578. Corresponding figures for 1983 are not yet available.

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brittan: We have no record of any approaches from the association. I shall consider any approach if and when it is made.

Cable Pilot Projects (Licence Applications)

Mr. Yeo asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is yet in a position to state when he expects to make known the applications he has received for licences for new cable pilot projects.

Mr. Hurd: We hope to do so soon after the closing date for applications, which is 31 August.

Prisons

Mr. Malins asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many new prisons have been built in England and Wales since June 1979; and where they are.

Mr. Hurd: One completely new prison has been opened since June 1979 — Her Majesty's prison Frankland, Brasside, Durham. Substantial additions have also been made to existing establishments such as those to

District	Method											Total	
	Sharp instrument	Blunt instrument	Hitting, Kicking etc.	Strangulation or asphyxiation	Shooting	Explosion	Burning†	Drowning	Poison or drugs	Motor vehicle‡	Other		Not known
M. Southwark	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
N. Islington	2	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	5
P. Lewisham and Bromley	—	1	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	12
Q. Brent and Harrow	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	3
R. Greenwich and Bexley	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
S. Barnet and Hartsmere	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
T. Richmond and Hounslow	1	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
V. Kingston, Merton and Esher	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	4
W. Wandsworth	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
X. Ealing and Hillingdon	3	1	—	1	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	8
Y. Haringey and Enfield	2	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	7
Z. Croydon, Sutton, Epsom and Ewell	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	4
Airport Division	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Thames Division	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	49	6	19	12	5	3	10	—	1	2	7	—	114

* As at 1 June 1983.

† Includes all homicides which occurred in fires, whatever the actual cause of death.

‡ Excluding death by reckless driving.

TABLE 6
Offences currently* recorded as homicide in the Metropolitan Police District by result of court proceedings or other outcome
Number of offences

Offences currently* recorded as homicide	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
<i>Decided by court to be homicide</i>					
Murder	30	25	39	35	29
Section 2 manslaughter	34	15	26	21	20
Other manslaughter	31	37	55	48	33
Infanticide	1	1	2	5	1
Total	96	78	122	109	83
<i>Court decision pending</i>	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Proceedings not initiated or concluded without conviction</i>					
Suspect found by the court to be insane	2	1	—	2	—
Suspect died	4	1	1	3	7
Suspect committed suicide	4	—	8	5	—
Proceedings discontinued or not initiated	1	2	2	39	—
Total	11	4	11	49	7
<i>Currently no suspect</i>	14	16	23	26	21
Total offences currently recorded as homicide	121	98	156	184	114

* As at 1 June 1983.

TRANSPORT

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: I am not aware of any such approaches. I shall consider the matter when it arises.

Vehicle Weighing Stations

Mr. McGuire asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will further consider setting up vehicle weighing stations on motorways and trunk roads similar to the system operating in the United States of America in order more effectively to deal with the problem of overloading of commercial vehicles.

Mrs. Chalker: My Department is currently reviewing its enforcement procedures, including the arrangements for checks against overloaded vehicles at roadside check sites and at ports.

An official from the Department recently visited the United States and observed the system of enforcement against overloading practised by the various United States enforcement agencies. His report will be taken into account in the review of the Department's enforcement procedures, and I shall write to the hon. Member in due course.

A52, Bottesford

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will outline the next steps, both statutory and in regard to public consultation, which he will take regarding the proposed bypass on the A52 road at Bottesford, Leicestershire, following the recent public exhibition in the village.

	Original estimate provision for 1982-83 (March 1982) £'000	Revised estimate provision for 1982-83 (July 1982) £'000	Actual expenditure 1982-83 £'000
Billingham Diversion (Cleveland) (7.4 km.)	5,096	5,096	5,768
LONDON-FISHGUARD ROAD			
Hillingdon, West End Road (Greater London) (1.7 km.)	4,828	4,828	5,068
KENDALL-DONCASTER ROAD			
Skipton Western and Northern Bypasses (North Yorkshire) (10.1 km.)	3,293	3,293	2,452
<i>Proposals to start (contracts let after 31 October 1981):</i>			
LONDON-PENZANCE ROAD			
Polstrong-St. Erth (Cornwall) (11.4 km.)	2,062	1,841	908
Marsh Mill-Manadon (Cornwall) (4.1 km.)	5,473	5,372	5,285
Manadon-Tamar Bridge (Cornwall) (4.5 km.)	1,972	1,663	4,889
NORTH DEVON LINK ROAD			
Stage 1: M5-Tiverton (Devon) (10.3 km.)	7,901	7,532	8,776
STOKE-DERBY LINK ROAD			
Blythe Bridge-Utoxeter (Staffordshire) (13.9 km.)	940	590	808
MANCHESTER-BARNSELY ROAD			
Accrington Easterly Bypass, Southern Section (Lancashire) (5.4 km.)	601	344	206
EXETER-LEEDS ROAD			
Chesterfield Inner Relief Road (Derbyshire) (4.3 km.)	2,326	2,057	1,347
LIVERPOOL-LEEDS-HULL ROAD			
South Docks Road, Hull (Humberside) (8.4 km.)	3,390	3,056	3,029
Totals		304,316	317,843

The estimates themselves included an offsetting allowance of £10 million for work which might not in the event be undertaken in the year, although this covers the smaller schemes as well as those costing over £10 million each.

The increase in expenditure over estimate is mainly accounted for by fast progress on some schemes under construction during 1982. Provision was made for this in a net transfer to Class VI.1 in February.

ENVIRONMENT

House Prices

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish a table showing the ratio of house prices to average earnings for each year since 1953, together with the rate of mortgage interest for each year.

Sir George Young: I will write to the hon. Member.

Institution of Environmental Health Officers

Mr. Archer asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will arrange for an exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall relating to the centenary year of the Institution of Environmental Health Officers and the work of its members.

Mr. Patrick Jenkin: Arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for an exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 24 to 28 October 1983.

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Patrick Jenkin: The Association of London Authorities has made a general request to my Department for recognition and inclusion in the standing arrangements for Departmental consultation with local government. I am considering this request along with legal advice I am seeking.

Office Space

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if, pursuant to his reply of 25 July relating to occupied and vacant office space, in London, he will publish those figures readily available relating to the City of London;

(2) if, pursuant to his reply of 25 July relating to occupied and vacant office space in London, he will publish those figures available relating to Greater London;

(3) if, pursuant to his reply on 25 July relating to occupied and vacant office space in London, he will publish those figures readily available relating to inner London, being the area of the former county;

(4) if, pursuant to his reply on 25 July relating to occupied and vacant office space in London, he will publish those figures readily available relating to the City of Westminster.

Mr. Macfarlane: My Department does not assemble or publish statistics relating to occupied and vacant office space in any part of London.

Office Development, Hay's Wharf

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state the quantitative basis for his decision to permit office development at Hay' Wharf.

Mr. Macfarlane: My reasons for approving the development proposals for Hay's Wharf were set out in the decision letter issued on 6 July. I will send the hon. Member a copy.

Local Government Expenditure

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will hold discussions with local authorities on their expenditure needs in 1984-85.

association, a company, a private individual or any other, for England, Greater London and the rest of England, respectively, for each of the years 1966 to 1982.

Sir George Young: I will write to the hon. Member.

CIVIL SERVICE

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Minister for the Civil Service whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: No. I will consider any such approach if and when the occasion arises.

THE ARTS

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Under-Secretary of State answering in respect of the arts whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: My noble Friend the Minister for the Arts has received no approach from this body but he will consider any such approach if it arises.

Theatre Museum

Mr. St. John-Stevas asked the Under-Secretary of State answering in respect of Arts whether he will make an immediate statement on the future of the Theatre Museum.

Mr. Waldegrave: Discussions are taking place with the Greater London council on modifications to those provisions in the draft agreement for a lease of premises for the theatre museum which relate to the timing of building work. My noble Friend the Minister for the Arts hopes that these will lead to early signature of the agreement. It remains his intention that building work should start not later than next financial year if practicable, and he is hopeful that an earlier start may be secured without calling on Government funds in 1983-84.

Arts Budget

Mr. St. John-Stevas asked the Under-Secretary of State answering in respect of the Arts if he will make a statement as to where the cuts the Minister for the Arts has announced he is making in the arts budget will fall.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer I gave to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) on 27 July. —[Vol. 46, c. 405-6.]

NATIONAL FINANCE

Nursery Creches

Sir William Clark asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if it is the practice of the Inland Revenue that where a subsidised nursery creche is provided for staff the annual amount of such subsidy is added to the salary of the staff member for tax purposes, and that if the combined total exceeds £8,500 then the benefit of the subsidy is subject to income tax.

Mr. Ridley: I understand that under the law, where an employer incurs expense in providing a facility for the private benefit of an employee or a group of employees with remuneration (including benefits) of £8,500 a year or more, liability to tax will arise under the benefits-in-kind legislation. I am always ready to consider representations about the scope of this legislation.

Pension Funds

Mr. Alex Carlile asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will consider seeking the amendment of the legislation applicable to company pension funds so that where employees leave the company's service prior to retirement age in order to become self-employed, they are given the right to transfer their accumulated contributions to an approved self-employed pension fund; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: I have noted the hon. Member's suggestion. We are very concerned about the whole problem of early leavers from occupational pension schemes. We are still considering what should be done.

Government Debt

Mr. Gould asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will assess the desirability in present circumstances of funding the Government's debt at higher interest rates.

Mr. Lawson: The prices and yields of Government debt instruments are kept under continuous review in the light of market and other developments.

Gilts

Mr. Gould asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he makes, in deciding the level of gilt sales, of the consequent effect on variable rate lending by the banks to British industry.

Mr. Lawson: The likely consequences for domestic financial behaviour and conditions are taken into account in deciding the appropriate level and form of gilt sales.

Exchange Rate

Mr. Gould asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is Her Majesty's Government's policy to raise interest rates relative to those of other countries to avoid a fall in the exchange rate.

Mr. Lawson: The Government assess the case for higher or lower short-term interest rates in the light of a variety of indicators of financial conditions, including the exchange rate, as explained in the medium term financial strategy.

Loan Stock

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what conditions the uplift on the principle repayable on maturity of a value added or dynamised loan stock may be deductible from the issuing company's profits; and if he will broaden the provisions to assist companies whose commitments in regard to the terms of repayment of the principal have increased more rapidly than the retail price index.

Mr. Ridley: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave him on 19 July.—[Vol. 46, c. 104.] Where the uplift on the principal of a loan stock is specifically linked to inflation, it will generally be a capital item and so not deductible against the issuing company's profits. But the particular tax treatment of a stock will depend on all its terms. If my hon. Friend has a particular example in mind and can provide me with further details, I shall be glad to look into it and write to him.

Exchange Control

Sir William Clark asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what impact the abolition of exchange controls has had on the United Kingdom's balance of payments position.

Mr. Lawson: The abolition of exchange controls will undoubtedly have affected the composition of the capital account and caused the exchange rate to be lower than it would otherwise have been. Net outward capital flows will have to be increased to the extent that this lower exchange rate may have increased the current account surplus.

Treasury Officials (Salaries)

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many officials in the Treasury are in receipt of salaries of more than £30,000 a year.

Mr. Hayhoe: Ten as at 26 July 1983.

Capital Expenditure (Underspend)

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer which central Government capital programmes will be given permission to carry forward some underspend from one financial year to the next; and what will be the size of the carry forward facility.

Mr. Lawson: The scheme announced in my statement on 7 July will apply to all central Government capital expenditure and to equivalent expenditure on procurement by the Ministry of Defence. The maximum carry forward from one year to the next will be 5 per cent. of the total provision.

Import Levies

Mr. Body asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the import duty or levy imposed upon cheese, apples and tinned salmon from Canada at the most recent convenient date.

Mr. Hayhoe: I regret that in the time available it has not been possible to provide the information requested. I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Small Businesses

Mr. Arnold asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* comparative figures for the size of the small business sector in each of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries.

Mr. Lawson: The then Department of Industry published the latest comparable international statistics available on the size of small business sectors in the 19-25 November 1982 issue of *British Business*. This is available in the Library and I would refer my hon. Friend to pages 486 to 491 of the issue.

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he makes it his policy not to have any contacts with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lawson: I have received a letter from the ALA asking that it be recognised equally with the London Boroughs Association. I am considering the implications of the request.

Family Income

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will tabulate figures comparing net after tax incomes for a married pensioner couple with joint gross incomes of £100 per week, under the present system and assuming schemes 1 to 4 of Cmnd. 8093, in each of the following circumstances (a) £55 state pension, all payable on the husband's contribution, and £15 occupational pension of husband, and £30 investment income of wife, (b) £55 state pension with the wife's share payable on her own national insurance contribution, and £10 occupational pension of wife, and £20 investment income of wife, and £15 occupational pension of husband and (c) £55 state pension, all payable on the husband's contribution, and £15 occupational pension of husband, and £20 investment pension of wife, and £10 income of wife through self-employed retirement annuity scheme.

Mr. Ridley: The tax bills in 1983-84 for a married couple over 65 in the circumstances specified are as follows:

- (a) £8.34 per week (b) no tax payable, (c) £5.34 per week.
The calculation in (b) assumes that the wife's national insurance retirement pension is treated as her earned income.

The personal allowance levels on the basis of revenue neutrality for schemes 1 to 4 of Cmnd. 8093 were determined, at 1980-81 levels, for taxpayers under 65. To set appropriate levels for the aged, in order to calculate specimen tax bills, it would be necessary to answer the questions raised in chapter 7 of Cmnd. 8093 and to determine the desired relativity between the basic single person's allowance and the allowance for those aged 65.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the cost of allowing wives to count their category 'B' national insurance retirement pensions—paid by virtue of the husbands' national insurance contributions—as their own earned income, assuming (a) continuation of the present tax system and

ns of the Department's advisory services with a view to assessing their cost effectiveness in meeting the needs of these firms.

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities, if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contact with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: I received a letter from the association recently and am considering this approach.

Loan Guarantee Scheme

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to extend the operation of the loan guarantee scheme.

Mr. Trippier: No. The three-year pilot phase of the scheme comes to an end in May 1984. I will be conducting a thorough review of the scheme in the autumn and it would clearly be premature to consider any significant changes to the scheme at this time.

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he is satisfied with the operation of the loan guarantee scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The last review of the scheme carried out by my predecessor indicated that, in general, the scheme was operating well. The take-up of the scheme continues at an encouragingly high level. I will be embarking on a further major review of the scheme in the autumn by which time it will be nearing the end of the three-year pilot phase.

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what has been the net cost of the loan guarantee scheme since its inception.

Mr. Trippier: The net cost, in terms of payments made to the banks and income derived from premiums and recoveries, was about £16.3 million at 30 June 1983. However this figure takes no account of the wider economic and social benefits arising from the scheme's operation.

Doors (Imports)

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will make a statement on the extent of import penetration of manufactured doors from (a) Taiwan, (b) Singapore, (c) Portugal and (d) The Philippines; what proportion these represent to domestic production; what representations he has received from the British Woodworking Federation about this; what reply he has sent; and what subsequent action he has taken.

Mr. Norman Lamont: What information is available about the relationship between United Kingdom manufacturers sales and imports of manufactured doors is shown in the following table. This shows that there has been a strong growth in imports in the first five months of this year after a decline in 1982. Imports from Taiwan, Singapore, Portugal and the Philippines as a whole have remained a relatively stable proportion of total imports although there have been changes within the group.

My Department's officials have assisted the British Woodworking Federation in preparing an antidumping complaint against imports of exterior doors from Taiwan which was opened for investigation by the European Commission on 10 June 1983. Discussions with the federation are currently taking place as to whether or not action can be taken against the increase in imports of flush doors from Portugal.

Sales and Imports of Doors

	Thousands £ Million		1981			1982			1983			
	1981	1982	1981	Jan-May 1982	1982	1981	Jan-May 1982	1982	1981	Jan-May 1982	1982	1983
United Kingdom												
Manufacturers' sales*	7,498	8,336	—	—	—	109.0	134.3	—	—	—	—	—
Imports	2,548	2,177	785	1,515	27.2	26.1	9.8	18.1				
of which												
Taiwan	675	512	201	333	12.0	8.4	3.5	5.8				
Singapore	513	510	217	260	2.3	2.3	1.1	1.2				
Portugal	207	228	72	213	2.0	2.2	0.7	2.2				
The Philippines	40	80	4	121	0.6	1.3	0.1	1.9				

* United Kingdom manufacturers' sales by firms with employment of 35 or more of door sets, flush door leaves and door leaves (including garage or louvred doors).

Aluminium Smelter (Invergordon)

Mr. Kennedy asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, given the current improvement in world demand for aluminium, he will now instigate an independent inquiry into the possible reopening of the aluminium smelter at Invergordon, having specific regard to the question of a more favourable power contract under which the plant could operate.

Mr. Norman Lamont: No. The question of a new power contract for re-opening the Invergordon aluminium smelter is a matter for commercial negotiation between the company and the power authority concerned.

Value Added Network Telecommunications Operators

Mr. Grylls asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many value added network telecommunications operators are now working under his new licensing system; and how many of these are firms employing fewer than 200 employees.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Since the general licence for value added network services was issued in October 1982, 50 companies proposing to provide value added network services have registered with my Department and have paid the appropriate fee. Twelve of these companies are known to be providing services. In addition a large number of companies providing value added services do not need to register since they are able to operate under other general licences.

The general licence for value added network services does not require licensees to provide information about whether they are actually providing services or about the number of employees. The detailed information requested by my hon. Friend is not therefore available. I would be reluctant to ask licensees to bear the cost and inconvenience of sending me the periodic returns which would be needed to provide the information requested.

Boilers (Conversion)

Mr. Tony Speller asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to make available grants for converting boilers from oil fuel to incinerated refuse fuel in the same way that grant is paid on conversion from oil to coal-fired boilers.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have no plans to do so. One of the several purposes behind the coal firing scheme is to help reduce the high levels of coal stocks, thus saving public expenditure. Conversions to burning a mixture of coal and other material can however be considered under that scheme, although it is unlikely that a project involving less than a 75 per cent. total burn of coal (on a thermal basis) would be acceptable.

Grants and Loans (Merseyside)

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if any money paid in grants or loans to firms on Merseyside which have closed has been repaid.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Yes. Regional development grants are provided under certain conditions which are intended to ensure that the grant-aided assets continue to be used for at least 4 years within the development areas. When a company closes its premises and the grant-aided assets cease to be used, or are transferred outside the development areas it is the Department's normal practice to recover grant.

Hotels (Grants)

Mr. Gale asked the Secretary of Trade and Industry (1) what percentage of grants under section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969 has been made in respect of hotels with more than 10 bedrooms;

(2) what percentage of grants under section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969 have been made in respect of chain hotels;

(3) what percentage of grants under section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969 have been made in respect of hotels in metropolitan areas.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information is not readily available in the form required. I will write to the hon. Member as fully as possible and will place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Gale asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to widen the scope for applications for grants under section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Although preference is given to certain types of project, the section 4 scheme is already open to good qualifying tourism projects of all kinds.

ENERGY

Geothermal Hot Water

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he has any further proposals for the extraction and use of geothermal hot water in the Southampton area.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: No. My Department has an agreement with Southampton city council covering the Western Esplanade geothermal development. As my predecessor announced on 1 June, our next exploratory borehole will be in the Grimsby/Cleethorpes area.

United Kingdom Continental Shelf (Condensates)

Mr. Skeet asked the Secretary of State for Energy what volume of condensate has been discovered on the United Kingdom continental shelf; and what percentage of the 16 discoveries is economically recoverable under the current tax regime.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Of the sixteen hydrocarbon discoveries listed in the 1983 Brown Book as containing condensate, most are at an early stage of appraisal, and it is therefore possible to give only an approximate figure for the recoverable condensate reserves. This is currently assessed to be not less than about 600 million barrels.

It is for the licensees to decide whether any particular discovery is economic to develop.

Association of London Authorities

Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether his Department has had any approaches from the Association of London Authorities; if he will list them together with any reply he has given; if he will make it his policy not to have any contact with this association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have received no approaches. I will consider any such approaches as they arise.

Electricity Cables

Mrs. Dunwoody asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether his Department issues guidelines to electricity boards on the recording of the positions of electricity cables; whether any procedures exist to make such information available to other utilities; and if he is satisfied with the present arrangements.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Boards are required by statute to maintain records of underground cable locations and to

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Mr. Geoffrey Finsberg: When my right hon. Friend has further meetings with her colleagues today, will she invite them not to enter into consultation with the new phoney Association of London Authorities, which is merely a front organisation for the Labour party, but to continue consultations with the long-established London Boroughs Association?

Col. 1020

The Prime Minister: Yes, I completely agree with my hon. Friend. I shall pay due regard to his warning and also consult our many London Members in the House.