

SECRET

1 a-b

MR TURNBULL

*It must be
Wednesday not.*

SOCIAL SECURITY UPDATING STATEMENT

Prime Minister
Discussion of the Companies Bill could
provide an opportunity for raising Company
contributions to political parties. This
points to Wednesday. Agree? AT

We have an awkward handling issue on which I should be grateful if you could seek the Prime Minister's views. 20/10

As part of the public expenditure negotiations, final agreement has now been virtually reached on the social security programme. This includes a package for the annual updating involving a further freeze of child benefit.

In line with the practice adopted last year an updating statement ought to be made at some point next week. To delay it any further means an uncomfortably large gap since the publication of the relevant RPI figure. And it actually costs money - about £2.5 a week - to delay.

The obvious option would have been to make an announcement next Thursday afternoon, 26 October, with Cabinet being notified of the package the same morning. But parliamentary handling next Thursday afternoon is difficult;

- we already have PM's Questions, business questions and the Prime Minister's statement on CMOEM.
- the business for the day is the completion of the Companies Bill, for which there is no guillotine.
- the business managers are very concerned that if an updating statement was also added, the Companies Bill business would start so late that its passage would be put at risk.

so DSS and the business managers would like to have the updating statement on Wednesday 25. DSS suggest that they could send a note round to Cabinet Ministers on Tuesday 24 informing them of the package. But this would be a good deal less satisfactory in terms

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of Cabinet handling, and could give an opportunity for some colleagues to say that they had not had a proper opportunity to comment on the child benefit decision.

So it is a matter of balancing Cabinet handling and parliamentary handling difficulties.

Would the Prime Minister prefer to work to Wednesday or Thursday?

Paul Gray

19 October 1989

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PAUL GRAY

SOCIAL SECURITY UPDATING STATEMENT

The Prime Minister has seen your minute of 19 October, and has commented that the statement must be on Wednesday. She wishes to take no chances with the handling of the Companies Bill which will provide another opportunity for mischief-making on companies contributions to political parties.

AT

ANDREW TURNBULL

20 October, 1989.

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MR TURNBULL

It must be
Wednesday night.
SOCIAL SECURITY UPDATING STATEMENT

Prime Minister
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