

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH THE LORD PRESIDENT: ITEMS FOR THE AGENDA

1. Mr. Rifkind's minute at Flag A.
2. The Lord President will report to you the outcome of today's QL discussion of the legislative programme, which is to be considered by Cabinet on Thursday 9 July.

As you know, he is most unhappy about the main water private legislation. He believes that everyone's time is being wasted by the pretence that this year's programme will include this legislation. He may argue that it is better to recognise now that it will not, so that the DOE's resources can be switched to higher priority tasks for this Session.

He is also concerned about the Housing Bill. Current estimates suggest that it would be two hundred clauses long! The Lord President believes strongly that one hundred clauses are the limit. There is general agreement that the rent control legislation should be included in the Bill. Inclusion of Housing Action Trust legislation as well would bring the Bill up to one hundred clauses or so. Inclusion of a tenant's option to transfer between landlords would push the Bill to well beyond the one hundred clauses limit.

The Treasury oppose both the dropping of the main water privatisation legislation and the inclusion of the Housing Action Trust clauses within the first Housing Bill (both because of the public expenditure necessary to bring the housing concerned up to reasonable standards and because of their wish to leave room in the programme for the water legislation.)

DN.

CCB/UP

You were going to put a note into the E(LF) folder developing the ideas

under 3 below.

NLU

1.7

and allow time for consultation



More generally, the Lord President is most concerned to ensure that the Community Charge, Education and Housing Bills have been introduced before Christmas.

3. You may wish to have a brief word with the Lord President on the broad political tactics for pushing through the Community Charge legislation. The Chief Whip has told me that already a number of senior members of the Party have expressed opposition, for example, Sir Philip Goodhart, Mr. Michael Heseltine and Sir Barney Hayhoe. Other less senior members have also expressed opposition or reservations.

Ministers will need a plan for dealing with this opposition. The Whips are already mounting a major campaign, which will need to be kept up over several months. In addition, there needs to be, I think, a concerted campaign in the House by senior backbenchers, like Sir Peter Hordern, Sir Michael Shaw and Sir Giles Shaw, to rally support. The Department of the Environment need to establish a Publicity Unit (into which Bernard should have an input) to mount a campaign throughout the country to publicise the advantages of the Community Charge and to respond instantly, and at local level where necessary, to criticisms and mis-information. The Conservative Party needs to be involved, especially to rally the doubters in the ranks among your supporters in local government.

All this needs organisation. You might depute, at Thursday's E(LF), the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Chief Whip, in consultation with the Party, to get matters moving.

N.L.W.

N. L. Wicks

30 June 1987