

# LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11.00 date: 19.5.82

## PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working at No 10 all day.

At 9.30am she chaired a meeting of the Group of Ministers concerned with the Falklands (Foreign Sec., Home Sec., Foreign Sec., Chancellor of the Duchy, Attorney General and CDS) which ended at 10.30am.

At 11.00am the Prime Minister was interviewed by Jimmy Young on BBC Radio 4 for half an hour.

At 12.00 noon the Prime Minister will hold talks with Mr Mugabe followed by lunch. Lord and Lady Carrington will attend.

At 4.15pm the Prime Minister will meet Mr Steel and Dr Owen, a meeting arranged at their request. This meeting would be in the House of Commons on Privy Council terms. Donald Stewart had already seen the PM on the same terms and we did not know of another meeting planned.

At 7.45pm the Prime Minister and Mr Thatcher will host a dinner in honour of Mr Muldoon. The Duke and Duchess of Kent will attend.

## IN THE HOUSE

### STATEMENTS

At about 3.30pm there will be a Statement by Mr Walker on EC Agriculture Council following a short business statement.

### ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 68 Written: Mr Robert Maxwell Hyslop to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the 1981 annual report and accounts of the Crown Agents for Overseas Govts and Administrations are to be published. (Answer will announce publication today - Crown Agents press conference at 11.00).

No 77 Written 3.30pm: Sir William van Straubenzee to ask the S/S Education and Science when the Report of Lord Rothschild's review of the work of the Social Science Research Council is to be published. (Answer will announce publication today - Lord Rothschild held press conference at 9.30am. SSRC press conference at 11.00am). We indicated that Lord Rothschild had come to the conclusion that the SSRC should not be abolished or dismembered but a lot could be done to improve its efficiency and the way it communicates to the man in the street.

No 82 Written 4.00pm: Mr John Peyton to ask the Prime Minister whether she can yet make a statement about the recent report by the Security Commission into security procedures and practices in the public service; and whether the report will be published. (Answer will be substantive and announce publication tomorrow of Government strategy).

No 80 Written 4.00pm: Mr John Major to ask the S/S Environment what discussions he has had with the local authority associations about local authority expenditure in 1982-83 and whether he will make a statement. (Answer is linked to Mr Heseltine's 4.30pm meeting with the Consultative Council on Local Govt Finance). We discouraged ideas that suggested Mr Heseltine did not propose to do anything about local authority expenditure overshoot.

We said that Mr Heseltine had today published the third round of his Management Information System for Ministers together with the latest quarterly manpower figures for DoE and related organisations. This showed that there had been big reductions in senior staff and an annual salary saving of £87.6m.

FALKLANDS

We reported that the Argentines had put in a preliminary response which at first sight did not look satisfactory to us. It was not their final response and although we had no indication as to when this would come we had made it clear we expected a swift response and no further procrastination. In their initial reply the Argentines had asked for clarification on some points and added and subtracted a few items. The Group of Ministers meeting this morning would be considering the initial Argentine response and would no doubt make comments on it - particularly indicating our view that it is unsatisfactory. Our UN Ambassador had made known our position on the outstanding items and that we continued to ask for a final response. Sir Anthony Parsons would be seeing Perez de Cueller today.

Asked if at the end of negotiations we would be producing a document indicating the final proposals we said we thought this was a possibility and agreed that elements of the proposals might be outlined in the debate on Thursday. We did not confirm that the PM would necessarily speak in the debate though obviously it was a strong possibility.

Asked if the PM had told the Queen of the Government's decision to invade during yesterday's Audience we pointed out that Audiences with the Queen were private but of course the PM would have brought the Queen up to date.

The Task Force was now consolidated and we were not closing any options. It did not follow that we would take action straight away. We had been honestly and positively trying to get a negotiated settlement. On many occasions the Argentines had turned down very reasonable proposals. We awaited a proper response.

We confirmed that Mr Steel and Dr Owen had asked for their meeting yesterday and we thought the emphasis would be again on the diplomatic moves.

We indicated that the MoD would be issuing a statement on a Spanish language service to be beamed to the Argentines on the Falklands from Ascension.

POPE

We said we had heard nothing more from the Vatican. Our Ambassador had conveyed to the Pope our view that acknowledging that Government involvement was not large and that the visit was of a pastoral nature, we would assist him by scaling down Government involvement.

EC

Following the decision in the EC on farm prices the previous day we acknowledged that this was a grave and serious development but it was too soon to talk about what action the Government might take. Ministers would stand back and consider our response coolly.

HC

nces can the Minister give to further education if they will not be required to provide such education on the cheap, at their expense, when 10,000 people are involved in the new?

ton: I think that I can reassure the hon. However, the recommendations of the youth have not been officially approved by the . Consultations are in process, but there is no ent to change the guidelines.

thead: Is it not a crowning absurdity that the are still contracting the public sector of higher education although these institutions could art in the training scheme initiative and, as I t, without any allocation of funds or obligation of the Department of Education and Science mmitment in that direction?

ton: The hon. Gentleman has got it wrong. of those staying on in colleges' of further r full-time education is increasing. Next year, a 25 per cent. increase. Indeed, we have e funds for that increase. We have provided illion extra for the 16 to 19 year-old age group ot at all bad.

#### ool Curriculum (Sex Discrimination)

Joan Lester asked the Secretary of State for nd Science what steps he has taken to eliminate ination in the school curriculum.

son: My Department issued a circular when the ination Act came into force, and since then we the issue in a number of different publications. ance document entitled "The School ", published last year, says ential to ensure that equal curricular opportunity is ailable to both boys and girls".

stor: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that his e seen as complacent, given the mounting ar girls are under-performing in the sciences ology? Something needs to be done positively e local education authorities to take women's asly.

son: The Government are concerned that some ain schools are under-performing. In maths and is interesting to note that girls often perform oys do—in single-sex schools, or in separate in one school.

#### Numeracy and Literacy

Dobson asked the Secretary of State for and Science whether he proposes to provide resources to counter the threat to the e of numeracy and literacy identified in 5 of Her Majesty's Inspectorate's report dated 2.

h Joseph: I consider that the level of cash r school education included in the rate support ment for 1982-83 was sufficient to maintain an andard of education in that sector.

son: If the Secretary of State proposes to take whatever of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of

Schools' concern about the threat to standards in education, why does he not declare its members redundant, because they are obviously wasting their time? In addition, as the Prime Minister and the right hon. Gentleman crawled round the country before the last general election talking about constantly improving education standards, why do they not resign?

**Sir Keith Joseph:** There are serious problems of adjustment to falling school rolls. However, the pupil-teacher ratio and real spending per child at school are both at record levels.

**Mr. Christopher Price:** If the Secretary of State is concerned about standards in schools, why did he reject all the Select Committee's proposals to keep up those standards? The proposals were made on an all-party basis. What proposals does the right hon. Gentleman have for maintaining standards in our schools?

**Sir Keith Joseph:** I look forward to discussing those crucial questions tomorrow with the Select Committee. I think that the problems will not be solved in quite the way that the Select Committee suggested.

#### PRIME MINISTER

##### Engagements

**Q1. Mr. Chapman** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 May.

**The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher):** This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others, including one with the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

**Mr. Chapman:** During the day, will my right hon. Friend reflect on the fact that ridding the Falkland Islands of all Argentine troops is not only the main objective of her Government—backed up by the overwhelming support of the British people—but is seen by millions beyond our shores as an objective that is fundamental to the prospects for international law and order and essential to the security and independence of all small sovereign States—the very point recently made by no less a person than the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth?

**The Prime Minister:** I warmly endorse what my hon. Friend has said. Our objective in the south Atlantic is not only to ensure that the Argentine troops withdraw from the Falklands but to uphold international law and to see that territorial boundaries are not, and cannot be changed by force.

**Mr. Foot:** Does not the Prime Minister agree that matters cannot be left quite where they were at the end of last Thursday's debate and that several important questions should be clarified in debate in the House? I refer, for example, to the questions put by the right hon. Member for Sidcup (Mr. Heath) about the nature of the Peruvian terms and some of the possibilities that were put forward. There are also questions about how far the Argentine Government may have moved towards accepting at any rate two of the requirements that the Government have laid down. Will the right hon. Lady make it quite clear that we shall be able to discuss any response from the Argentine

Government in the House as well as any comment that the Secretary-General of the United Nations may make on the situation?

**The Prime Minister:** This will be a critical week for deciding whether a peaceful settlement is attainable. Our ambassador to the United Nations returned, saw Senor Perez de Cuellar and put some proposals to him, to be handed over to the Argentines. I understand that we expect a reply very shortly—within a matter of a day or so. Therefore, it is a critical week and the Government think that it would be timely to hold a debate later this week. I understand that the matter will be considered through the usual channels.

**Mr. Foot:** I thank the right hon. Lady for her response. It is right that the House should have such a debate, in which—I assume—the House will be able to judge the propositions for a peaceful settlement before any major escalation of the situation.

**The Prime Minister:** No military action can be held up in any way. To do so would be to give notice to the dictator, who is our enemy.

**Mr. Foot:** Surely the right hon. Lady has a responsibility to give notice to the dictator that the House has the right to judge such matters before there is any escalation of the situation.

**The Prime Minister:** The right hon. Gentleman is constitutionally and practically wrong, and wrong when it comes to regarding the interests of our people in the task force and in the Falklands.

**Mr. Peyton:** Does the Prime Minister agree that in the absence of any further major developments there will be little point in having a further debate in the House, save perhaps, to give the Leader of the Opposition a further opportunity to slide away from resolution into a morass of vacillation?

**Mr. Dalyell:** Cheap.

**The Prime Minister:** I offered a debate through the usual channels because I believe that this will be a critical week that will decide whether or not a peaceful settlement is attainable. We cannot go on prevaricating. The Argentines are trying to spin out the negotiations. So far, no military option has been closed or held up, and it will not be. However, because I think that this is a critical week it is right to offer a debate.

**Mr. Litherland:** May I draw the Prime Minister's attention to a report in *The Observer*, which said that the Argentine Government owes Williams and Glynn's Bank £6 million, and added that if that is not forthcoming it will have to be met by the taxpayers of this country? In other words we should supply money for destroyers to sink our ships. Does the Prime Minister think that it is about time that she put pressure on the banks and the financial institutions to play their part, or is it far more convenient for them for there to be a loss of life rather than a loss of profit?

**The Prime Minister:** I cannot associate myself in any way with what the hon. Gentleman has said. We have frozen Argentine assets in the United Kingdom. The bankers are playing their part, just as every one else in the country is. I can only condemn what the hon. Gentleman has said.

**Q2. Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 18 May.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Atkins:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that there are many normal, decent people in this country who are not over-zealous jingoists, but who view the antics of the right hon. Member for Bristol, South-East (Mr. Benn) in participating in a march in which there was a banner calling for victory for Argentina, as being, if nothing else, in doubtful taste? Bearing in mind that both he and his right hon. Friend the Member for Lanark (Dame Judith Hart) were members of a Government who sold ships and planes to the Argentine—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I have said before that the Prime Minister can be questioned only about those matters for which she is responsible.

**Mr. Atkins:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that this is political opportunism of the worst order?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend is correct in saying that Governments from both sides of the House have sold weapons and ships to Argentina. He is also correct in saying that the two right hon. Members he has mentioned were members of Labour Governments. I also agree that the attitude that those right hon. Members are taking is out of step with the country, their constituents and even their party.

**Mr. Craigen:** As those of us in this country know what a determined lady the Prime Minister can be, has she considered at any time the possibility of a face-to-face meeting with the Argentine leader—[*Interruption.*—]—to maximise the opportunities for this last attempt at peace?

**The Prime Minister:** I am a very merciful person. The answer is No, Sir.

**Mr. Ancram:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that many of us who have been life-long supporters of the idea of a European Community have been deeply disturbed by some of the actions of the Council of Ministers over the past 48 hours? Will she make it clear to our partners that co-operation within the rule of law cannot be selective, and that these actions can only give comfort to our enemies and endanger the Community as a whole?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend is referring to the voting that is taking place over the CAP farm prices, in which it looks as if the prices will be implemented by a majority vote. If that is so, it is without precedent. It raises serious issues and we shall be considering what to do under the new circumstances. I do not think that it would be wise to go any further than that at the moment. It may still be possible to pull it back.

**Mr. David Steel:** Is the Prime Minister therefore rejecting the advice of the Conservative group in the European Parliament, which has supported such a move?

**The Prime Minister:** They are as free as I am to express their views. [*Interruption.*] I did not agree with their views on the Luxembourg compromise.

**Mr. Mates:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that in circumstances such as these, the hardest thing that people can do is to wait, and contain themselves in patience, particularly when they are not, and cannot be, in

possession of all the facts? However, will my right hon. Friend accept that most of us, both inside and outside the House, will keep patience and faith, confident in the knowledge that at the right time my right hon. Friend and her closest advisers will do the right thing?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend's advice is wise. I am grateful to him for it.

**Mr. Maxton:** Now that the Prime Minister is away from the dangerously jingoistic atmosphere of the Scottish Tory party conference, will she reconsider the attitude that she expressed, that war is more thrilling and more exciting than the welfare of her people?

**The Prime Minister:** I have never expressed such an attitude.

**Mr. Maxton:** You did.

**The Prime Minister:** I have never expressed such an attitude. However, I believe firmly that we have a duty to defend our people from the invader.

#### Falkland Islands

Q3. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the Falkland Islands.

**The Prime Minister:** Our representative at the United Nations has had a further meeting with Senor Perez de Cuellar. The negotiations are continuing and we are doing all that we can to reach a peaceful settlement, although there are principles on which we cannot compromise. There remain substantial difficulties. I believe that we shall know within the next day or two whether an agreement is attainable. We cannot have endless Argentine prevarication. We have been negotiating in good faith for six weeks and there has still been no sign of Argentine willingness to implement the Security Council's mandatory resolution.

Our determination to ensure that all Argentine forces are withdrawn from the islands remains absolute. We have throughout made it clear that we shall take whatever steps are necessary to bring this about. We are meanwhile increasing the military pressures on the Argentine Government.

**Mr. Dykes:** I thank my right hon. Friend for that detailed statement. Does she agree that the Government have now done all that they can to achieve a peaceful settlement? Before the awful prospect that full-scale hostilities will have to begin, can we reconsider those specific items of Argentine intransigence that have made

them resist, adamantly and stubbornly, the demands of the Secretary-General, to which the British Government have already acceded?

**The Prime Minister:** We have done everything that we can to try to secure a peaceful settlement. The Argentines have shown their intransigence by flouting every single part of the United Nations mandatory resolution. Not only did they flout the resolution, they have gone in the contrary direction by piling extra men and equipment to the islands.

**Mr. Strang:** Is the Prime Minister aware that the speech that she made in Perth last Friday convinced many people that she was more intent on a military solution than a peaceful settlement, that would be acceptable to the vast majority of the Commons, but not to the Right wing of the Tory Party? Is it the case that the Argentine Government are prepared to withdraw their troops from the Falklands without requiring Britain to concede the principle of sovereignty first?

**The Prime Minister:** We were negotiating in February—with the islanders—in New York, long before the invasion. It was the Argentines who broke off those negotiations. We were negotiating over the South Georgia incident. It was—

**Mr. Cryer:** Answer the question.

**The Prime Minister:** I shall answer the question in my own way and in my own time.

It was the Argentine Foreign Secretary, Senor Costa Mendex who broke off a diplomatic solution to the South Georgia incident the day before invasion. For six weeks we have been trying to reach a negotiated settlement. If we are not able to do so, most of my right hon. Friends and hon. Friends, and most hon. Gentlemen would not flinch from a settlement by force.

**Mr. Waller:** If, unfortunately, it became unavoidable at some time in the future that the use of force had to be contemplated in the defence of British interests, would it not be highly irresponsible for any actions to be delayed, not for operational reasons and in defence of Service men's lives, but simply to consult Members of the House, however eminent they might be?

**The Prime Minister:** I believe that any military action or option cannot and must not be delayed by people who are extending negotiations. To say that we have to consult people in the House, apart from being constitutionally wrong, would give notice to the invader of when we intended to take action. That would be stupid as well as totally unjust to those whom we expect to fight for us.

Q41. Mr. Ron Brown (Leith) asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 18 May.

Q42. Mr. Delwyn Williams asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 May.

Q43. Mr. Skinner asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 18 May.

Q44. Mr. Dover asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 May.

Q45. Mr. Jim Marshall asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 May.

Q46. Mr. Edwin Wainwright asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 May.

Q47. Mr. Alton asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 May.

Q48. Mr. Parry asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 May.

Q49. Mr. Thomas Cox asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 May.

Q50. Mr. Stanbrook asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 May.

Q51. Mr. Lee asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 18 May.

Q52. Mr. Norman Atkinson asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 May.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others, including one with the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

#### Factory Closures

Q13. Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister how many hon. Members she has seen on matters relating to factory closures since she last answered oral questions; and how many jobs were expected to be lost in the closures mentioned.

**The Prime Minister:** I have had no such meetings since 13 May.

#### Supplementary Benefit

Q22. Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Prime Minister if the Government have any plans to impose any new conditions in connection with drawing supplementary benefit upon young people aged 16 to 19 years who are unemployed.

**The Prime Minister:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services recently invited the Social Security Advisory Committee to consider two sets of amending regulations concerning supplementary benefit. These include provisions with a bearing on the benefit entitlement of people in this age group. For the

most part the amendments will clarify existing provisions, but he has proposed a regulation to change the "21 hour rule" governing the benefit position of unemployed people who undertake part-time courses of education or training. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security announced details of the Government's intentions in reply to a question on 10 May from my hon. Friend the Member for Ripon (Dr. Hampson).

Proposals for withdrawing supplementary benefit entitlement from 16-year-old school leavers were set out in the December 1981 White Paper, "A New Training Initiative: A Programme for Action" (Cmnd. 8455).

#### Falkland Islands

Q23. Mr. Renton asked the Prime Minister whether, on the occasion of her visit to the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament, she plans to discuss the Falkland Islands situation with the Secretary General.

**The Prime Minister:** I would hope to see the Secretary General during my visit, and would naturally expect to discuss the Falkland Islands situation with him.

#### South Atlantic

Q25. Mr. Warren asked the Prime Minister if, when she meets the President of the United States of America, she will discuss with him the future defence of the South Atlantic.

**The Prime Minister:** I would expect this to be among the subjects which we shall discuss when I meet President Reagan in June.

#### Falkland Islands

Q26. Mr. Eggar asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the Falkland Islands.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes).

#### Broadcasting (Departmental Responsibility)

Q35. Mr. Freua asked the Prime Minister if she will transfer responsibility for broadcasting from the Home Office to another Department.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

#### Comptroller and Auditor General

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Prime Minister, pursuant to her answer to the hon. Member for Norfolk, North, 19 April, *Official Report*, c. 19, what is the total number of staff of the Comptroller and Auditor General; how many of these people are qualified accountants; and if she will list separately the qualifications of the 36 staff of the Comptroller and Auditor General who are employed on the audit of the National Health Service.

**The Prime Minister:** The present staff of the Comptroller and Auditor General for England, Scotland and Wales numbers 766, of whom 621 are audit staff, and the remainder supporting staff. The Department has 60 staff who are qualified as members of accountancy bodies. A further 235 are at various stages of training for such qualifications.

Thirty-four audit staff are currently employed on the audit of the National Health Service in England, Scotland and Wales. Of these, 14 have passed the departmental training examination; three are qualified members of CIPFA; and 17 are undergoing training for that qualification. The Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland employs four staff on NHS audit and their qualifications are: one FCCA; one ACIS and two unqualified.

#### Television (Concessionary Licence Fee)

Mr. Winnick asked the Prime Minister what representations she has received regarding a concessionary television licence fee for retired people living on their own; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have from time to time received letters on this subject but we have no plans to introduce concessionary licences for pensioners. As my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary explained in the debate on 16 December 1981—[Vol. 15, c. 322-61]—we continue to take the view that the right way to help retirement pensioners is by maintaining the real value of the retirement pension.

### DEFENCE

#### Falkland Islands

Mr. Trotter asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether Service men involved in the Falklands crisis will be able to make a claim against his Department in respect of the losses incurred by them through the cancellation of holiday arrangements for Service reasons where such loss is not covered by insurance.

Mr. Wiggin: Yes. In circumstances where cancellation could not reasonably have been foreseen at the time of booking, regulations exist under which claims may be made by Service men for losses incurred by them and their immediate families when holidays are cancelled for Service reasons. Claimants are required to produce evidence that all reasonable steps have been taken to obtain a refund from the holiday operator or travel agent for sums they have been obliged to pay in advance for the holiday.

#### Compulsory Military Service

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has any plans to introduce any form of compulsory military service; and if his Department has authorised any administrative measures to facilitate the introduction.

Mr. Wiggin: There are no plans to introduce compulsory military service and therefore no administrative measures have been taken to facilitate its introduction.

#### Rockall (Union Flag)

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements are made for the replacement, when necessary, of the Union flag raised by Royal Marines on Rockall in 1955.

Mr. Rifkind: I have been asked to reply.

A flag can withstand the weather conditions on Rockall for only a very short time. A plaque was therefore also placed on the rock in 1955. A new plaque was erected in 1971 and was still in position when the island was last visited. It will be checked and, if necessary, replaced when the light is next inspected, probably later this year.

### ENVIRONMENT

#### HMS "Dauntless"

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has received representations about the development of HMS "Dauntless" to provide additional accommodation for personnel working at RAF Greenham Common; whether he intends to hold a public inquiry; and if he will make a statement.

Sir George Young: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations about this proposal. However, the proposal has not been formally referred to my right hon. Friend for decision by the local planning authority or the developing Department and the question of holding a non-statutory inquiry therefore does not arise.

#### Environmental Impact Analysis

Mr. McKelvey asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether any estimates have been made by his Department on the cost of the various options for environmental impact analysis.

Mr. Heseltine: There are not currently any statutory requirements for environmental assessments of projects for development, although major projects are subject, in effect, to such assessments. The extent of any additional costs which might come from applying a statutory requirement for such an assessment would depend on its nature. The Government are currently opposing a draft EC directive on the subject because of their concern to avoid making any unnecessary additions to costs and delays in reaching decisions on projects.

#### New Towns

Mr. McKelvey asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much public expenditure is invested each year in the new towns.

Sir George Young: The forecast outturn of net public capital investment by the English new towns in 1981-82 is £105 million—after deducting receipts from special disposals. The provision for 1982-83 is £112 million.

Mr. McKelvey asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total sum realised so far through the sale of the assets of the new towns.

Sir George Young: New towns have been selling assets since their inception in 1946. A total figure is not available. The English new towns have realised £356 million from the sale of assets since April 1979.

#### Tin Cans (Recovery)

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is his policy towards the recovery of tin cans at central points on a similar basis to bottle banks;

(2) in view of the collection of 1,500,000 tin cans a year in the Leeds "Save a Can" experiment and their recycling