



Mr McDonald

CePS/Lord Bellwin

PS/Mr Stanley

PS/Pem Sec. Dr Holdgate

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Your ref:

10 March 1983

Dear Home Secretary

Thank you for your letter of 2 March setting out the views of QL Committee on the Departmental bids for the 1983-84 Legislative Programme. I should like to accept your invitation to attend the meeting on 14 March.

Without knowledge of the other programme Bills you are recommending for inclusion in List B it is difficult to give more than a provisional view. I anticipate that I shall be in a position to give a firmer comment at the meeting.

In the meantime I note what you say about the Somerset House (Management) Powers Bill and the New Towns (Money) Bill. On the latter I accept that if there is to be a short pre-election session then the Bill must be restricted to a financial clause only. If there is to be a normal post election session then I consider it essential for the Bill to include the provisions to wind up the New Towns Commission and to achieve an effective means of transferring housing and community-related assets from new town corporations to the local councils. Without these powers we are unable to wind up the Commission or any New Town Corporation, some of whose dissolution dates have already been announced for 1984 and 1985.

I should also like to put up a marker that it is highly probable that legislation will be needed to give cover to the extension of the scheme to deal with defects in Airey Houses (or variants of it) to other house types. You are aware of current discussions in H Committee and of John Stanley's recent statement to the House (8 February). The Chief Secretary is anxious that we do not continue making ex gratia payments.

I think it might be helpful if I explain at the meeting the probable position on the scope and timing of the local government legislation. I should like, as a minimum and without prejudice to my final views on the List B, to suggest that at least one DOE Bill should be held in reserve pending final decisions on



local government legislation. On the basis of current priorities this would be a medium sized Housing Bill extending the system of assured tenancies and simplifying the improvement grants system (B4 of our original bid).

I am copying this to the Members of QL, and to First Parliamentary Counsel and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours sincerely,*

*T. King*

P.P. TCM KING

*(dictated by the Secretary of State and signed in his absence).*

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