

1. MR. BUTLER ¹⁶⁰³
2. PRIME MINISTER

PUBLIC ORDER REVIEW

You asked this morning about the state of the Public Order Review by the Home Secretary as compared with what you said in the Guildhall speech. Below are the actual words you used:

"By the end of this year the Home Secretary will have completed his review of the whole question of public order including the Act of 1936 which has stood largely unchanged since that time."

This is in fact literally true. The Home Secretary is now considering parts of the review and is holding three or four meetings a week to discuss particular aspects. The completed review will be in his hands by Christmas. He is understandably anxious to get the main issues sorted out with his main colleagues within the Home Office and the Scottish Office at least before minuting you, and I think this is right. He has, however, undertaken to take your views at the earliest possible stage. More generally, the Government will need to ensure that the main law and order agencies - particularly the police - are on side before publishing the review. Nothing would be worse than to have spokesmen for the Police Federation rubbishing the recommendations before the ink was dry.

All this means that the timetable is longer than I think you anticipated this morning. But I do not think that this breaches the undertaking which you gave in your Guildhall speech. Indeed I understand from Robin that the caveat about

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later publication was made when the Home Office advised the use of the form of words in the speech. On this basis are you content to let the Home Secretary get on with this for the moment with a view to the earliest possible reference to you in the New Year?

Yes
no

DF

10 December 1984