

PRIME MINISTER

11 December 1984

HOME OFFICE REPORT ON PUBLIC ORDER

Earlier in the Autumn this report was promised by the end of the year. It is probable that you will receive a draft of this report just before or just after the end of the year. I have spoken to officials at the Home Office who have provided me with the following bulletin of progress.

As predicted, the Home Office are unlikely to find any major gap in the current criminal law armoury covering public order offences. Moreover, they positively wish to protect those areas where the common law has still not been restricted by legislative codification.

Three principal points will probably emerge from the Home Office report:

- (1) The police should be given additional powers to control static demonstrations including picketing.
- (2) There should be a revision of offences along the lines envisaged by the Law Commission Report with certain improvements. This will provide for a series of offences from riot down to an offence of Sober and Disorderly Conduct.

- (3) The report will also deal with consequential areas, such as the protection of Embassies and the recovery of costs.

There will be a battery of relatively small provisions suggested. At the moment, the Home Office is uncertain how to handle the results of these recommendations. It has not consulted the Scottish and Welsh authorities.

Home Office has finished receiving evidence and is now drafting the report. It envisages a White Paper in the Spring.

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