

E.R.  
PRIME MINISTER

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H Committee

1. United Nations Convention on discrimination against women

At its recent meeting H Committee discussed (minutes attached) the question of whether we should ratify the UN Convention on the "elimination of all forms of discrimination against women". The Committee agreed that there was no alternative to ratification. They did not consider however that the reservations proposed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary went far enough and in particular they were not ready to agree that this country should accept the commitment to search for ways of further reducing discrimination with a view to its eventual elimination. It was agreed that no immediate announcement should be made.

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2. Corporal punishment

The Committee discussed the implications of the ECHR case in which the Court had ruled against this country in favour of two Scottish parents who did not wish their children to be subject to corporal punishment. They agreed that the Secretary of State for Education and Science should inform the ECHR that the Government were undertaking consultations on the best way of ensuring that parental convictions on corporal punishment were respected. A consultative document would be issued later in the year with a view to legislation if necessary at some point in the future. They also agreed that the Scottish Secretary should reassert the commitment given by successive Secretaries of State that corporal punishment should be eliminated in Scotland by the end of 1983/84.

JF.

7 March 1983