

PRIME MINISTER

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H COMMITTEE

Dog Licences

H Committee (minutes attached) discussed the proposal by the Secretary of State for the Environment to increase the dog licence fee to £5. In the event, however, a majority of the Committee favoured abolition. Particular factors which weighed with the Committee were the impossibility of enforcement and the absence of obligation on authorities to spend licence fee income on dog control measures. The Lord President invited Mr. Jenkin either to take the matter to Cabinet or to bring back proposals reflecting the majority view of the Committee in the autumn. *(See his minute elsewhere in the box)*

Civil Legal Aid

There was something of a row in H Committee about the Lord Chancellor's proposals for curbing civil legal aid expenditure and for extending the system of payment on account from last year to this year. The Chief Secretary argued that the low take-up rate of the 1982/83 scheme (only £13m of the £30m allocated) demonstrated that there was no great demand for it. The Scottish Office said that they did not have the money for a similar scheme in Scotland. In the event, however, it was agreed that since the Lord Chancellor would need the goodwill of the legal profession in order to secure greater control over civil legal aid expenditure, some money should be made available for payments on account. This should not, however, be as much as proposed by the Lord Chancellor and the precise amount would need to be determined in discussion with the Chief Secretary.

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20 July, 1983