



Prime Minister

PRIME MINISTER

*I doubt the letter
has would be greeted
with approval = the idea
was sharply criticized
in a 10-min
note with 1 speech
last week
p. 6*

*Agree to the preparation of
a consultation document?*

*Would you like to see it
in draft? Mr Penn
and*

*JMB
27/10*

The Home and Social Affairs Committee today discussed the proposals made for the future of dog licences by the Secretary of State for the Environment (H(83)36). We were able to reach agreement in principle on the Environment Secretary's alternative proposal, that the dog licence as it currently exists should be abolished and replaced by a discretionary power for local authorities to institute a system of registration and dog control in their own areas. This system would be financed by a registration fee fixed by the local authority within a maximum limit set by central Government. Such a scheme would require primary legislation and the Environment Secretary recommends that it should form part of the 1984/85 programme. He is prepared to take responsibility for this legislation.

There are a large number of details still to be considered before any public announcement can be made. The Environment Secretary advised us that the local authority associations would not object to this proposal, although clearly they will wish to be reassured about central Government's attitude to its (small) impact on their manpower.

The next stage is for the Secretary of State for the Environment, in consultation with the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to work up proposals and prepare a consultation document setting out in more detail exactly what is proposed. When this is issued there will no doubt be considerable public comment, on which we shall have to take a robust line. However, the existing situation is indefensible and the other alternatives of abolition or an increase in the licence fee both present very serious objections. Whatever reservations we may have about the detail of the present proposal, it does concentrate on the major element of the problem, which is how to control dog nuisance. I think that it is the best solution available to us and we must press ahead. It may be possible to introduce legislation in 1984/85, but the Queen's Speeches and Future Legislation Committee will need to consider this in the context of the programme as a whole.

I am sending a copy of this minute to members of H Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

hollis

Postament - legislative Programme Pt II

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27 OCT 1963

RESTRICTED



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

31 October, 1983.

Dogs

The Prime Minister was grateful for the Lord President's minute of 26 October reporting on the discussion at Home and Social Affairs Committee of the Secretary of State for the Environment's proposals on dog licences.

The Prime Minister agrees that a consultation document should be prepared, along the lines discussed by the Committee. She does, however, have some doubts as to whether the proposals for a local authority licensing system would be greeted with approval. She recalls that the idea was strongly criticised in a speech in the House last week on a Ten Minute Rule Bill.

The Prime Minister would be grateful to see a draft of the proposed consultation document in due course.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the members of H Committee and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

David Barclay

Miss Janet Lewis-Jones,
Lord President's Office.

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PRIME MINISTER

DOGS

H Committee returns on Tuesday to the subject of dog licences (see attached paper).

The Secretary of State for the Environment would still prefer to raise the dog licence fee rather than abolish the system. But his paper concedes that a majority of the Committee is likely to prefer abolition, as they did last time.

As a compromise, he would accept abolition of the licensing system plus a new system of local registration run by local authorities (who would set the registration fees, within a maximum prescribed by the Secretary of State).

This would require primary legislation, which the Secretary of State would wish to see in 1984/85.

Would you like the Lord President to minute you about H Committee's conclusions?

Yes please
md

DMS

20 October, 1983

Note: Minute commissioned from Lord President. Cabinet Office and DoE informed by telephone.

DMS
24/10



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

25 October 1983

Dear Patrick,

TEN MINUTE RULE MOTION: CONTROL OF DOG NUISANCE

Thank you for your letter of 20 October about Tony Marlow's ten minute rule motion for Wednesday 26 October.

The timing of this is a little awkward in relation to our H Committee discussion, and I am sure that in the circumstances your proposed approach - not to oppose and to abstain in any vote on tomorrow's motion - is the right one. As regards any necessary action if a Bill is introduced, we will probably need to reflect both on the outcome of today's meeting and on the contents of the Bill itself before deciding what to do. I assume that you will write to me and other interested Ministers, or as necessary bring the matter to L Committee, in advance of any Second Reading date.

I am copying this letter to other members of Legislation Committee, Sir Robert Armstrong and First Parliamentary Counsel.

Yours
John Biffen

JOHN BIFFEN

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for the Environment

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15 NOV 1983



10 DOWNING STREET

- 1) Mr Turnbull Not at all AF 6/12
- 2) Mr Barclay

Would it, do you
think, be exceedingly
wise to show the attached
to the PM when the draft
dogs White Paper appears?

D.

CF

~~CF~~

Please b/t with the draft
consultation paper when it
arrives.

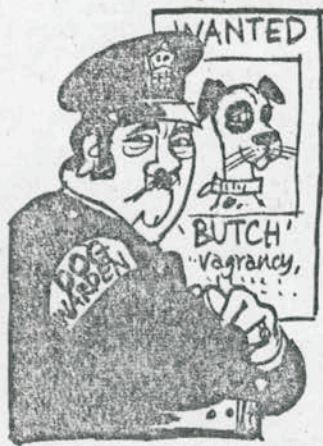
Dms
7/12

Hounds of fate

GUARDIAN

29-76

KENNETH BAKER MP considers the brave new world of dog licences



EVERY leader in the West is against "Big Government." Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan are against it. Mrs Thatcher speaks eloquently against it, and the Prime Minister is manoeuvring himself into the position of being, by the time of the next election, the champion of the little man. But Big Government invariably starts in a small way.

If the role of Government is to be reduced, then people have to be weaned away from believing that the State can solve all their problems. It is pointless criticising the size of the bureaucracy if people, politicians and Government all conspire to find solutions that invariably lead to more bureaucrats — recording, checking, analysing, policing, following-up and generally cossetting. The mood of the country in general is now clearly against Government, but it is very difficult to interpret and implement this in the particular. One essential thing is that we must all resist the urge to find new areas for state intervention. A classic example of this is the report that has just appeared, from a working party of civil servants, on dogs.

The report reveals that there are about six million dogs in the UK, and up to one million could be

strays—though only 200,000 have actually been taken into police stations as strays in any one year. Stray dogs are a nuisance. They foul footpaths; cause accidents; worry livestock and contaminate the soil of parks with diseases that can be passed to humans. The police are too busy to spend more time on dogs, and the inevitable answer is a national force of 1,000 dog wardens.

The cost can be met by increasing the dog licence to £5. The Minister has asked for comments, but has no doubt about it: the campaign for dog wardens is rolling on and brave is the man who will stand up and say "what rubbish."

The arguments swing to and fro. Some opponents have even dared to suggest that there aren't many stray dogs. Since they are domestic animals, they need food to be given to them daily, and therefore what may appear to be a stray to one person is someone else's pet which they see and feed in the evening. Moreover 60 per cent of the stray dogs that are taken to police stations are claimed within a few days. How pettifogging of the opponents to play with statistics like this when every sensible person with a pair of eyes knows that there is a problem of stray dogs! Some opponents in their narrow bigoted way

have suggested that the Treasury would never allow the revenue from dog licences to be earmarked for the warden service since this would be breaching a fundamental principle of not hypothecating revenue. If the licence money were earmarked why shouldn't the petrol duties and the car licence revenue be spent just on roads instead of paying interest on our debts. How narrow of the Treasury to think like this when the health and safety of the nation are at stake! Some obtuse if not lunatic opponents asked if it would be better to appoint bee and wasp wardens since these had been responsible for eighty deaths since 1900.

No, the case was convincing and in 1977 a thousand dog wardens were appointed. In 1978 ten regional pounds had to be built, all with facilities for de-worming and for spaying bitches, and it was clear that a further 500 wardens were needed. In 1979 these wardens revealed that an even greater threat to health and safety were stray cats. The Government, prior to introducing cat licences in 1980, approved the doubling of the wardens!

In 1981 following the escape of a tame crocodile off Wigan Pier, and the terrorising of Scunthorpe by an orang-utang the Government agreed that the National

Force of Cat and Dog Wardens should be responsible for all animal protection and welfare. In 1982 a Minister for Animal Protection was appointed to take his place alongside the Minister for the Arts, the Minister for the Disabled. In the same year the Queen allowed the force to use the appellation "Royal" and the College of Heraldry approved their motto: *Per Ordure ad Astra*.

In 1983 replying to a Parliamentary Question the Minister said: "The Inspectorate of the Animal Protection Staff amounted to 3,000 qualified wardens, and the administrative support to a further 4,000. The House will realise that the administrative support on this scale is necessary to follow through the work of the wardens, to administer the pounds, to provide veterinary services and to prevent licence evasion. I am glad to tell the House that the Government has decided to establish an animal licensing centre in an area of high unemployment."

In 1984, Britain held the first International Conference of Animal Wardens. At last we had taken a lead in world affairs. In this annus mirabilis the Government introduced the "RSPCA and Battersea Dogs Home Nationalisation Bill," since the private provision of such services was on a national basis

inappropriate. In 1985 the Government, to stop unemployment reaching three million, introduced a scheme to allow each animal warden to take on a young school leaver. This doubled the Inspectorate to 7,000 and the total administrative cost in that year, at 1977 prices, rose to £150 millions. In 1986 the Minister for Animal Protection surrendered to the lobby that wanted animal licences treated like drug prescription. The old, the young, and pregnant women were exempted. This reduced the yield of licences to £10 millions. In 1987 the tenth anniversary celebrations of the establishment of the Warden Force which took place in Wembley Stadium were spoiled when an elderly lady rose up and felled the chief warden, since her dog had been taken from her to be de-wormed, spayed, pounded and destroyed. The judge in sentencing her said: "It is people like you who, by defying the rule of Parliament, undermine law and order and imperil the health and safety of our nation." The elderly lady's comments were struck from the Court record.

Now is the time to say "No" to this nonsense.

Kenneth Baker is Conservative MP for Westminster, St Marylebone