

MR FLESHER20 January 1984LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME: 1984/85

Some comments on the Pollution (Protection of Food and Marine Environment) Bill in the context of our earlier paper to the Prime Minister on industrial pollution issues generally.

The first part of the proposed Bill will tighten up the administration of the 1974 Act on dumping at sea. The proposals do not represent any significant change in policy but provide a sounder legal basis for existing practices and greater flexibility in licensing arrangements.

In its own terms this is fair enough. However, it will focus public attention upon our policy for the disposal of sewage and industrial wastes and low level nuclear wastes in particular. We are already coming under considerable national and international pressure to restrict sea dumping. The German Government is convening a European Ministerial Conference in the Autumn on the North Sea where the UK could well be isolated.

|| It is possible, therefore, that we shall need to reconsider our policy on dumping at sea.

The second part of the Bill will introduce statutory powers to control the distribution and consumption of food contaminated by a civil nuclear, chemical or similar incident.

|| Such a measure is also likely to add to public concern on the basis that we are anticipating this type of incident.

It is also possible that the Prime Minister's forthcoming review of policy and presentation for industrial pollution could indicate the need for primary legislation on other subjects. Two possibilities are the amendment of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and a comprehensive and compulsory control system for pesticides.

We suggest that any pollution legislation for 1984/85 needs to be considered in the wider context of our general approach to industrial pollution problems.

DLP.

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