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Ref. A985/1244

PRIME MINISTER  

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Legislative Programme 1985-86: Consequences of the  
Inclusion of a Gas Bill  
(C(85) 11)

## BACKGROUND

FLAGA

At the meeting of the Sub-Committee on Economic Affairs which approved the proposals by the Secretary of State for Energy for the privatisation of the gas industry, the Lord President was invited to discuss the consequences for next Session's programme of including a Gas Bill with the Queen's Speeches and Future Legislation Committee (QL) and to report back to Cabinet. This item will therefore only need to be discussed if the decision of Cabinet in the previous item is to include a Gas Bill in next Session's programme. The legislative programme agreed by Cabinet on 28 February is annexed.

## MAIN ISSUE

2. The main issue is which Bills to drop from the programme agreed by Cabinet on 28 February if a Gas Bill is to be included.

3. The Lord President's memorandum suggests that the Nationalised Industries Bill and the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill should be deleted. E(NI) effectively agreed last week that the Nationalised Industries Bill might be deferred to a later session, and this seems unlikely to give rise to any difficulty. It is not easy to select a second Bill. Mr Hurd will no doubt argue that Northern Ireland (Emergency





Provisions) should not be dropped. But there are very few useful alternatives. Sir Keith Joseph's Education Bill is perhaps the most serious alternative.

4. The memorandum also points out that there are three other Bills which Cabinet did not agree to put into the programme, but which were left on one side for further consideration. These are Housing, Dockyards and Deregulation. QL is to consider the problems which including any or all of these Bills would create for the legislative programme and will report back to Cabinet before the end of May. There is therefore no need to discuss this aspect of the programme at this meeting.

#### HANDLING

5. You will wish to invite the Lord President to introduce his memorandum. Cabinet will be aware already, from the previous discussion, of the size, complexity and controversiality of the Gas Bill. You might therefore wish to invite the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Chief Secretary to react to the proposals that their Bills should be dropped. Most members of Cabinet will have a view on the appropriate changes in the programme; you may like to invite the Lord Privy Seal to give his general view on the likely situation in the Commons next session towards the end of the discussion.

#### CONCLUSIONS

6. You will wish Cabinet

- a. to agree on the Bills to be deleted to create room for a Gas Bill; and



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b. to note that QL Committee will consider during May any further restructuring of the programme which may appear to be necessary and will report back to Cabinet before the end of the month.

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ROBERT ARMSTRONG

1 May 1985

CONQUEROR

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ANNEX

BILLS ORIGINALLY RECOMMENDED BY QL FOR INCLUSION IN  
LEGISLATION PROGRAMME 1985-86

ESSENTIAL (4)

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. Armed Forces                          | medium     |
| 2. EC (Portuguese and Spanish Accession) | very short |
| 3. Crown Agents (Waiver of Interest)     | short      |
| 4. Northern Ireland Loans                | very short |

PROGRAMME (21)

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 17. Agriculture   | short            |
| ⊙ 20. Education   | medium           |
| 22. Wages   | medium           |
| 25. Atomic Energy Authority   | short            |
| 28. Local Government and Planning                                   | long             |
| 34. Commonwealth Development Corporation<br>(Overseas Subsidiaries) | very short       |
| 35. Social Security   | long             |
| ⊙ 38. Animals (Scientific Procedures)                               | substantial      |
| 39. Shops   | short            |
| 41. Public Order  | medium           |
| 46. Latent Damage   | short            |
| — 48. <u>Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions)</u>                | medium <u>==</u> |
| 49. Museum of London (Amendment)                                    | short            |
| 50. Housing (Scotland)  | long             |
| 51. Legal Aid (Scotland)  | substantial      |
| 52. Law Reform (Parents and Child) (Scotland)                       | medium           |
| ⊙ 56. Financial Services  | long             |
| 57. Consumer Goods and Services                                     | medium           |
| 61. Civil Aviation  | medium           |
| 62. Building Societies  | long             |
| ✓ 63. Nationalised Industries                                       | medium           |

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UNCONTROVERSIAL (8)

L	64.	Fellowship of Engineering and Further Education Unit Grants	very short
	65.	Superannuation (British Council and Commonwealth Institute Pensions) Act (Amendment)	very short
	66.	Irish Sailors' and Soldiers Land Trust (Winding Up)	short
L	69.	Family and Matrimonial (Miscellaneous Provisions)	long but Law Commission drafted
L	45.	Public Trustee and Funds Administration	short
L	70.	Land Registration	short
L	71.	Regulation of Activities in Outer Space	short
L	72.	Trade Marks (Consequential Amendments)	short

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