

PRIME MINISTER

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME 1985/86

Attached is a note from the Policy Unit about next year's legislative programme. It argues that, in order to accommodate next year's Housing Bill, the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Bill and the Consumer Goods and Services Bill should be deleted from the programme instead of the Local Government part of the Local Government and Planning Bill. This is on the grounds that the first two of these are essentially non political, whereas the Local Government Bill extends compulsory tendering and competition to important areas of local government.

I think that it would be a mistake to intervene in the deliberations of QL in the way proposed by the Policy Unit. There are several reasons:

- i) Lord Whitelaw has had to alter the programme substantially to accommodate the Gas and Housing Bills. In order to do so he has had to put together a complex package of agreements with departmental Ministers eg Mr. Tebbit's agreement to the Gas Bill was on condition that none of his Bills were cut. A further intervention from No. 10 would greatly complicate this process and would certainly not be welcomed by Lord Whitelaw.
- ii) The arguments adduced against the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Bill apply with equal, if not greater, strength to the 1986/87 Session. Moreover, like it or not, this Bill is a manifesto commitment from both 1979 and 1983.
- iii) Why not make a virtue of necessity? It might well be a good idea to have a Session free of local government legislation so that Patrick Jenkin can concentrate on getting the rates package right and selling it. If the Local Government Bill remains in next year's programme,

E. R.

we will have legislated on local government in every  
Session of this Parliament.

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Do you wish -

a) to write to Lord Whitelaw as proposed in the Policy  
Unit note?

or

b) not to intervene in QL's considerations? ✓

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*DF*

Timothy Flesher  
13 May 1985

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LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME 1985/86

On Thursday, QL will consider the Legislative Programme for 1985/86. The inclusion of the Bill to deregulate the private rented sector and introduce home improvement loans will entail the removal of at least one other Bill from the Programme.

The draft paper for submission to Cabinet which QL will consider says that "if deregulation of the private rented sector is to be achieved in this Parliament, next Session is the time to do it", and recommends that a Housing Bill be included in next Session's Programme. We agree.

However, the draft paper goes on to suggest that the local government element of the Local Government and Planning Bill be deleted. But this Bill extends compulsory tendering and competition to such matters as refuse collecting and cleaning, and contains other value-for-money measures. This, too, is best done in the next Session rather than in the Session immediately preceding a General Election.

We suggest that two other Bills, considered in the Paper as possible candidates for deferment, should be deferred:

The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Bill. This longish and highly controversial Bill would update and extend existing controls over scientific procedures on living

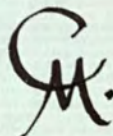
animals by introducing a licensing system and a statutory Quango. There was a White Paper commitment in 1983 to early legislation, but we think this Bill - which is highly regulatory - should not be proceeded with in the next Session, if at all. It will be opposed vigorously by many animal groups for not being tough enough, and by medical groups worried about any further controls.

The Consumer Goods and Services Bill. This largely uncontroversial, medium-length Bill would impose upon suppliers the duty (which to some extent already exists under the Sale of Goods Act) to ensure that goods offered for sale are safe. Again, this is a regulatory Bill, and we think that - since it will be popular with most sectors and broadly acceptable to the Opposition - it would be an appropriate measure for 1986/87.

We recommend that you should send a Private Secretary's letter to Wille Whitelaw suggesting that, since the Government favours deregulation and competition rather than further regulation, the two regulatory Bills would be good candidates for deferment; and that the Local Government and Planning Bill should have its place for 1985/86 as an important, if contentious, measure to improve value for money in local authorities.



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