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1 June 1983

Dear Robin,

PROCEDURE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS

I expect you will be up-dating the guide in the light of this year's election. I list below a number of passages that will need altering.

Choice of date

Page 1, footnote. This should now read -

"\*(Part I of Schedule 1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983)". ✓

Page 2, para 5.1. The first 2½ lines should now read -

"5.1 The rules in Part I of Schedule 1 of the 1983 Act provide that". ✓

Page 7, para 15. The first line should now read -

"15. Under Part I of the Representation of the People Act 1983 the last". ✓

Action before election announcement

Page 15, para 36. The normal interval between dissolution and polling is now 22 days (see para 5.1, last sentence), which means that dissolution will normally occur on a Wednesday for a Thursday polling day. So the parenthesis should now read -

"(normally a Wednesday because of the customary choice of a Thursday for polling and the normal 22 day interval between dissolution and polling)". ✓

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Please check by reference to a calendar that I have got this right.

Page 18, para 41. The normal timing is as follows -

- Day 1. Commission read. Commons elect a Speaker, and adjourn.
- Day 2. The Speaker is approved, after which the taking of the Oath by Members begins.
- Day 3. Oath-taking continues.
- Day 4. Oath-taking continues, the swearing of the greater part of the Members being achieved fairly early on this day.

In 1970, the greater part of the Members were sworn on days 2 and 3, with the Opening on day 4. Day 4 is thus the earliest practicable day for the Opening. I think para. 41 would be clearer with the following alterations -

Line 2, for "When" substitute "On the day that"

Line 6, for "election of the Speaker" substitute "approbation of the Speaker on the second day on which the House meets,".

Line 10, for words from "fairly" to "meets" in line 11 substitute "by fairly early on the fourth day on which the House meets, though in 1970 this was achieved on the third day, thus enabling the Opening to take place on the fourth day."

Finally, you may think it worth adding a few words to para. 9 of Checklist I, or to para. 5.3 on page 2, or to both, to the effect that dissolution dates for all likely polling days should be cleared with First Parliamentary Counsel as soon as there is any likelihood of an election.

GEORGE ENGLE

*Yours sincerely*  
*George Engle*

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*Election*

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

2 June 1983

PROCEDURE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS

Thank you for your letter of 1 June containing amendments to our election handbook. I have indeed been bringing it up to date as we have gone along, and I have incorporated the amendments in your letter. I will send you a revised version when the Election is over.

*7/83*

George Engle, Esq.,  
Office of the Parliamentary Counsel.

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