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26 June 1985

Robin Butler Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

Dear Robin,

PROCEDURE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS

Thank you for your letter of 17 June enclosing one copy of the sixth edition of the guide. (I have caused my previous copy to be destroyed.)

This embodies all the non-asterisked textual amendments suggested by me; but paragraph 31 still does not mention that dissolution without prorogation occurred in 1983.

I have written to the Home Office, asking them to notify me as soon as they decide to make an order bringing into force the provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1985 which affect the relationship between dissolution and polling. I will let you know what is afoot whenever I hear from them. I will let you have a revised version of paragraph 16(i)(a) in due course.

What you say in the last paragraph of your letter is correct - though, as I said in paragraph 7 of my letter of 30 May, there is a technical difficulty (currently under consideration) which appears to preclude any interval between the date of the Dissolution Council and the date of dissolution. If and when a solution of the

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Election May 1983

Gen. Election



technical difficulty is found, we will have to consider what changes ought to be made in the guide. Paragraph 3.2 is obviously a candidate.

Finally, I should perhaps mention the dimness of the photocopying in several places in my copy of the sixth edition - e.g. the bottom of pages 12 to 17 and 22 to 24. I hope the next edition will be more legible.

Yours sincerely

GEORGE ENGLE



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5 July 1985

F E R Butler Esq
10 Downing Street
SW1

No need to reply.

Dear ~~Robert~~,

FERB

PROCEDURE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS

Thank you for your letter of 3 July enclosing improved copies of pages 12-17 and 22-24. I am having the replaced pages shredded.

Certainly
";" has
dropped
out.

I now see that paragraph 27 mentions the 1983 dissolution without prorogation. In line 7 of that paragraph, has "; and" dropped out after "complication"?

I have a revised version of paragraph 16(i)(a) ready to send you as soon as the Local Government Bill is sure of enactment.

Yours ever

George

GEORGE ENGLE

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Election - '83 election 5/83



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

3 July 1985

PROCEDURE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS

Thank you for your letter of 26 June.

I did not mention in paragraph 31 that dissolution without prorogation occurred in 1983 but it is mentioned in paragraph 27.

I will look forward to hearing from you further when you have heard from the Home Office about the date to bring into force the provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1985.

I apologise for the photocopying. I am enclosing new copies of pages 12-17 and 22-24.

Sir George Engle, K.C.B., Q.C.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

17 June 1985

PROCEDURE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS

Thank you for your letter of 30 May enclosing further amendments to our guide to the Procedure for General Elections.

Your letter has brought to light that, although the sixth edition was indeed produced as promised in my letter of 2 June 1983, it was given to nobody but me.

I have now had to decide what to do about amending it further, bearing in mind that the asterisked amendments in the attachment to your letter will not come into effect until some date in the future. I have decided that the best thing to do is to circulate the sixth version including the unasterisked amendments - i.e. those that are already in force - so that everybody has a version which is right at this moment; and to hold back the asterisked amendments, particularly since virtually all of them - i.e. those affecting the timetable - are not on present form expected to come into effect until February 1987. In the meantime it seemed to me to be important to make available a version which is currently correct but to warn those concerned that further changes are on the way. I have therefore circulated the sixth edition under the attached cover note which I enclose with your copy.

Since the Home Office do not receive a copy of this guide, I would be grateful if I could continue to use you as our guide and mentor on it. Could I therefore please look to you to let me know when the asterisked amendments should be introduced and (if it is not too much trouble) to let me have a revised version of paragraph 16(i)(a) when the Local Government Bill becomes law.

I agree with you that it is not necessary to make an amendment to cover the provision for the demise of the Crown. That is not a sufficiently standard event to make it necessary to include a reference in a guide to normal procedure.

The point you raise in paragraph 7 seems to me (if I understand it correctly) to have important implications. If the timetable for a polling day runs from the date of the proclamation dissolving the existing Parliament and summoning the new one, and the proclamation can provide for

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the dissolution of Parliament on a future date, it appears to follow that the interval between dissolution and polling day could be less than 22 (or 23) days. Indeed the date of actual dissolution could become a moveable feast. This would require an amendment to para 3.2 and would have an important practical effect on the Government's completion of its business before a General Election. But perhaps I am reading more into Part I of Schedule I of the Representation of the People Act 1983 than I should?

Sir George Engle, K.C.B., Q.C.

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