


PRIME MINISTER

I am afraid that the Government sustained a minor defeat in the House of Lords yesterday on the Transport Bill. An amendment from Lord Lucas of Chilworth, seeking to reinforce the law protecting drivers who take car-sharing passengers from any complications over their insurance position, was carried by 104 votes to 84.

The Department of Transport are very relaxed about this defeat. They say that in the first instance any such provision is unnecessary since drivers are already well protected; but that Lord Lucas' amendment is itself defective; and that they have in mind to introduce at Report stage in the Lords a work-able amendment to cover the same point.

They say that there are no public expenditure consequences, but that there may be some insignificant extra work for insurance companies.

I have no idea why the Lords Whips allowed this defeat to happen. The Lords do not seem to be wholly reliable on transport matters.

 MS

14 May 1980