

PRIME MINISTER

Parliamentary Affairs

Next Week's Business

The business for next week has changed since you saw the provisional timetable on Monday. The business managers have, however, left the Nationality Bill in on Tuesday, despite the risk of a scene because of the unemployment figures. This is because they want to go to the Committee of Selection on Wednesday and not lose another week in getting the Committee stage launched. I am sure that that is right, but there will certainly be a scene on Tuesday because the Opposition have formally requested a statement from Mr. Prior on the unemployment figures. I assume that you will not be disposed to agree to this, since it would lead automatically to a demand for a statement every month from now on; but the Chancellor of the Duchy should raise the question with Cabinet.

We shall have to watch the statements' timetable for the next few days in any case. Subject to Cabinet's views, Keith Joseph will make his BL statement tomorrow afternoon or on Monday. The Chancellor has also proposed a statement on Monday, on cash limits. There are no Government proposals for statements on Tuesday, and we will of course seek to avoid any statements then. Keith Joseph also plans to make his Quicksilver statement on Thursday 29 January.

Legislative Programme

As you know, QL failed to agree about the Petroleum and Continental Shelf Bill. This will be raised at Cabinet. A Cabinet Office brief is attached.

MJS

21 January 1981