



PRIME MINISTER

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME 1979-80

1. I have continued to keep under review the progress we are making on the preparation of legislation, about which I sent you an earlier report on 10 September. Today the Chief Whip and I have considered a major review of the whole of the legislative programme.

2. The forecast which I gave in my minute of 10 September still holds good, except that we should now have the European Communities (Enlargement) Bill ready in October, a little earlier than we had expected; and the Transport Bill and the Ports (Finance) Bill will probably not now be ready until sometime in November. The National Heritage Fund Bill will also be introduced in November.

3. There have been some adjustments in the contents of particular bills. There will now be a separate bill on shipbuilding which should be ready by the end of October; and the amendments to the Employment Protection Acts will probably form part of the Trade Union Bill. I understand that there will no longer be a Valuation and Rating Bill for Scotland: these small provisions will be incorporated in the Local Government, Planning and Land Bill.

4. I have also noted the suggestion in the Industry Secretary's minute of 27 September that provisions on Supplementary Benefit for strikers might be included in the Social Security Bill. Given the policy questions which still have to be resolved, I should be surprised if this



could be done without delaying the Bill's introduction and postponing the Second Reading from before until after Christmas. The delay would in turn put back the date for Royal Assent and so put at risk the savings and other changes which the rest of the Bill is intended to achieve in 1980/81. I would not favour adding provisions of this kind in Committee.

5. Subject to that point, we can reasonably expect that the most important parts of our legislative programme will be brought forward in good order over the next few months, with a substantial number of bills available for introduction during the first few days after Parliament returns. The Chief Whip and I will make every effort to get Bills through the Commons in time, with adequate time for consideration in the Lords, but I cannot at this stage guarantee that we shall be able to get all of them through both Houses as soon as some colleagues would like. Those which need Royal Assent by the end of the financial year will present particular problems, and I have noted the special urgency of the Industry Bill from the point of view of savings in the PSBB. Different bills present different problems from the point of view of the Parliamentary timetable, and I am in touch with colleagues concerned to discuss this and agree solutions. It is, however, too soon to decide finally on tactics or questions clearly of timing and the use of the guillotine, which must depend on the way in which the Parliamentary situation develops in the autumn.

6. As I mentioned to you however in August, both the Chief Whip and I are most anxious not to introduce any guillotines before Christmas. We are continually monitoring progress and will report to you on any special difficulties which may emerge.

7. I am sending copies of this minute to colleagues in the Cabinet, to the Minister of Transport, the Chief Whip and the

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Lord Advocate, to First Parliamentary Counsel, and to Sir
John Hunt.

N.S.J.S.

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3 October 1979

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