



HOUSE OF LORDS,  
SW1A 0PW

My ref: 256/70/03

27 September 1983

My dear Willie:

Illegitimacy

In your letter of 1st August you gave the approval of H Committee to my proposals for reform of the law relating to illegitimacy, subject to the satisfactory resolution of the points raised by the Home Secretary in his letter of 29th July. Among these was the suggestion that priority should be given to the implementation of the custodianship provisions in Part II of the Children Act 1975. In this he is supported by Norman Fowler, who pointed out in his letter of 8th August that the resources required for this step are more modest than those which would be needed for the Family Law Reform Bill.

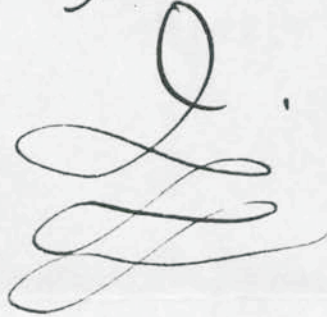
I have given careful thought to the question of priorities and to the resource implications of the Bill generally, bearing in mind also the doubts expressed by Peter Rees in his letter of 10th August. My conclusion is that the custodianship provisions should take precedence over illegitimacy and should have the prior charge upon such spare capacity as I can conjure up out of my existing resources. Regrettably the extra squeeze which would be needed to accommodate the illegitimacy provisions as well is beyond me at present. This is a great pity. The number of additional staff and registrars that would be required is not large and the proposed Bill is generally agreed to be a worthy piece of law reform. I have therefore considered another possible course, namely, changing the law subject to a delayed commencement. But it is not very satisfactory to drag out the implementation of primary legislation in the way that the Children Act 1975 has been dragged out and, subject to whatever you and others may say, my reluctant preference is for shelving the whole project for the time being.

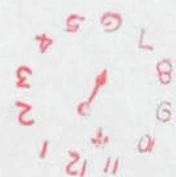
The Right Honourable  
The Viscount Whitelaw, C.H., M.C.,  
House of Lords.

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I am sending copies of this to members of H Committee,  
to First Parliamentary Counsel and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

yrs :

A handwritten signature in cursive script, consisting of several loops and flourishes, positioned below the text "yrs :".



29 SEP 1983