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POLICY UNIT  
24 February 1984

PRIME MINISTER

THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME

The Legislative Programme for 1984/85, the first full year of the new Parliament, should aim to tackle the more contentious parts of the programme laid out in the Manifesto. It should also take those measures where time is needed to transmute law code into working action on the ground before an election disrupts the process. 24/2

The debates in QL have produced some improvement in what at the beginning was a tired, unexciting and damaging programme. It is right to take the Local Government measures, to include a Social Security and Health Bill which enables the family practitioner controls and pensions reform to begin to bite, to deal with Representation of the People measures, to have a Bill which enables the pledges on solicitors to be honoured.

The most notable omissions in the programme as now set out lie in the fields of privatisation and the creation of more effective markets. In privatisation Cabinet could press for Civil Aviation as well as Public Transport: Nicholas Ridley is well advanced with his measures on the bus industry and says he could introduce both Bills within the tight timetable of the 1984/85 session. He should be supported.

In the energy field, gas is only in as an alternative. Whilst there are still delays in settling the policy on both gas and electricity it would be folly not to include legislative time for at least the first steps in the difficult task of denationalising parts of the energy industries. Peter Walker will be upset after preparing his paper if nothing can happen.

In the difficult task of making markets work, the most obvious omission is legislation to deal with the problems in the private rented sector housing market. Better labour mobility requires an easier system of new lets for tenants. Patrick Jenkin has come up with some good proposals and should be supported.

/In order to

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In order to accommodate these additions to the programme there need to be reductions. Scotland at the moment has four long or medium Bills which would take up too much legislative time. In order not to upset George Younger too much, the neatest way of reducing Scotland to three Bills would be to suggest deferring for a year both the English and the Scottish measures on Insolvency and Bankruptcy. Two long Bills would then pass out of the programme and in the process DTI would be relieved of the difficulty of piloting through one long Bill in a year when they have enormous tasks ahead in sorting out their industries. Could Norman Tebbit be persuaded of the wisdom of this?

If you did not wish to drop the bankruptcy measures then it would be necessary to drop two of the other Scottish measures (Heritage, Family Law and Law Reform). None of them are vital.

If Civil Aviation is accepted as a Bill then the short Civil Aviation Bill in the essential category is no longer necessary. In the uncontroversial category several of the measures could be removed. It would make sense to take out the longer ones - Enduring Power of Attorney and Merchant Shipping. Nicholas Ridley might agree if he gets both his privatisation measures in.

The result of all this would be to reduce the number of Bills (Total -2), whilst improving the quality of the programme. It would have more controversial measures and therefore more political cutting edge. It is right to take controversy at the beginning of the Parliament and it would also help to counter allegations of drift. If there are too many uncontroversial and tired looking Bills in the programme the Press will redouble its criticism.

In the uncontroversial category, if you wish to reduce numbers you could also remove the English Industrial Estates Corporation, Land Registry and Law of Property Amendment, Foreign Compensation and OpenCast Coal Planning (Total -6). These are all short Bills. There is a case for removing these to leave more flexibility. Later in the year some additional measures may be needed as a result of policy work under way at various Departments: if short Bills were needed they could then be accommodated. For example, contracting out in local government may need legislation, and the pollution policy

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initiative might uncover small legislative gaps which need plugging. The argument against is that it might upset the Lord Chancellor and Foreign Secretary for little extra Parliamentary time gained. The attached chart summarises these proposals.



JOHN REDWOOD

PROGRAMME BILLS (16 RECOMMENDED BY QL)Necessary:Total

Local Government	(DoE)	
Social Security and Health	(DHSS)	
Representation of the People	(Home Office)	
Brunei	(FCO)	
Administration of Justice (Solicitors)	(Lord Chancellor)	
Elections (Northern Ireland)	(NIO)	
Nationalised Industries	(Treasury)	
Public Transport ) Presented as a	(D/Transport)	
Gas ) choice, both	(D/Energy)	
	needed.	

Not included but necessary:

Civil Aviation (long)	(D/Transport)	
Private Rented Housing	(DoE)	11

Debatable:

Prosecutions	(Home Office 2nd Bill)	
Pollution (Good but not based on a full pollution policy review)	(Agriculture)	
Trustee Savings Banks	(Treasury 2nd Choice Bill)	3

Could be sacrificed:

Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Scotland) - Policy questionable and not urgent.	(DTI)	
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or

Two of Heritage, Family Law, Law Reform (Scotland)		5
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UNCONTROVERSIAL BILLSBest to sacrifice:

Merchant Shipping	(Transport)	
Enduring Power of Attorney	(Lord Chancellor)	

Could also postpone to another year:

Open Cast Coal (Planning)	(Energy)	
Foreign Compensation	(FCO)	
Land Registry and Law of Property	(Lord Chancellor)	
English Industrial Estates Corporation	(DTI)	

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MR. REDWOOD

The Prime Minister has noted the discussion in QL Committee finalising its recommendations to Cabinet on next year's legislative programme. She has also noted the points made by the Policy Unit in their various minutes about the programme. She would be grateful if the Policy Unit could provide a brief on the Cabinet paper on the legislative programme for 1984/85 when it is circulated for discussion in Cabinet on 1 March.

T. FLEENER

21 February 1984

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*Dr*  
*27/2*

*Dear Willie*

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME 1984-85

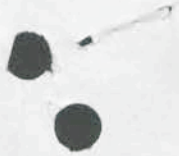
*will request if required*

Thank you for your letter of 23 February.

I note that QL have only accepted my short essential Civil Aviation Bill and one of my uncontroversial Bills. I am disappointed that you have not felt able to go further on my bids for Programme Bills. You will not be surprised to learn that I shall feel bound to argue in Cabinet the case for many more privatisation Bills, including buses and airports which I have confirmed can both be ready for early introduction.

*Nicholas Ridley*

NICHOLAS RIDLEY



29 FEB 1984