

PRIME MINISTER

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME 1985/86

The Cabinet is due to consider on 6 June the recommendations of QL Committee for amending the programme previously agreed by the Cabinet. The Lord President has told me that QL will recommend that the Education Bill should be removed from the 1985/86 programme and marked down for the 1986/87 programme.

I appreciate the pressures on the next Session. But I shall nevertheless want to argue strongly in Cabinet that the Education Bill should remain in the 1985/86 programme. It is the vehicle for making certain legislative changes which are essential for taking forward our policies for raising standards which we have set out in the White Paper "Better Schools".

These policies depend crucially on improving teaching quality. The Bill will enable the holder of my office to make the in-service training of teachers perform more effectively its central role in raising standards, and to secure the appraisal of teachers with far-reaching possibilities for better management of the teaching force and for relating pay more closely to performance. Enactment next session will enable us to make a start on both these fronts in 1987/88 ie within this Parliament.

Our policies also comprise a reform of school government. Another main function of the Bill is to give governing bodies a measure of independence vis-a-vis the local authority so that parents, local employers and other lay people can make their own contribution towards raising standards at school, and schools can have that life of their own which the 1944 Education Act intended them to have. Since implementation will be phased, only enactment next session will permit implementation to start this Parliament, as we said it should in "Better Schools".

I hope that the Cabinet will agree that an Education Bill does have to figure in the 1985/86 programme. Meanwhile I am considering whether it is possible to reduce its content so as to save some Parliamentary time. I would be content for the Bill to be introduced in the Lords.

I am sending copies of this minute to other members of the Cabinet, to Sir Robert Armstrong and to First Parliamentary Counsel.

KJ.

3 June 1985

Department of Education and Science

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