

PRIME MINISTER

H COMMITTEE ON THURSDAY 25 JULY

You may be interested to see the minutes of H on Thursday. There were two items on the agenda: Criminal Justice Bill 1986/87, and drugs misuse.

Criminal Justice

The Committee agreed a White Paper should be published in the autumn proposing legislation to strengthen the sentencing powers of the courts, to encourage them to make more orders assisting victims, and to improve the organisation of court business. Further work would be put in hand before decisions were taken to include the following proposals in the White Paper: to empower reparation between offender and victim; to provide for the confiscation of the proceeds of crime; to re-organise the Criminal Injuries Compensation scheme; to provide for the review of lenient sentences and to close a loophole in the law on the deportation of immigrants who overstayed.

You will wish particularly to look at the reference to lenient sentences. The point was made at H that another attempt at present to provide for the review of lenient sentences might well be defeated in the Lords, but that further public discussion might create a different atmosphere by the time the bill was introduced.

Drugs Misuse

H welcomed the report of the Mellor Working Group, and Ministers agreed to do everything possible to ensure that enough progress was made to pave the way for a major announcement in the autumn.

The proposal to legislate on confiscation would need to be discussed separately with the Law Officers, but H recommended that QL should seriously consider the merits of giving the bill a place in the 1985/86 legislative programme.

Pharley
I am writing to the Home Office to confirm your view that room must be found *for* this next session, that you are pleased with the progress the Home Secretary is making, but that you are not yet convinced finer, rather than forfeiture, are the right way forward.

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Mark Addison

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26 July 1985