



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY
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From the Secretary of State for Social Services

FOA/2711/20

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP
Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street
London SW1

Prime Minister

*I understand you enquired
about the legislative timetable
for the Health Bill.*

31 August 1979

This note explains.

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12/9

HEALTH SERVICE (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL

In your Private Secretary's letter dated 15 August to the Home Office referring to Gerry Vaughan's letter, dated 2 August, to members of Home Affairs Committee about the borrowing limit of the General Practice Finance Corporation it says that you understand that Royal Assent would not be required for the Health Service (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill until November 1980. I hope that this is not correct.

As Gerry Vaughan explained in his letter, we intend that this bill will deal primarily with the Government's proposals on private medical practice. In the consultations on these proposals, with the medical profession and other interests, we have said that we want to introduce legislation as soon as possible after the summer recess. The proposals were circulated in correspondence to Home Affairs Committee before consultations began. There are two main reasons for urgency - first that the Health Services Board is continuing to put out recommendations for phasing out pay beds which, under current legislation, I am obliged to implement; and secondly that the Board itself comes up for reappointment in January 1980 and it would be very embarrassing for us if the Bill was not by then well on the way to completing its passage through Parliament. (Ideally this measure should be on the Statute Book before the date for reappointment.) Consultations on the proposals have been cut short so that we can work to this timetable and we will be putting their final proposals next month to Home Affairs Committee. I realise that the timetable we have in mind is extremely tight but we are driven to it.

I take your point about the desirability of avoiding a separate one-clause Bill dealing with the General Practice Finance Corporation's borrowing. There should be no need to press for this provided the Health Service (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill can be enacted in line with the timetable I have outlined, which would enable

us to deal with the borrowing limit before the Corporation effectively ceases to function. But it is essential for us to move quickly on both these issues and I do not see how we could live with the consequences of allowing the Health Services Board to continue to phase out pay beds in NHS hospitals.

I am copying this letter to the other recipients of this correspondence.

Yours

Patel

- cc* Miss Spencer
- Mr Wormald*
- Mr Cashman*
- Mr C.H. Wilson*
- Mr R.P.S. Hughes*



10 SEP 1953