

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



Prime Minister

(1)

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

22 June 1983

Agree that the Home

Secretary raise this in Cabinet tomorrow?

Dear Tim,

Content with the line at X? And the draft passage?

MUS 22/6

..... I attach a draft of a brief passage on the question of capital punishment which the Home Secretary would like to use in the course of his opening speech in the debate on home affairs tomorrow, since this is a matter on which he feels the Government are likely to be pressed.

X As you know, he has been giving very preliminary consideration to how this issue might be handled in the new Parliament with the Lord Privy Seal and the Chief Whip. They all agree that the appropriate forum for a debate on capital punishment is a Private Member's Motion in Government time in a form which enables the House to express a view on the restoration of the death penalty generally and for separate categories of offence. Their advice is that this should be possible from the procedural point of view. The Home Secretary would not wish to give any commitment on the question of timing tomorrow.

If the Prime Minister is content with this approach the Home Secretary will raise the matter in Cabinet tomorrow.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure to David Hayhoe (Lord Privy Seal's Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

Yours ever,
HHT

H. H. TAYLOR

Tim Flesher, Esq.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

[We are as a Government very conscious of the concern - both in this House and in the country - that there should be a fresh opportunity to debate the question of capital punishment.]

Traditionally the Government does not take up a stance on this issue but it is left for the House to decide on a free vote. That tradition will be maintained. I can say, however, that the Government will make time available for a full debate of this important issue at a suitable opportunity, and in a form which will enable hon. Members to express a view on the restoration of the death penalty both generally and for different categories of offence].