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PS/Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
PS/Secretary of State for Employment
PS/Paymaster General
and officials in HMT, Revenue Departments and other Departments in Whitehall

TREASURY WEEKLY BRIEF

I attach the latest version of this Brief. Changes from the previous Brief, of 5 July, are sidelined.

M M Deyes

M M DEYES

RA

R I G ALLEN

12 July 1982

EB Division
H M Treasury
01-233-3364

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ECONOMIC BRIEF: CONTENTS

A GENERAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

1. Government's main economic objectives

[Longer term economic policy objectives discussed by Chancellor in CPC lecture 3 July, and interview published FT 5 July.]

Main objectives are to achieve, over a period, a sustained improvement in the economy through reduction of inflation and promotion of enterprise and initiative. Reduction of inflation requires maintaining steady but not excessive downward pressure on monetary variables, and complementary fiscal policies. Improvement of supply side depends on restoration of flexible and competitive market economy and better incentives.

2. Economy still in recession?

Recession can be defined in different ways. What is quite clear is that activity reached a turning point in first half of last year, and that a modest recovery has begun - and is projected to continue.

3. Government policies caused recession by deflating demand?

[Industrial production down 11 per cent; GDP (output) down 5 per cent; total final expenditure down 1 per cent since first half 1979.]

No. Output had fallen much more strongly than demand during the current recession. At same time import penetration has continued on rising trend. Essential problems of economy lie on 'supply side' - lack of competitiveness etc. Government policies aimed at helping industry to redress these problems by : deregulating, restoring incentives and implementing a financial strategy under which inflation and interest rates can fall over the medium term.

4. Economic recovery in doubt?

[GDP figures for Q1 1982, published 22 June, show little change on Q4 1981. Industrial production also broadly flat since last autumn, but still 2 per cent higher than a year ago. NB May industrial production figures to be released Tuesday 13 July.]

Profile of recovery likely to be uneven and jerky particularly when affected by such factors as very severe weather and industrial disputes. It remains the case that activity is above levels of last spring. Prospect is for resumed and continued recovery. This is supported by most independent forecasts, CSO's index of leading cyclical indicators and other forward indicators. Most encouraging pointer for sustainable recovery is progress being made against inflation. (See also Section B.)

5. What factors caused recent flattening out in recovery?

Recovery is slow and fragile. Number of factors - temporary rise in interest rates last summer/autumn; temporary pause in progress on reducing inflation; slower, and later than expected, world recovery - could all have weakened confidence and activity. But prospect is for resumed, if slow, recovery.

6. Tighter than expected fiscal policy to blame?

[Latest published estimate of 1981-82 PSBR £8.8 billion compared with Budget time estimate of £10.6 billion.]

Relationship between PSBR and output extremely complicated (especially since precise reasons for undershoot not well understood). Essential to consider influence of fiscal and monetary policies together. Firm control of Government borrowing essential to maintain downward pressure on interest rates; latter have fallen since last autumn and this can only improve prospects for recovery.

7. Recovery depends entirely on developments in the US?

Clearly cannot isolate ourselves from international developments. Lower world interest rates (particularly in US) would undoubtedly benefit the world economy and the UK. But UK policy certainly not determined in Washington, or Wall Street. At turn of year, UK short term interest rates were above those in US, currently below.

8. 1981-82 PSBR outturn inconsistent with MTFS?

Misleading to look at PSBR for individual years in isolation. Government's aim remains to reduce PSBR as ratio of GDP over medium-term. Latest estimates for outturn in 1981-82 suggest a ratio of about 3½ per cent, similar to ratio forecast for 1982-83. But looking over a longer run of years trend is clearly downward. (See also Section H.)

9. Fiscal boost desirable?

[Sam Brittan FT 8 July argued money GDP growth in 1982-83 may under shoot MTFS figure of 9½ per cent per cent; hence fiscal boost could be accommodated 'in the context of a reaffirmation of the MTFS'.]

Last year's PSBR undershoot probably meant that fiscal policy was somewhat tighter than expected. But it helped fall in interest rates - now down from last September's peak of 16 per cent. There is no reason at this stage to depart from Budget forecast of PSBR for this year, or to challenge Budget judgement.

10. OECD comments on UK economy

[OECD Economic Outlook July 1982 published 7 July.]

Report presents reasonably balanced and fair assessment of policies and prospects, close in many respects to most recent independent forecasts. It predicts a resumption of gradual recovery, a further reduction in inflation, and encouraging further substantial improvements in productivity. (See also B, and T for view on World economy.)

11. Latest (June) Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin?

[Published 1 July].

It is for the Bank to comment on the detail of their assessment. But wrong to interpret Bulletin as particularly gloomy: sees continued progress in reducing inflation, further productivity gains, and resumption of (slow) recovery. While Bank is right to emphasise continuing difficulties and uncertainties of world economy, recently some more encouraging signs from US (eg further pick-up in leading indicators.)

12. Progress on inflation not being maintained?

[12-monthly increase in RPI rose from 9.4 per cent in April to 9.5 per cent in May-June RPI to be published 16 July.]

No, trend is firmly downwards. Indeed, we may do rather better than FSBR forecast of 9 per cent by end-1982. By contrast, when Government took office, inflation rate was 10½ per cent, and rising. (See also Section K.)

13. Unemployment accelerating again?

[June figures published 22 June show rise in UK, seasonally unadjusted, level to 3.06 million; seasonally adjusted figure shows 39,000 increase on previous month, compared with average 22,000 monthly rise between January and May.]

Of course figures provide no grounds for satisfaction or complacency. But not too much should be made of June figure by itself; unemployment tends to follow a very erratic and uneven monthly pattern. Rise in unemployment this year less than half that in first six months of 1981.

[IF PRESSED Apparent general weakening of labour market indicators can be interpreted as consistent with hesitation in recovery since last autumn. Cannot draw implications from June figures about future levels of unemployment.]

(See also Section C.)

14. Report on Budgetary Reform by the TCSC ("Armstrong" Report)

[Report published 17 June.]

Government will want to consider its recommendations. We did draw attention in our evidence to the various practical and other constraints and also to the progress already made in the Armstrong direction under this Government (eg MTFS). Will be thinking carefully about recommendations to publish Green Book/PEWP in January etc. But cannot anticipate reply to the report.

BULL POINTS As at 12.7.82

(i) Activity. Recovery has begun: industrial and manufacturing output up 2 per cent from spring 1981. [But NB, underlying level of output broadly flat for last 6 months.] Business opinion surveys, most recent major independent forecasts, and CSO's cyclical indicators see prospect of resumed and continued recovery.

(ii) Investment. Total fixed investment rose 4 per cent between 4Q 1981 and 1Q 1982. DOI investment intentions survey suggests 2 per cent rise in and services' investment in 1982. Suggests fall in investment all but over. Private sector investment, particularly in plant and machinery holding up well. Investment in plant and machinery in 1981 only slightly (1½ per cent) lower than 1980, 8 per cent higher than in 1H 1979.

(iii) Total housing starts up 37 per cent in five months to May 1982 on 1981 average.

(iv) Interest rates. Short-term rates have fallen 3-4 points since turn of year (now 12½-13 per cent). Process temporarily interrupted by Falklands dispute, now resumed. Recent falls reflect several factors:- single figure inflation, M1, £M3 and PSL2 developing favourably in relation to target, Government borrowing under control, exchange rate firm.

(v) Inflation. 12-monthly increase in RPI now in single figures - 9.5 per cent in May - more than halved since spring 1980 peak (21.9 per cent). Inflation in April and May lowest since January 1979, but trend now firmly downwards, not upwards as then. Manufacturers' output prices up just 8¼ per cent in year to June.

(vi) Costs.

- Increase in average earnings halved in 1980-81 pay round. Public sector pay in line. Further moderation in average level of settlements in current round. CBI pay databank for manufacturing settlements suggests average now around 7 per cent compared with 9 per cent in previous round.
- Little increase in manufacturers' unit wage and salary costs over last year - only 3 per cent up in year to 1Q 1982, below average of our major competitors and comparable to that of Germany and Japan.
- Manufacturers' input prices up just 5½ per cent in year to June.
- CBI April survey shows lowest degree of unit cost pressures for 15 years.

(vii) Manufacturing productivity. Output per head rose 12 per cent since end 1980. Output per head and output per hour 5 and 8 per cent higher than previous peak in 1H 1979.

(viii) Competitiveness. Cost competitiveness improved by 10-15 per cent during 1981 reflecting pay moderation, higher productivity and exchange rate fall, but remains $^1/_3$ worse than in 1975.

(ix) Profits: Industrial and commercial companies gross trading profits (net of stock appreciation excluding North Sea) risen since 1Q 1981. In 1Q 1982 40 per cent higher than a year earlier. Recovery in profits from very low base: ICC's pre tax real rate of return just 2½ per cent in 1981.

(x) Exports have held up better than many feared following 50 per cent loss of competitiveness between 1975 and 1Q 1981. In 9 months to May 1982 non-oil exports (excluding erratics) slightly (about 1 per cent) higher than in 1980.

(xi) Special employment measures. Total provision for special employment schemes planned to reach £1½ billion in 1982-83, and to be £4 billion over current and next two financial years. 280,000 unemployed school-leavers last year found places on YOP by Christmas.

(xii) Overseas investment in UK: US direct investment in Britain amounted to stock of over $14 billion in 1980. Nearly 60 per cent of all US outward non-oil direct investment now takes place in EC - over half of that in UK. Half of all Japanese investment in the EC also comes to Britain.

(xiii) Overseas debt repayments. Official external debt reduced from over $22 billion in May 1979 to around $13.7 billion at end-May 1982.

Economic Briefing Division, HM Treasury, 01-233 3819/5809

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND PROSPECTS

[NB: Industrial production figures for May to be released Tuesday 13 July].

1. Recovery faltering?

- Taken together, all three measures of GDP suggest some hesitation in recovery in Q1 1982, but GDP remains above levels of last spring. In part reflects impact of very severe weather and industrial disputes at turn of year.
- Some recovery in industrial production in February and March, but little change in April. Underlying level of industrial/manufacturing output broadly flat over last 6 months.
- Manufacturing productivity risen 12 per cent since end 1980. Industrial and commercial companies' gross trading profits (net of stock appreciation) up 40 per cent in year to Q1 1982. Inflation 9.5 per cent in May. Interest rates fallen 3-4 points since autumn. Competitiveness improved by 10-15 per cent since Q1 1981.
- Prospect of resumed and continuing recovery broadly shared by business opinion surveys, bulk of outside forecasts and CSO's cyclical indicators. Leading indicators suggest continuation of recovery after some hesitation through early 1982.]

Inevitable that recovery be uneven and jerky, especially so when affected by such factors as very severe weather and industrial disputes. Activity remains above levels of last spring. Though there are considerable uncertainties [eg on world recovery] prospect is of resumed and continued recovery. This supported by almost all independent assessments. Recovery in productivity and profitability encouraging. Best help for sustained recovery is lower inflation and interest rates.

2. Other evidence of improvement in economy?

See Bull Points (following Section A).

3. Latest CBI assessment gloomy?

[CBI Enquiry for June reports little change in order books or stocks since last April, and expectations of broadly flat output over next four months. S. Brittan (FT 5 July) suggests 'preliminary evidence' of more pessimistic July CBI enquiry and lower CBI forecast of growth.]

CBI June Enquiry disappointing: confirms recent indications of temporary flattening out in activity since last autumn. But encouraging signs of further moderation in inflationary expectations - necessary condition for improved growth. Latest CBI forecast believes modest recovery will resume in second half of this year, and predicts inflation rate below 8 per cent this autumn.

4. Government's own forecasts?

[FSBR forecast (9 March) assesses recovery to have begun. Main points are:

per cent increase on year earlier

	1982	1983 H1
GDP	1½	2
Manufacturing output	3	2
Consumers expenditure	½	½
Investment (private sector and public corporation)	4¼	5
Exports	3½	3

Forecast expects some stockbuilding in 1982, Government expenditure flat.]

FSBR forecast sees prospect of some recovery continuing into 1983. (Last two Government assessments of economy were broadly correct). Healthy rise in private sector investment and exports. Inflation well into single figures (7½ per cent) by mid 1983. Further progress depends on continued moderation in domestic costs and restoration of competitiveness.

5. Outside forecasts

[GDP profile in major post-Budget assessments:

	NIESR (May)	LBS (June)	St James (Apr)	Phillips &Drew (July	CEPG (April)	CBI (May)	OECD (July)	FSBR (March)
Per cent change 1982 on 1981	+1	+1	+1¼	+1½	-½	+1	+1¼	+1½]

Nearly all see prospect of continued recovery in 1982 in line with FSBR, (as always, a range, with Cambridge forecast (CEPG) being the more pessimistic) and see single figure inflation through rest of 1982 - also in line with FSBR. [See also C2 (unemployment)).]

6. Outside forecasts for output growth in 1982 revised down?

[Several groups (eg P & D, LBS, NIESR) have revised downwards (slightly) their forecasts for assessment of growth in 1982. But downwards revisions largely reflect (following recent disappointing output figures) revised view of timing but not of strength of recovery. Latest OECD Economic Outlook forecasts 1¼ per cent growth in 1982 (compare ¼ per cent in December forecast) - more in line with other groups.]

True that some outside forecasters have revised their assessment of growth in 1982 downwards but only slightly. And this partly reflects a timing change; most see slow growth resuming later in year. Note that OECD now much more in line with other groups. (See also A3).

C LABOUR MARKET

1. Recent unemployment figures and other labour market indicators?

[In June, unemployment (UK adult seasonally adjusted) rose by 39,000 to 2,911,000 (12.2 per cent). Total unemployment rose by 92,000 to 3,061,000 (12.8 per cent). Vacancies (UK seasonally adjusted) fell for fourth consecutive month to 105,000 compared with 113,000 in February. Vacancy flow data for May (latest month available) show inflow and outflow much same as April, slightly down on March, but much improved this year - about 164,000 per month this year compared with about 145,000 per month in 2Q 1981. Recent unemployment vacancy figures are shown below:

	1980 Q4	1981 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	1982 Q1	Q2
Unemployment (UK adult sa)	105	77	62	51	33	21	30
Vacancies level	99	98	89	96	104	112	107

[Other labour market indicators (overtime, short-time, hours worked in manufacturing) improved during 1981, but have shown no further improvement since turn of year.]

Just as Government did not put undue weight on relatively low increases (5-6,000) in unemployment in February and March of this year, not too much should be made of relatively high June figure. Underlying rate of increase in unemployment in H1 1982 less than half that of same period last year. Vacancies in June one third higher than Q2 1981, and turnover so far this year higher than last.

[IF PRESSED on general weakening of labour market indicators: reason for weakening uncertain, but can be intepreted as being consistent with hesitation of recovery since turn of year. Prospects are for resumed and continued recovery. (See B1.)]

[IF PRESSED VERY HARD on implications for future levels of unemployment: cannot draw any conclusions from one month's figures. Very difficult to forecast (see C2-3 below). Prospect remains of continued and resumed recovery. (See B1.)]

2. Unemployment expected to continue rising rapidly?

[Most outside forecasters see continued rise in registered unemployment during 1982 reaching about 3 million (UK adults) in Q4. Opinion divided for 1983; some (CEPG, Cambridge Econometrics, ITEM, NIESR) see rise continuing but at a slower rate, some broadly flat (LBS, St James) others (P&D, S & Coates) expect slight (roughly 50-100,000) fall in 1983. Liverpool foresee fall of 400,000. Cambridge Econometrics new forecast claims '3 million jobless to end century'.]

Unemployment forecasts uncertain; independent forecasters encompass differing views for 1983 - several projecting stabilisation, some [a slight] decline. Rise in unemployment so far this year less than half that of a year ago. Employment situation will benefit from some further recovery in activity this year (see B1).

What is Government's own forecast of unemployment?

Government does not publish a forecast of unemployment, or employment, at Budget time (nor does it ever do so). However it was assumed in Cmnd 8494 that unemployment (GB, excluding school leavers) would average 2.9 million in 1982-83, and for rest of survey period. Current (June) figure is 2.91 million and, though this is still rising, it is not inconsistent with PEWP figure.

4. Employment continuing to fall?

[Total employment declined 2.1 million (9 per cent) between mid 1979 and end 1981.]

Decline in H2 1981 about two-thirds that in H1. Best help for permanent jobs is sustainable recovery.

5. Unemployment higher than in other countries?

[On standardised definitions in Q4 1981 UK employment was 12½ per cent compared with 7½ per cent OECD rate; a UK doubling compared with an OECD rise of almost one half since 1979.]

Whole world affected by rising unemployment. In our case we have additional self inflicted wounds of high pay awards and low productivity. Unemployment now rising very fast in some countries eg Germany.

6. What is Government doing to provide more jobs?

Government pursuing sensible fiscal and monetary policies to curb inflation and creating conditions for enterprise - only measures that will ensure sustainable increase in employment. Nevertheless Government expanding schemes to meet special difficulties and improve training - eg plan to spend £1½ billion in cash on 1982-83 (40 per cent more than in 1981-82) on special employment and training measures; new Youth Training Scheme costing £1 billion a year from 1983-84; and MSC working on proposed new community work scheme announced in Budget Speech.

7. MSC Task Group proposals on youth training?

Government has accepted Task Group's scheme as immense step towards setting standards and systems of training for young people as good as those anywhere overseas.

TAXATION

[NB 3rd Reading Finance Bill Tuesday 13 July]

1. Burden of taxation

[Total taxation (i.e including for example income tax, indirect taxes, corporation tax, rates and NIC) in 1978-79 was 34½ per cent of GDP (at market prices), 36 per cent in 1979-80, 37½ per cent 1980-81. It is forecast to be 40 per cent in 1981-82 and 39¼ per cent in 1982-83.]

This has inevitably increased during a time when the recession has been adding to public spending. Changes proposed in Budget will reduce total burden in 1982-83 compared with 1981-82. [NB: Not true of burden on persons.]

2. Burden of tax has risen for most households since 1978-79?

Slow growth of output and difficulty of restraining public expenditure have inevitably meant higher tax burden. But real personal income after direct taxes still higher than under last Government. And more honest to raise taxes to finance necessary higher expenditure than to increase borrowing, with the increased interest rates and inflation that would bring.

3. Burden has fallen for the rich?

Abolition of absurdly high marginal rates and raising of thresholds in 1979 essential to remove disincentives. Reimposition of an 83 per cent top rate of income tax would finance a reduction of less than one quarter of 1p in the basic rate.

4. Burden has risen most for the poor?

Proportion of income paid in income tax and NICs will <u>fall</u> in 1982-83 for lowest paid taxpayers. And low paid with children entitled to benefits such as FIS.

5. Personal tax burden increased by last Budget - when NICs taken into account?

The real increase in personal allowances and tax thresholds will <u>reduce</u> income tax as a percentage of income at all levels of incomes. Those over pension age who are taxpayers will benefit from income tax changes and will be unaffected by NIC rise, and, of course, State pensions are being uprated from November. [<u>IF PRESSED</u>: In immediate cash terms, increases in personal allowances etc will compensate for NIC increase for majority of taxpayers. Taking into account increased earnings in 1982-83 (for example using the Government Actuary's 7½ per cent assumption) percentage of income paid in income tax <u>plus</u> NIC will rise for most people, but will fall for the lowest paid, ie below about ½ average earnings (married) and below about 1/3 average earnings (single).]

6. No improvement in incentives?

There will be 1.2 million fewer taxpayers than if allowances had remained at 1981-82 levels, and ½ million fewer higher rate taxpayers. For the substantial number taken out of tax or with reduced marginal rates, incentives will improve.

7. Poverty trap/unemployment trap getting worse?

The poverty and unemployment traps are a matter for concern. Must be remembered that result from attempts to relieve poverty over a period of years when the economy has shown little growth. The answer is to get sustained growth going again - this is the objective of our economic policies.

8. Family Forum call for Green Paper on effects of taxation and benefits on the family

Issued raised are among those covered by TCSC sub-committee's inquiry. Chief Secretary will be giving evidence on 21 July. Await report with interest.

9. Budget reduction in NIS not enough for industry?

Cut welcomed by CBI and industry generally. Provides substantial help on business costs. 1 per cent reduction maximum possible without risks for PSBR: outright abolition too costly. And other measures to help business directly - energy, construction, innovation and enterprise packages plus helpful - and welcomed - improvements in capital tax regime (see also Section P).

10. Excise duties increases inflationary/harmful to industries

Increases in excise duties as a whole slightly less than broadly compensate for past year's inflation. Variations between duties take account of industrial considerations e.g supplementary increase last July on tobacco/Scotch whisky industry/help for industry by smaller increases on e.g derv - mainly used by industry.

11. How has Government used fiscal incentives to encourage wider share-ownership?

Total of over 460 profit-sharing and share option schemes now approved by Inland Revenue. Compares with less than 30 in May 1979. Reflects liberalisation and extension of arrangements to promote profit-sharing and share-option schemes contained in 1980 Finance Act. Further fiscal encouragement on way from 1982 Finance Bill.

12 Real weekly net income has fallen since 1979 ?
/Parliamentary Answer 7 July W 111-2 7

On basis of the Question asked ,yes. Lower paid family breadwinners of course now be entitled to more FIS as well .

E PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND FINANCE

[Public Expenditure White Paper (Cmnd 8494) published 9 March. Gives planning totals of £115.2 billion in 1982-83, £121.1 in 1983-84 and £128.4 in 1984-85. About £5 billion higher than last White Paper in 1982-83 and £7 billion in 1983-84. Net effect of changes announced in Budget is to reduce totals to £114.9 billion, £120.4 billion and £127.6 billion].

1. <u>Public expenditure too high</u>?

Spending in 1982-83 planned to be about £5 billion (4½ per cent) lower than intended by last Government even if higher than planned when this Government first took office. Decisions to increase spending represent flexible but prudent response to changed circumstances e.g additional spending to help young unemployed. Drive to improve management in public sector and reduce administration expenses continues.

2. <u>Ratio of public spending to GDP is getting back to peak levels of mid 1970's</u>?

Ratios in 1980-81 (43 per cent) and 1981-82 (44½ per cent forecast) remain below level of 1974-75 and 1975-76 (46 per cent in both years). Rise in ratio in 1981-82 mainly reflects higher expenditure on social security at a time when real GDP falling. Ratio expected to fall in next few years: assumptions in MTFS would mean figures of 44½ per cent in 1982-83, 42½ per cent in 1983-84 and 41 per cent in 1984-85. Reflects assumed GDP growth and curbing of public expenditure.

3. <u>Ratio to GDP must grow unless big improvement in economic performance</u>?

[David Blake article <u>The Times</u> 30 June on official study of long-term public expenditure.]

An official study prepared on long-term public expenditure as part of normal, and continuing, process of controlling public expenditure and monitoring longer term effects. Has yet to be considered by Government. But report may point too pessimistic picture of level of public expenditure in long term. Government's policies are designed to secure real and lasting improvement in our economic performance; evidence that they are succeeding. Inflation is already coming down faster than expected at budget time.

4. <u>Study on longer term public expenditure concludes that unemployment could stay at 3 million for rest of decade</u>?

This is not a conclusion of the study. Report does not make <u>any</u> forecast of future unemployment - it uses a purely hypothetical assumption, intended to show what might happen to public expenditure if the worst is assumed about unemployment.

5. <u>Increase spending in recession</u>?

No good trying to spend way out of recession. Any benefits would be short-term. If increased spending not financed responsibly, would soon lead to more inflation. If financed prudently, would lead to higher interest rates and/or higher taxes. We are responding, within limits of prudence, to needs of current circumstances.

6. Spending Ministers seeking extra £5,000 million public expenditure in 1983-84?/Treasury once again seeking cuts in public expenditure?

Bids for additional expenditure have been put forward in usual way as part of annual public expenditure survey. Ministers collectively will have to decide which are to be allowed and, depending on size of any increase, to what extent the increase should be met by savings elsewhere.

7. Not enough capital expenditure?

Government prepared to give priority to worthwhile capital projects wherever this can be done within overall spending totals. Plans do allow for changes between 1981-82 and 1982-83. Planned capital expenditure also reflects decline in needs since early mid-1970s (e.g roads, schools). Planned spending should not jeopardise future standards and availability of public amenities and services.

8. What is being done to remedy inadequate appraisal of public investment revealed in recent C and AG report?

C&AG's report showed that when study on which it was based was made, two years ago, standards of investment appraisal in a number of areas were unsatisfactory. Improvement of these standards has since become an important part of the broader development of financial management throughout central government. Much has been achieved, through Treasury and departmental guidance and instructions, more training and closer monitoring. There is still a long way to go, but improvement of standards of investment appraisal remains a high priority.

9. Cash planning means concentration on first year, not enough on services in later years?

Government recognise case for medium-term planning. But planning must be related to availability of finance as well as prospective real resources. Cannot accept unconditional commitment to forward plans for services. Volume plans formerly had to be cut when conflicted with financial constraints - e.g after IMF intervention in 1976.

10. End-year flexibility?

Possibility of end year flexibility is being looked at again. There could be some managerial advantages in such a scheme. But we also have to consider question of cost.

11. Cut public sector pay bill/administrative costs of central government?

Only one third of current expenditure is on wages and salaries and much of that is for nurses, teachers, members of armed forces, police and so on. Provision for public service pay increases 1982-83 limited to 4 per cent. Administrative costs ae not far short of 10 per cent of total public expenditure. We are determined to reduce that proportion, and to maintain drive for more efficient management throughout public sector.

12. What allowance will Government make for pay increase in public services next year?

Government attaches great important to realistic wage settlements next year, in both public and private sectors. Provision for public service pay will be made from within cash plans for 1983-84. (See also K12.)

13. Will Government's operation of cash limits for civil service [and NHS] pay change as result of Megaw Inquiry Report?

Government is committed to policy of using cash limits to control public expenditure. We will consider and discuss the implications of Megaw report in due course. (See also K12.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

14. Overspending in 1982-83? Government response?

Local authorities are budgeting to spend some £1½ billion above Government's plans (£1¼ billion in England, £200 million in Scotland, £60 million in Wales). Government cannot ignore this large planned overspend. In ENGLAND: Secretary of State for the Environment intends to implement scheme for grant abatement announced last year and is considering further across-the-board grant cut. In SCOTLAND: Secretary of State for Scotland is seeking to reduce grants of Lothian Regional Council (by £45 million) and Stirling District Council (by £1½ million). In WALES: Secretary of State for Wales has announced his intention to withhold grant. He also asked Welsh local authorities to submit revised budgets. Amount of grant to be withheld will be determined in light of these.

Local authorities have only themselves to blame for these grant penalties.

15. Large rate increases this year are Government's fault?

Not at all. If local authorities had sought to spend in line with Government's plans, rate increases should be very low. Where they are high, it is because local authorities have chosen to overspend.

16. Effect of NIS reduction on local authorities?

As Chancellor announced in Budget, we intend that local authorities overall will be neither worse nor better off as a result of cut in NIS rate. We now propose that local authorities should pay the same rate of NIS for the whole of 1982-83. They will pay the lower rate of NIS for 1983-84, with an offsetting reduction in RSG.

17. Green Paper on Domestic Rating System: Government response?

Government is considering carefully all representations received. We wish to produce proposals for a scheme that will remedy shortcomings of present system while commanding wide support.

CIVIL SERVICE STAFFING AND PAY

1. Civil Service too big/does too much/is over staffed?

Since Government came to office, Civil Service has been reduced by 9 per cent to 666,400. This is smallest since 1966. Results from reduction in functions, privatisation and improvements in efficiency. On course to achieve aim of having Civil Service of 630,000 by April 1984. This is 102,000 fewer staff in post than in April 1979, and will mean the smallest Civil Service since the end of the Second World war.

2. Civil service pay: non-industrial civil servants

[Settlement date 1 April 1982.]

Civil Service Arbitration Tribunal awarded pay increases ranging from 4.75 per cent to 6.25 per cent - worth 5.9 per cent overall - and increases in annual leave. Government accepted the award which is being implemented. Increases (announced 12 May) for the higher civil service (under-secretary and above) were larger; they were decided in the light of recommendations of Top Salaries Review Body. Cash limits and manpower targets not being adjusted. (See also Section K).

3. Megaw Inquiry

The report of the Megaw Inquiry into arrangements for deciding civil service pay in future has now been published (Cmnd 8590). Report contains a number of important recommendations which need careful consideration. (See also E12-13 and K9-10.)

4. Civil Service pay: industrials

[Settlement date 1 July 1982]

Claim for increase in pay in line with inflation, shorter working week and longer holidays, is under discussion with the unions.

5. Scott Report/Public sector pensions?

See K 14.

G SOCIAL SECURITY

1. Increase in PSBR from deficit on National Insurance Fund?

[Government Actuary's Report, published 29 June, shows substantially increased deficits on NI Fund for 1981-82 (up from £153 million to £1,045 million) and 1982-83 (up from £94 million to £350 million). These figures distorted by CS strike; underlying deficits nearer £600 million in 1981-82 and £800 million in 1982-83.]

For 1981-82, the published outturn already takes this into account. For 1982-83, revised deficit is one of a number of factors which will affect PSBR but is not in itself, a sufficient reason to change our overall assessment of PSBR prospects.

2. Increase in National Insurance contributions because of NI Fund deficit?

The higher deficits for earlier years do not make inevitable an increase in contribution rates for 1983-84. A decision on the level of these rates will not be made until late Autumn and will take account of forecasts made at that time of Fund income and expenditure for 1983-84.

3. Restore abatement of Unemployment Benefit?

[17 Government backbenchers have put their names to an amendment to the Finance Bill intended to ensure restoration of the 5 per cent abatement of unemployment benefit.]

The abatement of unemployment benefit has been extensively discussed in House of Commons. We undertook to review the abatement when the benefit was brought into tax. This we have done. But this Government and Party is committed to reducing public expenditure. Restoring the abatement would cost £60 million in a full year. We are making good 2 per cent shortfall in last uprating. This applies to all benefits whether or not we are pledged to preserve their value. Including unemployment benefit - which we are not pledged to protect. (Cost of restoration for all benefits will be £515 million in full year.)

4. Death grant - increase to realistic level?

[Consultative document about death grant published 3 March, comments asked for by 30 July.]

Social Services Secretary would welcome comments on recently published consultative document on death grant. As have made clear, aim is to redistribute in more sensible fashion resources now devoted to death grant - cannot afford to add to those resources.

5. Merger of income tax and national insurance planned?

Government's written evidence to TCSC did not suggest such a merger. Committee asked about feasibility of merging the two systems, and the evidence gave an illustration of what a joint system would look like.

H PUBLIC SECTOR BORROWING

1. Government's expectations for PSBR in 1982-83?

Budget forecast for 1982-83 was £9.5 billion. No reason to change this forecast. (See also A9.)

2. Implications of CGBR outturn in April and May for PSBR in 1982-83?

[CGBR for April to June inclusive (published 9 July) was £3.1 billion; April to June 1981 was £7.4 billion.]

Last year's figures severely distorted by Civil Service dispute, so comparisons can be seriously misleading. Too soon to make any amendment to forecast for the year.

3. If PSBR higher in 1982-83 than in 1981-82 won't interest rates have to rise?

As percentage of GDP, outturn for 1981-82 is more or less equal to the forecast for 1982-83 i.e around 3½ per cent. The 1982-83 forecast is still a low figure both by comparison with deficits abroad and in relation to size of deficits over past decade.

4. Implications for public expenditure in 1981-82 and 1982-83?

Detailed public expenditure outturn information for 1981-82 will not be available until early July. Until then, implications for 1982-83 uncertain. [IF PRESSED: It is estimated, on very incomplete information, that the planning total will fall from £105.2 billion in the FSBR to around £104.5 billion (around £104 billion was provisional estimate given in other briefing) and that ratio of public expenditue to GDP will fall from 45 per cent to 44½ per cent].

5. How much was PSBR undershoot in 1981-82 and why?

[PSBR 1981-82 undershoot now appears to be less than originally thought: latest published estimate £8.8 billion, 1981-82 FSBR (published 9 March) estimated outturn of £10.6 billion.]

Reasons for undershoot still being assessed, but appear to be due to combination of factors. Central Government revenue was higher than forecast, and civil service dispute also contributed to unforeseen problems of interpretation on expenditure side.

6. Why treat PSBR as a crucial statistic when forecasting errors of this size can occur?

Importance of balance between government's spending and income recognised by all governments, whatever the difficulties of forecasting.

7. Implications for fiscal policy and MTFS?

See A 6 and 8.

8. Effect of Civil Service dispute on PSBR?

PSBR in both 1981-82 and 1982-83 affected by Civil Service dispute. In 1981-82 some £¾ billion of receipts delayed from March 1981 were collected, but some £1½ billion of receipts due in 1981-82 will now be collected in 1982-83. Debt interest cost of the strike some £½ billion in 1981-82. Dispute also damaged our ability to interpret and forecast the PSBR reasonably accurately (see question 5).

9. Fiscal policy should be based on cyclically adjusted/real PSBR?

Some merit in inflation-adjusted measure as indicator of fiscal stance in some circumstances. But there are dangers here: it would be quite wrong to exapnd PSBR in cash terms in response to an upsurge in inflation merely to keep inflation-adjusted measure constant. Policies intended to eradicate inflaton, not to adjust to it.

10. Parliamentary control over borrowing?

[EST at Select Committee on Procedure 29 June].

Welcome interest shown in Procedure Committee. Will continue to provide information to help Parliament reach view on what is happening. Open mind to consider any suggestions from Committee about form of information. [IF PRESSED: Propositions for some form of control a different matter: could complicate policy decisions on spending and revenue].

J MONETARY AND FINANCIAL POLICY

1. Monetary growth in 1981-82

[Provisional figures for banking June (fourth month of target period) indicated that £M3, M1 and PSL2 grew by 0.8, 0.8 and 0.6 per cent respectively (seasonally adjusted). These changes bring annual rates of growth in 1982-83 target period to 9½, 6¼ and 9 per cent respectively, compared with target range of 8-12 per cent. NB Final money figures for June to be published 15 July.]

Too early to judge outturn over target period as a whole, but recent figures are again encouraging. Figures point to continuing steady downward pressure on inflation.

2. Monetary conditions too tight?

Exchange rate, money GDP and monetary aggregates suggest financial conditions have been moderately restrictive whilst allowing falls in interest rates. Growth of bank lending is still strong, however; we do not believe that monetary conditions have been too restrictive.

3. Bank lending

Banking June figure is again lower, indicating that growth may be slowing. But although part at least of recent growth is in substitution for building society lending and other forms of consumer credit, to the extent that it is additional it may add to inflationary pressures; so must continue to proceed cautiously on interest rates.

4. Interest rates still too high?

Interest rates have come down significantly over past 6 months. Bank base rates were cut by [a further ½ per cent] only [a few weeks] ago. Of course we would like to see rates lower still; but we must proceed cautiously if we are not to jeopardise progress made to date in reducing inflation. Lower inflation offers best prospect for sustainable lower levels of interest rates.

5. Bank of England and Treasury in conflict, one wanting hold up exchange rate, the other to get interest rates down?

Bank's operations in the money market represent an agreed course of action.

6. Will high and unstable US rates affect UK rates?

US rates not sole determinant of UK rates, but high US rates certainly an adverse development and in September were a key factor in driving our rates up. Recently, however, sterling has remained reasonably firm, probably helped by improved prospects for wage round, and good trade figures. UK interest rates have eased this year against US trend; but we cannot insulate ourselves from difficult international background. (See also T10.)

7. Monetary targets discredited?

Monetary targets have important role in defining medium term direction of policy. But short term movements in monetary aggregates not always reliable guide to monetary conditions. Policy decisions based on assessment of all available evidence.

8. Why have you been 'over-funding' and providing large-scale money market assistance?

[Latest Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin carried small feature explaining process.]

The rapid growth of bank lending (much of which relates to structural changes) creates problems for conduct of monetary policy. By selling long-term Government debt on a larger scale outside the banking system it has been possible to contain the growth of money which the lending would otherwise have produced. If we had not intervened to relieve the resulting shortages in the money markets, the banks would have been forced to bid for deposits, raising short-term interest rates to levels which, according to other indicators of monetary conditions were not justified.

25 JUNE MONETARY PACKAGE

9. Will the tax change on zeros and deep discounts reopen the corporate bond market? Surely the tax treatment remains unfavourable?

It is too soon to say how companies will respond. The tax treatment clearly is not as favourable as some would want - but to allow companies to offset discount against tax and investors to be taxed as on capital gains would introduce unacceptable asymmetry. Announcement represents an important step forward - and we have said we are looking at an accruals based system on UK model. The best hope for the revival of the corporate bond market of course remains lower inflation and lower interest rates. We are on course for both.

10. Doesn't the amendment to the National Loans Act remove the only constraint on the Bank's purchases of bills? Will it mean even huger purchases in the future?

National Loans Act amendment is designed to remove an essentially fortuitous constraint on the Government's ability to borrow. Existing law could have prevented Government funding its borrowing requirement. Does not necessarily mean large increases in bill purchases. The scale of money market assistance will depend on the future course of bank lending etc.

Other measures designed to ensure it does not grow so rapidly - encouragement of corporate bond market and variable rate lending to local authorities.

11. Doesn't high Government funding and money market assistance merely mean higher long rates and lower short rates? Isn't it this that prevents companies borrowing long?

The level of interest rates depends essentially on the scale of Government borrowing rather than its form. We have succeeded in reducing the PSBR and the Government's call on financial markets and it is this which has paved the way for lower interest rates. Lower funding and higher short term finance would mean higher money supply which would cause expectations of higher inflation and raise interest rates.

12. Isn't Government simply acquiescing in rapid growth of bank lending and accommodating it?

The rapid growth in bank lending is a response to high inflation and structural changes following ending or direct controls - which were proven to have little effect. Tax and borrowing measures announced on Friday will have some impact on rate of growth but if impact of bank lending on money supply minimised no cause for alarm about inflationary prospects.

K PRICES AND EARNINGS

PRICES

1. Inflation lower than under previous Government?

[Average year-on-year rate of inflation between February 1974 and May 1979 was 15.4 per cent; average level of inflation since May 1979 has been 14.2 per cent.]

Year-on-year rate of inflation was 10.3 per cent and rising when previous Government left office. Now 9.5 per cent and falling on present forecasts we will be first Government for quarter of a century to successfully reduce the average rate of inflation during its term of office.

2. But inflation rising again?

No particular significance is to be attached to the 0.1 per cent rise in the monthly inflation rate in May.

3. How low inflation by end 1982?

[Budget time forecast Q4 1981 to Q4 1982 9 per cent and Q2 1982 to Q2 1983 7½ per cent.]

No new forecast to offer at this stage, but the year-on-year rate of inflation was already 9.5 per cent in May. In the coming months moderation in unit labour costs and competitive pressures on firms to limit price rises suggest Budget-time forecast of 9 per cent by this November could well be bettered.

4. Inflation still not as low as competitors?

[UK inflation 9.5 per cent in May, compared with 6.7 per cent in US, 5.3 per cent in West Germany, and 2.8 per cent in Japan.]

UK inflation now lower than Western European (OECD Europe) average, and well below many countries - such as France and Italy. Still some way to go to match US, West Germany and Japan, but good progress being made in right direction.

5. Movement in tax and prices index?

[Increase over 12 months to May 9.8 per cent, compared with increase of 9.5 per cent in RPI].

Fact that TPI has been increasing faster than RPI reflects measures taken to restrain Government borrowing, which is essential if inflation is to be controlled. But following recent Budget, difference is now small.

6. Nationalised industry prices

[Increase over 12 months to May 14.0 per cent, compared with an increase of 9.5 per cent in the RPI (see also R8)].

Gap between nationalised industry price increases and RPI due in large measure to cumulative effect of years of artificial price restraint. World oil price rises of 1979 and 1980 have also played important part. Increases regrettable, but holding prices down artificially would distort market forces and add to burden on taxpayer. Underlying position has been improving steadily for past year or so, but sustained improvement only possible if industries succeed in holding down current costs, particularly pay.

PAY

7. Current level of pay settlements

Recent decisions on public service pay announced by government confirm downward trend of settlements since the last pay round, when they generally average 8-9 per cent. Settlements are also well below rate of inflation for second year running.

8. Average earnings index

[Year on year growth 10.2 per cent in April compared with 11.0 per cent in March. Underlying unpublished increase also around 10¼ per cent.]

Encouraging that underlying rate of growth continues to fall. But must remember change over the 12 months to March straddles two pay rounds - not entirely indicative of recent trends. Also, earnings index inflated recently by some increase in hours worked.

9. NHS pay

Social Services Secretary announced 23 June that a further £90 million should be made available for increased pay offer in Health Service. This would allow increase in average pay for nurses of 7½ per cent, ambulance men and hospital pharmacists 6½ per cent, and other staff 6 per cent. Government believes this provides sound basis for settlement.

10. Top Salaries Review Board increases too large?

[Governemnt announced on 12 May increases of 14.3 per cent for senior civil servants and senior members of the Armed Forces, and 18.6 per cent for the judiciary.]

Government believes these increases are fully justified. Essential to ensure adequate supply of candidates of sufficient calibre for the Bench, and to provide adequate career structure and differentials in higher levels of Civil Service and Armed Forces. TSRB are only group whose present salaries are below those recommended for April 1980.

11. Zero pay norm in next round?

[Chancellor's Speech 6 July.]

This Government is not in the business of setting pay norms. It is for individual employers and employees to make bargains they think right in their particular circumstances, bearing in mind that the greater the restraint, the better prospect for jobs for those on the dole. No right to automatic pay increases every year.

12. Will there be a new pay factor for public expenditure?

Not yet been decided whether plans for next financial year will be calculated on basis of an explicit 'pay factor'. However, Government finances large proportion of country's pay bill, and will have to ensure that its own actions are compatible with overall needs of the economy.

13. Government exhortations on pay imply aiming to cut living standards?

[Latest RPDI figures published 1 July show Q1 level much same as in Qs 2 and 3 1981 (Q4 discounted as 'erratically low'), and lower than Q1 1981.]

No. Government seeking to create conditions for sustained improvements in living standards. This requires creation of more competitive and profitable industrial sector. Means that less of increase in nominal incomes should be absorbed by higher pay. The lower the level of settlements, the greater the headroom for output and employment to expand.

14. Index-linked pensions and Scott report?

The Government is considering whole question in light of Scott Report. Our aim is to ensure that public servants' pensions are fair to taxpayers, as well as to current employees and pensioners and their dependants.

15. Incomes Policy

[SDP Paper "Towards Full Employment" (published 8 June) includes proposal for permanent incomes policy].

Proposals for incomes policies, including recent refinements, do not avoid many of the familiar problems of norms, administrative costs, and interference with market forces. Experience gives no encouragement to the idea that incomes policy can be made to work on a permanent basis. They always succumb to the distortions they create.

I. BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

1. May trade figures?

[Figures published 9 July show current account in around £35 million surplus in May, giving cumulative total of £0.9 billion so far this year. Exports fell by some £105 million, mainly due to a fall in oil exports and erratics. Imports rose by £205 million in May, due to higher imports of manufactured goods. Invisible surplus projected at £150 million a month].

Current account fell substantially during May, due to large fall in oil exports from April's high levels and £200 million increase in deficit on non-oil trade. Cumulative surplus this year approaching £1 billion.

2. Exports

Export volumes of manufactured goods now back at level of 1981 Q4, and holding up well. Export volumes (excluding oil and erratics) in three months to May were 7 per cent higher than a year earlier.

3. Imports

Imports of finished manufactures rose by £125 million, principally concentrated in capital and intermediate goods, reflecting a strengthening of investment activity. Imports of oil rose by some £35 million, accounting for some of the fall in the visible balance, while imports of basics, which also fell, remain 8 per cent higher than in 1981 Q1.

4. Geographical analysis of exports?

Exports to OPEC and other developing countries remain flat. Exports to North America have been adversely affected by the US recession and have fallen 1 per cent.

M EXCHANGE RATE AND THE RESERVES

1. Policy towards the exchange rate/falling £?

[Since last autumn sterling has remained broadly stable. The average £ effective rate in Q1 1982 was over 10 per cent lower than in Q1 1981. Previous lows were $1.7470 on 6 April, DM 4.098 on 21 May. Highs were $1.97 on 30 November, DM 4.407 on 9 February. Rates at noon on 9 July were $1.7205, DM 4.289 and an effective of 91.09. Reserves at end June stood at $17.7 billion, compared with $17.8 billion at end May.]

Government has no target for exchange rate. The rate is taken into account in interpreting domestic monetary conditions and taking decisions on policy. Despite recent sharp fluctuations in value of some currencies caused by strength of dollar, sterling's effective exchange rate has remained stable.

2. Bank of England intervening to support the rate?

Policy is unchanged. Bank do intervene to smooth excessive fluctuations and preserve orderly markets particularly when conditions unsettled. But, as Chancellor has already stated, we have no target - undisclosed, secret or otherwise - for the exchange rate. Most recent reserves figures confirm that policy is unchanged.

3. Concerted intervention to reduce value of dollar?

All experience in recent years that exchange rates for major currencies cannot be manipulated by intervention alone. Intervention can help to steady markets, but not counter major exchange rate trends. That takes changes in real policies, affecting interest rates, monetary conditions and fiscal policies. Lower US inflation is in everyone's interest: matter for real concern is US fiscal/interest rate mix, a problem all countries are familiar with.

4. Improve UK competitiveness by devaluing exchange rate

Experience shows that exchange rate cannot be manipulated by Government against underlying market trends. Any attempt to lower it by intervention or by relaxing monetary control leads to higher inflation. For example although effective exchange rate depreciated by over a quarter between 1972 and 1976 competitiveness was unchanged, this remedy has been tried and it has failed.

5. Debt repayments

We have made excellent progress with our plans to reduce the burden of external debt substantially during this Parliament. We aimed to reduce official external debt to $14 billion by end of 1981. This has been more than achieved - external debt is now around $13 billion, compared with over $22 billion when the Government took office.

N EUROPEAN MATTERS

MEMBERSHIP OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

1. 1982 Budget - Parliament/Commission dispute

An agreement between the Parliament and the Council was signed on 30 June. If it is ratified by the European Parliament, it will provide the basis for settling the 1982 budget dispute, and also contribute to avoiding such disputes in future.

2. UK budget settlement

Foreign Ministers agreed on 25 May to a settlement for the UK budget contribution for 1982. The settlement provides for a basic refund of £490 million ecus in respect of 1982, with provision for changes to this figure if our unadjusted net contribution varies from the Commission estimate of £880 million. It was also agreed that the problem for the longer term would be settled by the end of November.

3. UK objectives for longer-term negotiations?

Government has made it clear that, in spite of our relative economic position, UK is prepared to remain a net contributor - but only on a very modest scale.

4. Implementation of budget settlement

This is still under discussion in Brussels. 25 May agreement envisaged partial rebates to Germany, Italy, Greece and Ireland for their share in financing UK refunds, making France bear a larger burden - but France will remain a substantial net recipient from the budget.

5. Remainder of Commission 'Mandate' report

The other member states broke the link between the different parts of the mandate report when they voted through the agricultural prices. But we are prepared to continue to work on the basis of previous agreements where applicable.

6. CAP prices 1982-83 and the Luxembourg Compromise

We made clear in Foreign Affairs Council on 25 May that we wished to have clarity about the EC's decision-making procedures. Four other member states shared our wish to re-establish the principle of unanimity when vital national interests are invoked. This is an improvement on 1966, though it is still an agreement to disagree.

7. Commission's ideas for changes to 'own resources' system

['EEC considers new source to boost budget': FT 5 July.]

Understand that Commission are considering measures to diversify Community's revenue sources. If they put forward proposals we will consider them. Our opposition to any increase in the 1 per cent VAT ceiling is well known.

8. Policy for CAP reform

Key measures are price restraint, curbs on surplus production and strict control of the growth of guarantee expenditure.

9. Costs of CAP to UK consumers

The Minister of Agriculture has dealt with a number of questions on this. Costs to consumers of the CAP as such depend on nature of alternative support system that is envisaged. Arrangements leading to a reduction in the cost of food to the consumer could well involve increased costs to taxpayers.

EUROPEAN MONETARY SYSTEM

10. What is the current attitude of the UK Government?

We fully support the EMS, and acknowledge the contribution which it has made to stability in the exchange markets. However, we do not yet feel able to join the exchange rate mechanism. We must wait until conditions are right for the system and for ourselves.

11. Join the EMS for exchange rate stability?

There is no reason to suppose that by the simple act of joining the EMS exchange rate mechanism we would guarantee exchange rate stability. This has not been the experience of the current participants. Genuine stability requires a return to low inflation rates throughout the Community.

EXPORT CREDITS 'CONSENSUS'

12. Progress on Export Credit Consensus negotiations

In October 1981 participants of OECD-sponsored 'Consensus' reached an interim agreement on the new terms to be applicable for export credits. These terms were to be effective until 15 May 1982. The chairman of the Consensus's second set of compromise proposals were discussed at an EC Council of Ministers on 30 June. Proposals included reclassification of some countries and increase in interest rates charged to 'rich' and 'intermediate' country borrowers. These proposals have now been agreed subject to one outstanding issue concerning the country classifications of Greece and Ireland.

P INDUSTRY

1. NEDC meeting 7 July: union anger at call for lower pay rises?

Valuable exchange of views at July NEDC. True that TUC argued that Government was 'using unemployment to screw down wages'. Chief Secretary and Industry Secretary showed, however, that this was not the case. They argued that best way of improving outlook for employment was by becoming more competitive, and this meant reducing wage increases further and maintaining recent rapid increase in industrial productivity. High wage increases would only make matters worse.

2. Prospects for industry-recovery?

See A2 and B1.

3. Companies' financial position?

[Industrial and commercial companies (ICC's) - excluding North Sea - gross trading profits (net of stock appreciation) rose 40 per cent to Q1 1982. But rise was from very low base - ICC's real rate of return just 2½ per cent in 1981. ICC's finances showed some weakening in Q4, reflecting slowdown in destocking, and unwinding of civil service dispute, but finances better in 1981 as a whole -

£bn

	1979	1980	1981 Year	H1	H2
Net borrowing requirement (+)/repayments (-)	+6.1	+5.7	+4.4	-1.2	+5.6
Financial surplus (+)/deficit (-)	-2.7	- 1½	+1.2	+1.5	-0.3

Some apparent deterioration in financial position reflects slowdown in rate of destocking, and effects of unwinding of civil service dispute (which delayed companies' tax payments), but companies' finances much healthier in 1981 than in two previous years. Company liquidity improved considerably in first quarter of 1982 .

4. Rate of return still too low?

[Real pre-tax rate of return of ICCs was 2½ per cent in 1981 - half the previous lowest figure in 1975.]

Yes, but Government can only help in limited ways. Fundamental improvement in ICC's profits and real rates of return depend on improved performance by companies, both management and employees. Much encouraged by recent productivity gains and trend towards moderate pay settlements.

5. High interest rates damaging for industry and investment?

[Each 1 per cent in interest rates raises interest payments on industry's borrowing by around £250 million.]

Budget measures have eased pressure on interest rates, and the recent ½ per cent fall in the banks' base rates is encouraging. But Government believes best way it can help industry and promote investment is to create a climate in which business can flourish. Essential to get rate of inflation down so as to create a stable environment for business decision-taking. Continuing relatively high level of interest rates must be seen in context of priority attached to reducing inflation and need to control growth in money supply underlying the MTFS. (See brief J).

6. Government help for small firms

Budget provided further help for small businesses, increasing the number of measures taken so far to over ninety. Enterprise package included further reduction in weight of corporation tax; further increases in VAT registration limits; increase in global amount available for loans under Loan Guarantee Scheme (see below); and doubling of investment limit under Business Start-Up Scheme to £20,000 a year. New measures will encourage start-ups and existing firms.

7. Response to Loan Guarantee Scheme?

[More than 4,440 guarantees already issued - about half to new businesses. Total lending under scheme just over £149 million. Budget provided for lending ceiling in first year (to May 1982) to be raised from £100 million to £150 million and for further £150 million to be available in second year (to May 1983). Thirty financial institutions now participating.]

Scheme operating successfully. Too early to assess overall cost . After first year, of the 4000 guarantees issued, only 48 have been 'called'. Cost has been more than covered by the premium income received over the period. Scheme is kept under continuous review.

8. Enterprise zones: response from private sector?

All eleven zones now in operation. Response has been very encouraging. Many new firms are setting up in the zones, existing firms are expanding their activities and vacant land has been brought into use. Too early to assess success of zones.

NATIONALISED INDUSTRIES

EXTERNAL FINANCING LIMITS

1. EFLs for 1982-83 and future years?

Nationalised industries' total external finance increased by £1.3 billion in 1982-83 (£1.2 billion after allowing for NIS cut and other changes). Increase in 1982-83 was roughly half what the industries bid for. Government has given full recognition to problems faced by the industries in a period of recession. EFL's for 1982-84 will be announced later this year, as usual.

INVESTMENT

2. Investment plans unlikely to be attained?

No Government can unconditionally guarantee a level of investment by the nationalised industries. Approved levels set out in last White Paper (Cmnd 8494) are consistent with the industries' agreed external financing requirements, on the basis of their internal resource forecasts. But perfectly possible that plans might need to be revised, for example if the industries fail to restrain their current costs, including pay.

3. But shortfall in capital spending 1981-82?

[Figures in FSBR imply shortfall of £¾ billion, latest estimates suggest that this may be nearer £1 billion.]

Not easy to establish firm reasons after the event. Such evidence as we have suggests a mixture of reasons. Most important has been cut in investment in response to changed circumstances such as lower market demand. These cuts have been extraneous and have not borne any direct relationship to EFL pressures. Other cuts have been for wholly beneficial reasons, such as lower than expected inflation and cost savings.

4. Take nationalised industry investment out of PSBR?

Real problem of pressure on resources cannot be solved by changing statistical definitions. Since nationalised industries are part of public sector, their borrowing - for whatever purpose - must by definition form part of public sector borrowing requirement.

5. Is PM satisfied with the rate of return on capital in the nationalised industries?

[Pre-tax rate of return on nationalised industries' capital (including subsidies) has recently been announced as being minus 1 per cent (about the same as in 1979). This compares with 3 per cent for industrial and commercial companies.]

No. That is why we are continuing to press for greater efficiency within nationalised industries, and are setting realistic financial targets to ensure that the taxpayer and consumer get proper value for money.

6. Finance more nationalised industry investment by cutting current spending?

Yes. As in private sector, moderate pay settlements and control of other costs are essential. Ability to finance new investment in nationalised industries bound to diminish if excessive pay settlements agreed. Each 1 per cent off wages saves about £140 million this year; and each 1 per cent off total costs saves £330 million this year.

7. Private finance for NI investment?

In discussions in NEDC and elsewhere, we have indicated our willingness to consider new financing proposals, provided they can be structured so as to induce improvements in efficiency at least sufficient to offset the extra cost, and provided the finance is raised in fair competition with the private sector.

NATIONALISED INDUSTRY PAY AND PRICES

8. Nationalised industries' prices

[Having risen approximately in line with retail prices for several months, the May figures show bigger 12 months increase in nationalised industry, water and London Transport than all items RPI, ie 14.0 per cent compared 9.5 per cent. Restoration of this differential was expected; reflects March increase in LT fares and ending of electricity industry's rebates to consumers. Removal of these temporary distortions confirms that nationalised industry prices are still increasing somewhat faster than RPI, largely because of increases in energy sector. In May average gas and electricity charges were higher but average changes for telephone calls fell slightly following some price adjustments.]

Gap between nationalised industry price increases and RPI has been due in large measure to cumulative effect of years of artifical price restraint. World oil price rises of 1979 and 1980 have also played an important part. We greatly regret the need for these increases, but holding prices down artificially would distort market forces and add to burden on taxpayer. Underlying position has been improving steadily for past year or so. The differential between RPI and NI prices water charges and London Transport fares is now 4½ per cent compared with 14 per cent in January 1982. But sustained improvement will only be possible if the industries succeed in holding down their current costs, particularly pay.

PRIVATISATION

9. What further sales expected?

Special sales of assets in 1982-83 forecast at around £700 million and around £600 million in each of the later years. These figures well above those in last White Paper. This reflects primarily very large sales of energy assets - Britoil and the British Gas Corporation's major offshore oil assets - to be made possible by Oil and Gas (Enterprise) Act (which received Royal Assent in June).

10. Special asset sales in 1981-82

Gross sales in 1981-82 totalled £481 million, so target published in 1981 Public Expenditure White Paper of £500 million nearly met. Pleasing result - included two large sales - Cable and Wireless (£182 million) and Amersham International (£64 million). True that delivery of BNOC oil in 1981-82 paid for in 1980-81 and taken into account in special disposals figure for that year reduced 1981-82 receipts by £573 million to total of -£92 million. But it is gross figure which is true measure of success of Government's privatisation programme. As Chancellor said in Cambridge 3 July, 'Public utilities and the so-called "natural monopolies" cannot be allowed permanently and without challenge to remain within State ownership'.

11. Government has sold assets too cheap?

[Heavy oversubscription for British Aerospace, Cable and Wireless, Amersham International, followed by large increases in prices when shares first traded.]

Not in Government's interest to see shares underpriced, given the loss to the PSBR, but also risks in pitching price too high. Getting balance right not easy - especially when company's shares have not previously been traded. Government will continue to consider alternative forms of sale eg tender, but critics should note that sale by tender could make it harder for small investor to buy shares.

12. Contribution to giving people satisfaction of property ownership?

Exercise of returning enterprises from State ownership to ownership by the public has included measures to promote employee share ownership in the enterprise they work for; for example free offers of shares (British Aerospace, Cable and Wireless, Amersham); preference in allocation of shares (B Ae, C & W, Amersham, BP); provision for matching shares - one for each share subscribed for - (B Ae, Amersham, BP). Most radical initiative taken by consortium of managers and employees who bought National Freight Company.

S NORTH SEA AND UK ECONOMY

1. Onerous tax system damaging future field developments?

[Shell/ESSO announcement plans for Tern shelved partly because of tax system; reports that Phillips are postponing T-block complex and BP their Andrew field].

Other adverse factors - falling oil prices earlier this year; high development costs - much more important. Detailed study showed that under new tax structure, levels of profitability should still be sufficient to make exploration and development attractive. Hope that new structure will provide more secure and stable tax regime.

2. Chancellor's oil taxation package announced 9 June

[Summary: No field to pay APRT for more than 5 years; APRT repaid after 5 years if not set off against PRT; APRT allowed as a deduction in computing payback; further proposals to smooth PRT payments in second half of 1983; cost £55 million 1982-84]

Following Budget proposals, industry expressed concern on a number of specific matters; we have decided that some mitigation of burden for less profitable, more marginal fields is appropriate to meet particular problems. Tax system introduced in Budget, plus these changes, should enable nation to get its fair share from profits of this national asset, while leaving plenty of incentive to continue developing it.

3. Taxation of petrochemical feedstocks

[Government has announced that new rules on valuation of ethane for petrochemical use in interaffiliate transfers (Finance Bill Clause 119) should be extended to mixed streams of gas with a large ethane component. ICI complain that the extension and the rules themselves give unfair advantage to their integrated oil company competitors.]

Government convinced that new formula will give fair valuation. New valuation will not have effect of providing subsidy to ICI's competitors. Will do best to reassure ICI. Further consultations are taking place with ICI about the changes.

4. Government should do more to promote UK Continental Shelf oil production in 1990's?

[Select Committee on Energy's Report on depletion policy published 18 May: recommends reserve powers to impose production cuts but main emphasis on promoting development of fields to come into production in 1990s - increase pace of licensing rounds and overhaul fiscal regime].

Government's considered reply will be given in due course. Accept need to prolong high levels of UKCS production until end of century at least. Energy Secretary announced 17 May Government's plans for Eighth Round of licensing. Do not accept that fiscal regime makes North Sea development unattractive. On Committee's general proposal for overhaul of regime, would point out that industry does not want a structural upheaval: it would create serious uncertainty and major transitional problems.

5. Benefits of North Sea should be used to strengthen the economy?

[FSBR projections (in money of the day) of Government revenues from North Sea: £6.4 billion in 1981-82, £6.2 billion in 1982-83, £6.1 billion in 1983-84, and £8.0 billion in 1984-85. Lower than last year's projections, principally because of downward revision to oil price expectations. Projections incorporate March fall to $31 a barrel for Forties oil. Contribution of North Sea to GNP estimated at 4 per cent of GNP in 1981. Not projected to rise before 1985.]

Yes. Government's strategy derives greatest possible long-term benefit from North Sea. Revenues ease task of controlling public borrowing. This will help to achieve lower level of interest rates to benefit of industry and economy as a whole. Without North Sea revenue other taxes would be higher or public expenditure lower. But keep revenues in perspective. Less than 6 per cent of total General Government receipts in 1981-82.

6. North Sea revenues should be channelled into a special fund to finance new investment, particularly in energy?

North Sea revenues are already committed. Setting up a special Fund would make no difference. More money would not magically become available. So the money for this Fund would have to come from somewhere else. This would mean higher taxes or lower public expenditure, if public sector borrowing is not to rise. If borrowing did rise, then so would interest rates. Not obvious that net effect would be good for investment.

7. Is the Government underestimating North Sea revenues?

[Stockbrokers Scott Goff Hancock reported to be estimating Government revenues of £7.4 - £8.1bn in 1982-83, compared with FSBR estimate of £6.2bn]

No. Other estimates of Government revenues based on assumptions that seem over-optimistic eg on future production.

8. Future North Sea oil prices?

A matter for commercial negotiation between oil companies and BNOC.

9. Are we really any better off for our North Sea oil?

We are better off with oil - at current oil prices - than we would have been without it. We have been spared fall in real national income that other industrial countries have suffered following oil price rises. But North Sea oil costly to produce, so we are not necessarily any better off than we would have been had oil prices not risen. No need therefore for possession of oil to require a contraction in our industrial base.

T WORLD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCE

1. Why don't major industrial countries together lead revival of Western economy?

OECD's Economic Outlook (published 7 July) explains clearly why Western Governments are convinced 'a significant part of any stimulus to demand would increase public sector deficits, and dissipate itself rather quickly as an increase in inflation'. Furthermore, there is 'the possibility of re-igniting inflationary expectations, which became firmly established over a decade or more...' Remarkable unity on this at recent Finance Ministers' meetings and at Versailles Summit.

2. Western Governments' policies will increase unemployment to 32 million?

[OECD Economic Outlook forecasts unemployment 'approaching 32 million' in first half 1983 or 9 per cent of OECD Labour force (10½ per cent of Europe's. Also notes that unemployment is concentrated on the young, and that, in Europe, about one third of jobless have been unemployed 6 months and more.]

True that OECD forecasts rising unemployment - largely as result of increase in number of people looking for work. But OECD also forecasts employment to rise by over 2 million people in OECD area next year.

3. OECD says global recovery won't last?

[Economic Outlook warns investment so far shows little sign of pick-up needed for recovery to be self-sustaining. But same paragraph ends by emphasising importance of improving business outlook.]

Lower inflation should help reduce interest rates and coupling of these two with recovery in output will generate right climate for recovery in investment during 1983.

4. Versailles summit: international monetary undertaking

Major countries explicitly accepted "joint responsibility to work for greater stability in world monetary system". Could be significant step towards greater stability if five countries whose currencies make up SDR basket preserve value of their own individual currencies by reducing inflation at home. UK and France still some way to go in that respect.

5. French government 'seen the light' over reflationary policies?

[French government announced package of austerity measures including 4 month prices and wages freeze (to reduce inflation to single figures), increases in social security and unemployment contributions and limit to budget deficit of 3 per cent of GNP in 1982]

Strength and stability of Western economies as a whole will benefit if France - and Italy - can control inflation. So we welcome French government's recognition that inflation is as serious a threat as unemployment and that reining in public sector borrowing is essential part of counter-inflation strategy. (See also M6.)

6. French prices and incomes policy more humane than massive deflation?

French government not relying on prices and incomes policy alone but intend to curb Budget and restrain growth of money supply. Have seen that prices and incomes policies don't work in this country; nor is international experience encouraging. Our experience shows long term inflationary expectations not dented by policies lasting few months or even year or two; inflation always bounces back afterwards.

7. Anti-inflation policies are working

[Inflation down from a year ago in 6 of major 7 economies - significantly down in US (from 10 to 6½ per cent), Japan (5 to 2½), Italy (20 to 15) and UK (11½ to 9½). Small reductions in Germany (to 5 per cent) and Canada (to 11½), but increase in France (from 12½ to 14).]

Yes. Firm fiscal and monetary responses to 1979-80 vindicated by events. UK still some way to go to match US, Germany or Japan in bringing down inflation, but moving in right direction and ahead of some other European countries. Realism in wage settlements is growing, US, Germany, Japan and UK all have wage settlements in single figures. Other policies also working: oil savings have helped cut OECD oil demand. All point towards basis for sustainable recovery.

8. Prospects for UK economy worse than for other countries?

No. OECD's forecast for UK is close to most recent domestic forecasts and predicts average growth of about 1¼ per cent in 1982, rising to annual rate of 2 per cent in second half of 1982. That is very closely in line with OECD forecast for whole of Europe. Unemployment is expected to rise in all major countries except Japan. UK inflation still forecast to exceed OECD average in 1982 because of recent falls in inflation rates of USA, Germany and Japan, but UK should average OECD rate next year. Could do it this year if more responsibility in wage settlements.

9. Prospects for US economy?

[Leading indicators moved up for third successive month in May and preliminary Department of Commerce estimate of GNP showed slight rise in Q2, indicating recession has probably bottomed. But industrial production fell in April and May and seasonally adjusted unemployment is 9½ per cent. M1 near top of target range. Year-on-year rate of consumer price inflation down from 11 per cent in September 1981 to 6.7 per cent in May.]

Welcome signs that US recession may have ended. US has made good progress in reducing inflation. Some signs now of activity recovering, with housing starts and retail sales rising in May.

10. US Budget?

[One day after Congress agreed on budget deficit of $104 billion, Congressional Budget Office revised its economic and technical assumptions and re-estimated Congress's proposed FY deficit at $116½ billion. Congress's decision is not legally binding; outline agreement has now to be translated into detailed budget by Congressional committees.]

Welcome outline agreement on budget by both House of Congress. Hope Congress will soon reach agreement on details of budget for FY 83, as uncertainty about budget is probably an important factor adding to pressure on US interest rates.

11. US interest rate developments

[Prime rates still 16½ per cent, 3-month CD's dropped to 14.2 per cent]

True US interest rates rose recently. But prime rates well below peak of 21½ per cent last summer. Agreement on details of budget would improve prospects for lower interest rates.

12. Prospects for international interest rates?

Always difficult to forecast interest rates with certainty, but firm and balanced policies should over a period bring lasting reduction in both inflation and interest rates.

U FALKLANDS CRISIS EFFECTS/COSTS

1. UK economy affected by Falklands crisis?

Possible economic consequences cannot of course be ignored. But UK is basically in a strong financial position: inflation is coming down; interest rates on downward trend; balance of payments remains healthy; output is higher than a year ago. Disturbance due to Falklands dispute small in relation to overall macro-economic picture. No question of requiring any change in basic economic strategy.

2. Effect of Falklands dispute on markets?

[Exchange rate strong; domestic interest rates now ¾ per cent lower than before crisis began]

Despite a few uncertain days, the markets have come through the crisis well, reflecting confidence in government handling of crisis, and in economic policies. Too early to say what long term effects will be, but Government determined not to be deflected from its path.

3. Will dispute with Argentina affect UK trade figures?

Volume of UK-Argentine trade negligible (£20 million a month on either side).

4. Will freeze on Argentine assets affect standing of City?

We have not confiscated Argentine's assets, merely frozen them. This action was taken under extraordinary provocation; we believe international financial community will understand this.

5. Effect of restrictions on Argentina?

The crisis and our action will greatly reduce Argentina's capacity to raise loans on the international markets. A number of Argentine public foreign borrowing operations amounting to many hundreds of $million have been suspended since crisis began.

6. Future of restrictions?

European Community have ended their measures; UK's remain in place. Waiting for cessation of hostilities to be confirmed; must also take into account Argentina's restrictions against us. Lifting of EC import ban (effective from 22 June) does not affect UK's own ecnomic measures (separately imposed under article 224 of Rome Treaty). Specifically agreed by the 10 Foreign Ministers that EC sanctions would immediately be re-instated if there were further acts of force in the South Atlantic.

7. Argentina's debts

[NOT FOR USE: Argentine foreign debt at end 1981 estimated at $34 billion - about half size of Mexico's or Brazil's.]

Argentina may be seeking debt relief in talks with certain creditors about debt rescheduling. Not with British banks while freeze on assets continues. Proper rescheduling agreement would need to involve all creditors. [IF PRESSED on debt default possibility: banks have taken fairly relaxed at tude because ultimately overseas debt must be repaid by exports; Argentina's export sector is agriculture, which, according to most experts, is fundamentally healthy.]

8. Falklands defence costs?

[Specific figures for replacement of equipment, requisitioning merchant ships etc on BBC programme 8 July were speculative.]

Preliminary assessment of broad order of defence costs (excluding garrison costs) is about £550 million in 1982-83, and £200 million in each of the following two years. Non-defence costs (compensation, rehabilitation) are expected to be mi or in comparison. Totals should represent only a very small proportion of total public expenditure.

9. What will be costs of repairing damage and reconstructing the Islands' economy?

Too soon to say what these costs will be. Work has begun on restoration of essential services and on implementing Civil Commissioner's recommendations for priority action (accommodation, inter-Islands air service, education). Necessary financial provision is being made available. Not yet clear how existing FCO and ODA funds will be adequate and how far additional sums will be needed.

10. How will the various costs be met?

Intention is to try to absorb 1982-83 costs within the Contingency Reserve - and to some extent within existing budgets. Remains to be seen how far feasible. How future years' expenditure is to be funded will depend on decisions in forthcoming Public Expenditure Survey. Extra costs to defence budget (costs of the operation eg fuel, ship chartering, and equipment replacement) will be met out of monies additional to the 3 per cent annual rate of real growth already reflected in sums currently provided for defence. Decisions have yet to be taken on other programmes. In any case, the costs will be met in a way consistent with the Government's economic strategy.

AIDE MEMOIRE ON THE UK ECONOMY 12 July 1982

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND INDICATORS

(i) Activity. GDP fell by 6 per cent between 1979 H2 (last cyclical peak) and 1981 Q2 (trough of current recession), rose about 1 per cent between 1981 Q2 and 1981 4Q then declined by ½ per cent in 1982 Q1. Weakening at turn of year in part reflects impact of severe weather and strikes, but underlying level of output broadly flat in 6 months to March 1982; above levels of last spring. Most independent forecasts, business opinion surveys, and CSO's cyclical indicators expect resumed and continued recovery.

Volume of new engineering and construction orders in 1981 up 15 and 11 per cent on 2H 1980. Whilst home orders have continued to improve in early 1982 export orders tended to weaken around the turn of the year. Private housing starts up over one third between 2H 1980 and 1981. Total housing starts in 5 months to May 1982 up 37 per cent on 1981 average.

Recovery in 1981 largely reflected sharp fall in rate of destocking. Consumers' expenditure and Government consumption broadly flat. Fixed investment broadly flat in 1981, up 4 per cent between 1981 Q4 and 1982 Q1; DOI investment intentions survey suggests rise of 2 per cent in MDS fixed investment in 1982.

(ii) Lack of complete trade figures for 1981 and changed documentation procedures make recent figures difficult to interpret. Exports have held up better than many had feared. In 9 months to May non-oil exports slightly (about 1 per cent) higher than in 1980. Non oil imports have risen - up 13 per cent in same period - in part reflecting reduced rate of destocking and further rise in import penetration ratio. Current account estimated to be in surplus of £1 billion in first five months of 1982 following £7 billion surplus in 1981.

(iii) Employment and unemployment. UK employment fell 2.1 million (9 per cent) between 2Q 1979 and 4Q 1981 (about two-thirds concentrated in manufacturing), though rate of decline has slowed down. UK adult unemployment risen by 1.7 million (less than fall in employment) and stood at 2.91 million (12.2 per cent) in May. Total unemployment (including school leavers) was 3.06 million (12.8 per cent). Underlying rate of increase in unemployment slowed sharply during 1981 (105,000 per month in 4Q 1980 cf 25,000 per month in H1 1982). Other labour market indicators improved during 1981; eg short-time working down by ¾ during 1981, overtime up by over 10 per cent during 1981, and vacancies - despite slight weakening since February - up by 1/5 in 2Q 1982 on 2Q 1981, and with more rapid turnover. Little or no further improvement in unemployment or other labour market indicators since turn of year.

(iv) Wages and prices. Increase in earnings in 1980-81 pay round 11 per cent (settlements averaged about 9 per cent), half that of previous pay round. Settlements well inside single figures are now widespread (CBI average for manufacturing 7 per cent) suggesting further moderation in current pay round. 12-monthly increase in RPI 9.5 per cent in May; well inside single figures. Recent progress suggests outturn to November this year could well be within Budget time forecast of 9 per cent. Manufacturers' input prices up just 5½ per cent in 12 months to June. Corresponding rise in manufacturers' output prices 8¼ per cent.

(v) Productivity and Competitiveness (manufacturing). Output per man risen 12 per cent since end-1980. Output per man and output per man hour 5 and 8 per cent respectively higher than previous cyclical peak (1H 1979). Together with pay moderation, resulted in little increase in unit wage and salary costs during 1981 - rise of less than 3 per cent in year to 1Q 1982 - a rate below average of our competitors and comparable to Germany and Japan. Competitiveness (relative normalised unit labour costs) improved by 10-15 per cent during 1981, but remains about 1/3 worse than in 1975.

(vi) Company finances. Gross trading profits of ICCs (net of stock appreciation excluding North Sea) rose about 40 per cent in year to 1Q 1982. But real pre tax rate of return just 2½ per cent in 1981. Despite rise in company borrowing and deterioration in liquidity in 4Q 1982 (largely reflecting reduced sale of destocking and unwinding of civil service dispute which delayed companies' tax payments), company finances healthier in 1981 as a whole than in 1979 and 1980. Company liquidity improved in 1Q 1982.

(vii) Monetary aggregates. £M3 grew at an annual rate of 13 per cent in 1981-82 target period (from mid-February 1981 to mid-April 1982) compared with target range of 6-10 per cent. At least part of excess reflected increased market share of banks in mortgage lending. Over the same period, M1 and PSL2 grew at rates of 7 and 12 per cent per annum respectively. In recent months monetary aggregates have grown more slowly; in first 4 months of 1982-83 target period M1, £M3 and PSL2 grew by 6¼, 9½ and 9 per cent at annualised rates respectively of target range of 8-12 per cent.

(viii) Interest rate/exchange rates. Interest rates have fallen since turn of year; process temporarily interrupted by Falklands crisis, but now resumed. 3 month inter-bank rate fell from 16 per cent in December to about 13 per cent. After falling over 10 per cent during spring and summer 1981, effective exchange rate broadly constant at around 90 since last August.

(ix) Government borrowing. Latest published provisional estimate suggests PSBR £8.8 billion in 1981-82 (3½ per cent of GDP, compared with 5 3/4 per cent in 1980-81) about £1¾ billion lower than estimated at Budget time. CGBR £3.1 billion in April-June 1982.