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There were four statements today.

1. The Scottish Rates Support Grant

This was a fairly routine occasion giving Opposition members a chance to complain generally about interference with local government. There was comparatively little support from Government benches but Mr. Younger had no difficulty.

2. Stock Exchange

Mr. Parkinson's statement predictably aroused the wrath of the Opposition who accused the Government of exempting their friends in the City from the requirements of the law. There was, however, a general welcome from the Government side for the statement and considerably detailed questioning about the agreement reached with the Stock Exchange. Opposition members were not interested at all in the contents of Mr. Parkinson's statement and he was able to make effective use of the point that the Opposition had given the trade unions very considerable immunities while requiring nothing from them in exchange. He also stressed the desirability of settling matters out of court at a great saving to the taxpayer. Generally speaking the Opposition were not able to make their charges stick.

3. Public Expenditure

Mr. Rees had a considerable success with his statement both in its content and style. The approach of the Opposition clearly demonstrated there would have been disproportionate trouble had the statement not been oral. But Mr. Rees' low-key approach was, I suspect, far more successful in diffusing the situation than would have been the Chancellor. The Opposition questioning concentrated on job losses, in particular in the National Health Service which suggests that you may have the figure of 8,000 job cuts quoted to you tomorrow.

/4. Gibraltar

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Mr. Stewart's statement received a low-key response as befitted the fourth statement on a hot afternoon. The settlement was generally welcomed even amongst some Opposition members, who could not make up their minds whether the amount of work which had been guaranteed to the commercial dockyard was too great or too little. I think it unlikely that the subject will come up at Questions tomorrow.

5. White Paper on the Rates

Mr. Kaufman sought to cause a row about the delayed publication of the Rates White Paper calling on two occasions for a statement. It was clear that the Speaker was not going to be very helpful on this and in the end Mr. Jenkin had to come to the House to explain why the White Paper was not being published until next week. The Speaker allowed Mr. Kaufman to question Mr. Jenkin but he was able successfully to damp down the little excitement which was still left.

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