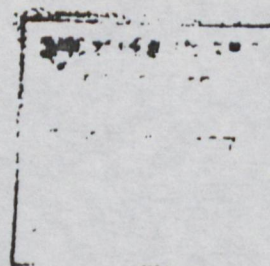




HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA



21<sup>st</sup> September 1987.

Dear John,

I am writing to ask clarification of the social security legislation we may expect this winter.

A commitment has been made to a Bill to correct errors and omissions in the Social Security Act 1986. I should be grateful if you could indicate the scope of this Bill and the likely date of its publication. You will appreciate that we will be looking for adequate time to debate in particular any mistakes in the 1986 Act which were concealed by the operation of the guillotine.

I anticipate that we can expect a large volume of secondary legislation this autumn to give effect to the provisions of the 1986 Act. As it is intended that most changes will be implemented in April 1988, I assume you will wish to lay such regulations before the end of this year. I should therefore be grateful if you could advise me how many orders, and on what subjects, you intend to introduce in the period to Easter 1988.

You will I am sure readily agree that a number of these regulations are of very considerable significance. In particular the orders relating to Income Support and Family Credit will give effect to entirely new benefits and the order relating to Housing Benefit will fundamentally amend one of the most widespread benefits. It therefore may be helpful if I indicate now that



/indicate now that

we will expect a full day's debate on each of these orders. I should be grateful if you could let me know when we can expect the announcement of the new income support rates and confirm that we will have these figures in time for the debate on the income support regulations.

Finally, I turn to the Guidance Notes on the Social Fund. These are not strictly of legislative status, but set the criteria for a novel and controversial benefit system. I therefore hope that when the final draft is completed it will be laid before Parliament for debate.

*Yours sincerely,  
Robin Cook*

Robin Cook.

DRAFT REPLY FROM SECRETARY OF STATE TO MR ROBIN COOK MP

SOCIAL SECURITY LEGISLATION

1. Thank you for your letter of 21 September about forthcoming social security legislation.
2. I confirm that directly after the recess, we shall be introducing a Bill to provide for various matters including a number of amendments and additions to the Social Security Act 1986. I propose to introduce the Bill immediately after the House returns from the Summer recess. I note what you say about the need for adequate time for the Bill to be considered; this will of course be a matter for the usual channels nearer the time.
3. There will, as you expect, be a considerable body of regulations, affirmative as well as negative. I note what you say about the regulations relating to the new and revised benefits; again the arrangements for their consideration will need to be discussed in the usual channels but I confirm that the benefit rates will appear in the regulations when they are laid.
4. On the Social Fund Officers' Manual, this is now in final form and will be published in December. I shall shortly let you have a pre-publication copy for your information and shall arrange for a copy also to be laid in the Library of the House.

ECON POL: Pub. Expenditure PT38

1111

