



LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Written Ministerial Statement

13 September 2010

Parliamentary Sessions

Leader of the House of Commons and Lord Privy Seal (Rt. Hon Sir George Young Bt MP): The Fixed-term Parliaments Bill proposes that Parliamentary General Elections will, ordinarily, take place on the first Thursday in May, every five years. One of the benefits of this proposal is the greater certainty it brings to the parliamentary timetable. As a consequence, the Government believes that it would be appropriate to move towards five, 12-month, sessions over a parliament, beginning and ending in the spring. This has the advantage of avoiding a final fifth session of only a few months, which restricts the ability of Parliament to consider a full legislative programme.

Under this proposal, and subject to the passage of the Bill, Her Majesty's Gracious Speech on the occasion of The State Opening of Parliament will, in future, ordinarily take place in the spring, rather than in the autumn.

In order to ensure a smooth transition, the Government has decided that the current session of Parliament will run until around Easter 2012. The next State Opening of Parliament will therefore take place shortly afterwards. In line with proceedings on the Fixed-term Parliaments Bill, the Government will then review the options for moving onto Spring to Spring annual sessions.

I intend to give the House as much notice as possible of future proposed recess dates and will issue a calendar of the future sitting days as soon as is practicable.