



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

16th March 1981

David Webb, Esq.,
Organiser,
National Campaign for the Reform of the
Obscene Publications Acts,
15 Sloane Court West,
London S.W.3 4TD

Dear Mr. Webb,

Thank you for your further letters concerning the Indecent Displays (Control) Bill which has now successfully completed its Committee Stage. Two of the lengthiest debates were on points you raised with me. Careful consideration was given to a definition of "indecent" but it was felt that this would only complicate matters. Your suggested definition, like those which were discussed could not be regarded as exhaustive and would not allow for changing attitudes. On the limitation of private prosecutions the Committee again gave the matter very careful consideration but on balance the view was taken that there was insufficient justification for removing what is held by many to be an important constitutional right, particularly taking into account the existing right under both the Vagrancy Act and the Indecent Advertisements Act.

There have, however, been amendments and two were made by me after representations from various quarters, and accepted by the Committee. The first is the redrafting of subsection 1(5) so as to remove the ambiguity that existed and it now reads :

"(5) In this section "matter" includes anything capable of being displayed, except that it does not include an actual human body or any part thereof; and in determining for the purpose of this section whether any displayed matter is indecent

- (a) there shall be disregarded any part of that matter which is not open to view; and
- (b) account may be taken of the effect of juxtaposing one thing with another."

The second concerns when the Bill comes into force. This is now three months instead of one month after enactment as originally proposed. The Committee has also

(TIM SAINSBURY MP



agreed to a warning notice with the wording
"WARNING Persons passing beyond this notice will find
material on display which they may consider indecent.
No admittance to persons under 18 years of age."
The written word, which as you know is covered by the
Obscene Publications Act, has not been specifically
excluded from the Bill as it could be possible by the
use of letters and graphics for an indecent
representation to be made.

Yours sincerely,

J. S. [Signature]