17 February 1975

CABINET

REFERENDUM: DRAFT WHITE PAPER

Memorandum by the Lord President of the Council

1. I attach a draft of the White Paper on the referendum. The present timetable provides for publication on 26 February; a debate in the Commons on 6 March or, failing that, early in the week beginning 10 March; publication of the Referendum Bill on 27 March; and Second Reading in the Commons as soon as possible after the Easter Recess.

2. The draft takes account of our discussions in Cabinet on 21 and 23 January and 6 and 11 February; my own two papers on the information activities of outside organisations and the Question on the ballot paper (C(75) 17 and 18); comments on earlier drafts of the White Paper from the Departments mainly concerned; and views so far expressed by the political Parties, the Trades Union Congress and the main outside bodies ie Britain in Europe and the National Referendum Campaign.

3. On many issues the draft is in terms of our suggestions rather than our decisions. This is in accordance with our undertaking to listen to all the arguments before reaching final conclusions. I should however draw attention to passages in which, following our discussions so far, important and possibly controversial proposals by the Government are announced:-

Chapter 2, paragraph 4

No requirement for minimum poll or more than a simple majority (C(75) 5th Conclusions, Minute 6).

Chapter 3, paragraph 2

Right to vote similar to Parliamentary elections ie no extension of existing register, except to peers.

Chapter 3, paragraph 11

Votes to be counted centrally (C(75) 7th Conclusions, Minute 3).
Chapter 4, paragraph 11

No limit on total expenditure by the two sides (CC(75) 5th Conclusions, Minute 6).

4. I should also draw attention to those passages where, following the Cabinet's discussion on 11 February, there are alternative versions on questions which we have not yet resolved (CC(75) 8th Conclusions, Minute 3):-

Chapter 2, paragraph 5

The wording on the ballot paper is discussed in C(75) 18, and I have offered three alternative versions.

Chapter 4, paragraphs 2-7

Various views on Government information were expressed in Cabinet on 11 February (CC(75) 8th Conclusions, Minute 3). But there was a measure of agreement that we should circulate both a popular version of the White Paper on the new terms and the Government's recommendation and an explanation of the referendum arrangements. There was also support for the proposal in the report attached to C(75) 16 that there should be a special unit to deal with requests for information. I have offered four alternative versions of paragraphs 4.2-4.6. The four versions have in common the White Paper, a popular version of it and an explanation of the referendum. Beyond that they add respectively:

Version A - Nothing

Version B - A factual pamphlet

Version C - Statements of opposite points of view

Version D - Both a factual pamphlet and statements of opposite points of view

Chapter 4, paragraphs 12 and 14

In dealing with the activities of outside bodies I have generally followed the line that I proposed in C(75) 17, but there are alternative passages which will enable the Cabinet to consider whether there should be a return of expenditure and restrictions on advertising.
5. The White Paper does not specify a date for the referendum, which must depend on the progress of renegotiation: but with a central count a Monday would secure the speediest result. Wakes Weeks begin in the second half of June, but on 23 June (the first practicable Monday) only Oldham and Rochdale will be on holiday. By 30 June they will be joined by a dozen other Lancashire towns.

CONCLUSION

6. I invite the Cabinet to settle the terms of the White Paper to be published on 26 February.

E S

Privy Council Office

17 February 1975
This White Paper is about the organisation of the national referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Community.

2. The referendum is to be held because of the unique nature of the issue, which has fundamental implications for the future of this country, for the political relationship between the United Kingdom and the other Member Governments of the Community, and for the constitutional position of Parliament.

3. The organisation of the referendum must be efficient and fair. Some special arrangements will be necessary, as set out in this White Paper. But wherever appropriate, the Government will use the well-tried machinery which serves for Parliamentary elections. Thus advantage will be taken of procedures and safeguards which long experience has shown to be effective, and which are familiar to the voters.

4. The political parties represented in Parliament and leading organisations campaigning both for continued membership and for our leaving the Community have been consulted; the experience of other countries has also been considered. The Government will pay careful attention to reaction to this White Paper both in Parliament and outside.
1. INTRODUCTION

On 23 January, the Prime Minister announced to the House of Commons that, once the outcome of the renegotiation of the terms of membership was known, a referendum would be held on whether the United Kingdom should continue as a member of the European Community or should withdraw. (The full statement is at Annex A).

1.2 When the outcome of renegotiation is known the Government will decide upon their own recommendation to the country, whether for continued membership of the Community on the basis of the renegotiated terms or for withdrawal. The present White Paper is concerned only with the organisation of the referendum ie the organisation of the poll, the provision of information to the voters and the scope of the legislation required.

1.3 The Government have studied the experience of other countries, with particular reference to those such as Australia and New Zealand with political systems closely related to ours and to the referenda on entry into the European Community held by Denmark, the Republic of Ireland and Norway in 1972. (Annex B summarises the practice in a number of countries)

1.4 The period of further uncertainty over our membership of the Community should be kept as short as possible in our own interests and those of other Community Governments. In his statement on 23 January, the Prime Minister said that, "Provided the outcome of renegotiation is known in time, we intend to hold the referendum before the summer holidays"
holidays, which means in practice not later than the end of June”. He went on to say that the Government proposed to introduce the necessary legislation around Easter time with a view to securing Royal Assent before the end of May. If the referendum is to be held before the summer holidays, it will be essential to complete the renegotiation and to prepare legislation in accordance with that timetable.
2. THE POLL AND THE QUESTION

2.1 The Government's general approach to the organisation of the referendum is that the familiar procedures and practices applied to normal United Kingdom elections should be used as far as possible. The same approach applies to the more general questions of the size of the poll and of the majority required to provide a decisive result; these are discussed below.

Size of Poll and Majority

2.2 The Government have agreed to be bound by the verdict of the British people, as expressed in the referendum result. They have considered whether that result should be subject to any special conditions in terms of the size of the poll or the extent of the majority.

2.3 It may be argued that a verdict of such importance should not depend on a simple majority – theoretically a single vote in over 20 million. A poll of a minimum size might be specified; or, alternatively, it might be laid down that the number of votes cast or the number composing the majority should exceed a specified proportion of the total electorate. Some countries have applied conditions of this kind to their referenda, though they are usually intended to make it impossible for constitutional changes to be introduced too easily or by a minority of the electorate.

2.4 The Government are concerned that the size of the poll should be adequate, and they are confident that it will be so. They also consider
it to be of great importance that the verdict of the poll should be clear and conclusive. In the circumstances they believe that it will be best to follow the normal electoral practice and accept that the referendum result should rest on a simple majority - without qualifications or conditions of any kind.

The Question on the Ballot Paper

2.5 It has been suggested that more than one question should be posed on the ballot paper, and that the questions should include one asking if the voters would prefer to leave the issue to Parliament.

But the Prime Minister has made it clear on several occasions that the referendum will ask for a simple "Yes" or "No" to a single straightforward question about staying in or leaving the Community in the light of the renegotiated terms of membership and the Government believe that the advantage lies with simplicity. The question will be embodied in the Referendum Bill itself and will therefore be approved by Parliament.

2.6 Some argue that the precise wording of the question can have a significant effect upon the result. Although there is no reliable evidence to support this view, the Government will seek to ensure that the words on the ballot paper are as free from bias as possible.

2.7 The Government are not yet committed to any form of words but propose for discussion that the ballot paper should read as follows:
On 1 January 1973 the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland joined Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands as members of the European Community. The Government have announced the results of the renegotiation of the United Kingdom's terms of membership.

DO YOU THINK THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM SHOULD STAY IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY?

YES [ ]

NO [ ]

Provision will be made for bilingual ballot papers to be used at polling stations in Wales.

OR

The Government are not yet committed to any form of wording but propose for discussion that the ballot paper should read as follows:

The Government have announced the results of the renegotiation of the United Kingdom's terms of membership of the European Community.

DO YOU THINK THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM SHOULD STAY IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY?

YES [ ]

NO [ ]

Provision will be made for bilingual ballot papers to be used at polling stations in Wales.

CONFIDENTIAL
[2.7 The Government are not yet committed to any form of wording but propose for discussion that the ballot paper should read as follows:

DO YOU THINK THAT WE SHOULD BE IN THE COMMON MARKET?

YES

NO

Provision will be made for bilingual ballot papers to be used at polling stations in Wales.]
3.1 This chapter considers the practical arrangements for holding the referendum; casting votes; counting them; and announcing the result.

Electorate

3.2 The electorate will consist of those on the current Parliamentary election register which came into force earlier this month, together with peers (who are registered for local government elections but cannot vote in Parliamentary elections.)

Responsibility for local conduct of the Poll

3.3 There are some differences in the electoral arrangements for various purposes in different parts of the United Kingdom. For the referendum the Government have concluded that the most satisfactory administrative arrangement will be to place the responsibility for polling arrangements (other than counting the votes) in England and Wales on the returning officers for district council and London borough elections, in Scotland on the returning officers for regional and islands area authority elections and in Northern Ireland on the Chief Electoral Officer.

Absent Voting.

3.4 The Government propose to include in the Bill a provision which would permit the postal and proxy voting facilities which are available for general elections to be valid for the referendum poll. Special steps will be taken to advertise these facilities, and it is hoped that those eligible for absent votes who are not already registered for them will apply now in order to reduce the burden on those who will be organising the physical arrangements for the poll. The Government's view is that,
as in Parliamentary elections, those on holiday should not be able to vote by post or by proxy.

Poll Cards

3.5 Poll cards are not an indispensable part of the electoral procedure but they serve a useful purpose. They remind the elector of his right to vote and they tell him his voting number and where his polling station is. It is hoped that poll cards can be produced in time for the referendum poll but this turns on the availability of materials and technical factors which are being explored.

Polling

3.6 Polling will be in the normal way; from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on the appointed day voters will go to the local polling stations, which will be those normally used for general elections. They will receive a ballot paper from the presiding officer; enter a booth; mark the paper in one of two clearly marked places; and put it, folded, into the ballot box.

Independent scrutiny

3.7 The absence of any candidates or their election or polling agents will leave the referendum without an important element of the ordinary electoral machinery unless some other provision is made. Candidates and their agents are specifically afforded access to the various stages in the procedure at which ballot papers are handled; the despatch and opening of postal votes, the casting of votes in polling stations and the count. The Government are considering to what extent the presence of independent observers would be appropriate and useful at the equivalent stages in the referendum poll.
Counting the votes and announcing the result

3.8 The votes cast at local polling stations and sealed into ballot boxes there can be counted at various levels. These divide broadly into a choice between a central count and a variety of methods of counting locally.

3.9 It would be practicable to arrange for the votes to be counted, as they are in local and Parliamentary elections, by local government district and London borough or by Parliamentary constituency. This arrangement would have advantage of speed in execution; of providing conveniently for the possibility of re-counts and checks in the case of alleged fraud or accident; of familiarity to those engaged in the count; and of economy in organisation. It would also be possible to arrange for the count to be organised by counties. The results would become known at whatever level they were counted and whatever the arrangements made for announcing or declaring them.

3.10 To arrange for all votes cast in the United Kingdom to be counted centrally would involve the creation of new machinery and would clearly be a major administrative task; involving as it would the transport of ballot boxes from polling stations to the counting centre. The count itself is likely to require at least five working days, including polling day.

3.11 In considering these alternatives the Government have attached particular weight to the character of the referendum as a national poll on a national issue, organised to secure the verdict of the whole British people. The constituency is the whole of the United Kingdom. In this respect the referendum will be fundamentally different from a General Election where individual members of Parliament are elected by individual constituencies. The Government have taken full account
of the views of those who believe that the voting pattern of the
different parts of the United Kingdom should be made known; but they
believe that the most appropriate arrangement in the special
circumstances of the referendum will be to count all the votes cast
centrally and to make a single declaration of the United Kingdom
result. To announce the result in this way will secure the
widest acceptance of the result by the British people.

3.12 Detailed arrangements for a central count are now being
planned. The possibility is being considered of using any mechanical
processes, including computers, which may be of assistance, though a
manual count is judged likely to prove the most reliable arrangement.
One centre in London may be used for the count in the interests of security
and economy of organisation.

3.13 A national returning officer will be appointed in due course.
He will be responsible for the arrangements for counting the votes and
certifying the result of the referendum which will be reported to
Parliament by the Prime Minister.
This chapter is concerned with all aspects of the provision of information to voters. It is divided into two sections, one dealing with Government activities, the other with the activities of outside organisations and individuals.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES (VERSION A)

4.2 The Government are giving careful consideration to the part they should play in providing information to the public about the issue of continued membership of the European Community and about the referendum itself. The question of membership has been debated many times in the last 15 years and a massive Government information campaign would be inappropriate. The campaigning organisations, the Press, radio and television can all be expected to provide an ample supply of information about the Community and the different points of view on the renegotiated terms.

4.3 The Government will however ensure that the outcome of renegotiation and their own recommendation whether to stay in the Community or not are explained fully to the voters by the publication of a White Paper (which will be debated in Parliament) and of a less technical account of the renegotiated terms and the Government's recommendation for delivery to every household.

4.4 The referendum itself will be unfamiliar to the public and the Government will therefore take appropriate steps to publicise the date of the poll and the procedures for voting.
4.5 The Government do not believe that it would be appropriate for them to subsidise in any way the activities of any of the bodies taking part in the campaign.

4.6 It is to be expected that there will be a substantial additional flow of requests to the Government for factual information, interpretation of the renegotiated terms etc from the press, radio, television and interested organisations and individuals; the Government therefore propose to establish for the period before the poll a special information unit to deal with such requests.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES (VERSION B)

4.2 The Government are giving careful consideration to the part they should play in providing information to the public about the issue of continued membership of the European Community and about the referendum itself. The question of membership has been debated many times in the last 15 years and a massive Government information campaign would be inappropriate. There is however evidence that many voters feel a need for information in the particular circumstances of the referendum. It is already clear that a large number of bodies will be engaged in considerable information activities but these organisations cannot necessarily be expected to provide readily available factual information about the Community. The Government will therefore distribute a factual pamphlet designed to provide background information which will help voters to understand points of view that will be expressed in the campaign.
4.3 The Government will also ensure that the outcome of the renegotiation and their own recommendation whether to stay in the Community or not is explained fully to the voters by the publication of a White Paper (which will be debated in Parliament) and of a less technical account of the renegotiated terms and the Government's recommendations for delivery to every household.

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One possibility is the issue to every household by the Post Office at public expense of a single document containing a statement of between 1,000 and 2,000 words of each of the opposing views together with answers given by each side to the same sets of questions. This document might be prepared by representatives of the main campaigning organisations representing the two points of view.
4.4 The Government will also ensure that the outcome of the renegotiation and their own recommendation whether to stay in the Community or not is explained fully to the voters by the publication of a White Paper (which will be debated in Parliament) and of a less technical account of the renegotiated terms and the Government's recommendation for delivery to every household.

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4.6 It is to be expected that there will be a substantial additional flow of requests to the Government for factual information, interpretation of the renegotiated terms etc from the press, radio, television and interested organisations and individuals; the Government therefore propose to establish for the period before the poll a special information unit to deal with such requests.
GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES (VERSION D)

4.2 The Government are giving careful consideration to the part they should play in providing information to the public about the issue of continued membership of the European Community and about the referendum itself. The question of membership has been debated many times in the last 15 years and a massive Government information campaign would be inappropriate. There is however evidence that many voters feel a need for information in the particular circumstances of the referendum. It is already clear that a large number of bodies will be engaged in considerable information activities but these organisations cannot necessarily be expected to provide readily available factual information about the Community. The Government will therefore distribute a factual pamphlet designed to provide background information which will help voters to understand points of view that will be expressed in the campaign.

4.3 The Government will also ensure that the outcome of the renegotiation and their own recommendation whether to stay in the Community or not is explained fully to the voters by the publication of a White Paper (which will be debated in Parliament) and of a less technical account of the renegotiated terms and the Government's recommendations for delivery to every household.

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4.7 It is to be expected that there will be a substantial additional flow of requests to the Government for factual information, interpretation of the renegotiated terms etc from the press, radio, television and interested organisations and individuals; the Government therefore propose to establish for the period before the poll a special information unit to deal with such requests.
INFORMATION ACTIVITIES OF OUTSIDE BODIES

4.8 The Government have considered whether any special arrangements are needed either to limit or to assist activities by outside bodies and individuals designed to inform the public of their views on the issues involved in the referendum. Little assistance can be derived from the precedent of Parliamentary elections in which the main control is on any expenditure designed to secure the election of a particular candidate. Expenditure by, for example, the national party organisations, which cannot be related to the campaign of any particular candidate, is uncontrolled. The Government approach this difficult area with no desire to limit traditional freedom of speech but rather with a desire to see that both sides of the case are known to the public and that public interest in the issues is stimulated.

Television and Radio

4.9 The Government are confident that the IBA and BBC will exercise editorial discretion designed to ensure that there is a fair balance between the opposing views in news and feature programmes. The broadcasting authorities may also decide to run a series of short "referendum broadcasts" analogous to party political broadcasts. In this way an equal number of short periods of television time would be made available to the main campaigning organisations in the two or three weeks before polling day. The Government would welcome such an initiative.

4.10 The television programme companies of the IBA are forbidden by statute from accepting political advertising. This prohibition applies also to independent local radio.
Other Activities

4.11 There is concern that the organisation favouring one course will have greater resources than those favouring another. It is already clear that any such imbalance, if it exists, is not preventing both sides from obtaining wide coverage of their views. The Government are convinced that any attempt to limit total expenditure by the two sides would be impracticable - not least because it could apply only after legislation had received Royal Assent.

4.12 The Government consider, however, that it would be appropriate for the public to know how much money has been spent on the campaign by major organisations and interests. Although this can be known only after the event, it could exercise a restraining influence and involves information that is legitimately of public interest. It is therefore proposed that the legislation should provide for such expenditure to be disclosed.

4.13 Careful consideration has been given to the possibility of banning or limiting certain activities in order to ensure fair play. The Government consider that restrictions and requirements which apply to the conduct of a general election campaign should as far as practicable apply to the referendum; these will include, for example, a ban on the employment of paid canvassers and a requirement that all campaign literature, posters etc should bear the name and address of the sponsoring organisations.

4.14 The Government have received representations that any adverse effect there might be on the balance of the campaign if one side had more resources than the other could be substantially reduced by a ban on the
publication by newspapers of paid campaign advertisements, except those necessary to publicise campaign meetings. [The Government agree and the proposed legislation will contain powers to allow such a ban to be put into effect for the duration of the campaign only.] or [The Government believe that such a ban would be an unacceptable restriction on a normal freedom and that it might have an adverse effect on the impact of the campaign and the number of people who decide to vote.]

4.15 Employers may seek to influence the views of their employees and trade unions the views of their members by warning them in their place of work of the dangers to their jobs of one outcome or another of the referendum. The Government do not believe that the control of such activities by employers or trade unions is an appropriate subject for legislation but hope that none of those concerned will engage in campaigning activities that might be damaging to industrial relations.

[Assistance from Public Funds

4.16 The Government have considered whether a fair and effective referendum requires the subsidy from public funds of the campaigning organisations. They believe that the provision of funds would be inappropriate. As already explained in paragraphs 4.2-4.7 above, the Government are, however, proposing to pay for the production and distribution of a document containing a clear statement of both sides of the case. The distribution of this document to all households will ensure that the public have access to a clear and concise statement by the two sides.]
5. LEGISLATION

5.1 In his statement on 23 January the Prime Minister announced that the Government proposed to introduce legislation at Easter-time to provide for the holding of the referendum.

5.2 The legislation will need to make specific provision for various matters which will apply uniquely to the referendum and to adapt the existing electoral machinery as necessary. To avoid burdening the Bill with a great deal of technical matter the Government propose that the Bill itself should be confined to the new provisions relating to the referendum together with a power to adapt the electoral machinery by Order. The Order will be laid immediately after the Bill has received Royal Assent.

5.3 The substance of the Order will be published as a White Paper at the time the Bill is introduced or very soon afterwards. This will enable the Bill to be debated against the background of specific proposals relating to the machinery; it will also enable the staff concerned with the machinery to make their preparations. The contents of the Order will be technical and seem likely to be uncontroversial. The Government will however take account of any views on matters of detail expressed during the debates on the Bill.

5.4 The division of material between the Bill and the Order will not be inflexible. The Government will consider any proposals for promoting particular subjects from the Order to the Bill provided this will not result in delaying progress. Subject to this the Bill itself is likely to contain the basic provision for holding the referendum and to determine the date; to specify the wording of the question;
to deal with the appointment of some person to have overall responsibility for counting the votes and announcing the result; to make appropriate financial provision; and to include the power to adapt the existing machinery by order. In addition the Bill might contain any controls or changes in the existing electoral machinery which appeared to be more suitable for inclusion in the Bill than the Order, such as the provision making absent voting facilities granted for an election valid for the referendum.

5.5 Because of its importance, the committee stage of the Bill will be taken on the Floor of the House of Commons. The Government are confident that, while different views will no doubt be strongly expressed, the great majority of members of both Houses of Parliament will recognise the importance of enacting the Bill speedily in order to permit the referendum to be held well before the summer holidays.
Prolonged uncertainty and delay on the decision of the British people are in the interests neither of Britain nor of other members of the Community. After 15 years of discussion and negotiation, it is an issue which all of us in this House and in the country want to see settled; and uncertainty about the future of British membership is inhibiting the work of the Community. The Government are committed to putting the issue to the people before 10th October this year. Provided that the outcome of renegotiation is known in time, we intend to hold the referendum before the summer holidays, which means in practice not later than the end of June. We shall, therefore, propose to the House arrangements which would make it possible to hold the referendum on that timetable, tight though it will be.

When the outcome of renegotiation is known, the British people should have the right to decide, through the ballot box, by means either of a General Election or of a referendum, whether Britain should continue in membership of the European Community or should withdraw.

The circumstances of this referendum are unique, and the issue to be decided is one on which strong views have long been held which cross party lines. The Cabinet has, therefore, decided that, if the time comes there are members of the Government, including members of the Cabinet, who do not feel able to accept and support the Government's recommendation: whatever it may be, they will, once the recommendation has been announced, be free to support and speak in favour of a different conclusion in the referendum campaign.

As to the arrangements for the referendum, I told the House on Tuesday that the rules for the test of public opinion must be made by this House. The Government propose within a very few weeks to publish a White Paper on the rules and arrangements for conducting the referendum. The White Paper will set out the various possible courses on each issue and the Government's proposals on such matters as, for example, the information policy of the Government during the referendum campaign, broadening arrangements during the campaign, the question of expenditure by campaign groups, the form in which the question is to be put to the British people, and arrangements for conducting the poll, the counting of the votes and the announcement of the result.

The Government will provide time for a debate on the White Paper on referendum procedure in this House before the Easter recess. That debate will, of course, be separate from, and will precede, the parliamentary debate which will be necessary on the outcome of the negotiations. The debate on the referendum White Paper will enable the Government to take full account of the views expressed by right hon. and hon. Members of this House, and by public opinion generally, in drafting the necessary legislation for the referendum.

The Government propose to introduce the legislation around Easter-time. We shall, of course, propose that all votes should be taken on the Floor of the House. If we are to be able to hold the referendum before the summer holidays, the Bill will need to complete its passage through both Houses and to receive Royal Assent by the end of May.
ANNEX B

REFERENDA IN SOME FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES*

Second draft by Foreign and Commonwealth Office

*INCORPORATING COMMENTS ON FIRST DRAFT FROM ALL POSTS EXCEPT BERNE
The Constitution provides that proposed alterations to the Federal Constitution or certain provisions of some State constitutions must be submitted to a referendum once passed by an absolute majority of each House of Parliament. In certain circumstances a proposed alteration can be submitted to a referendum if passed on two separate occasions by only one House. Referendums can also be held to obtain the views of the electorate on politically sensitive issues.

The Chief Electoral Officer distributes a pamphlet to every voter, showing the proposed constitutional alterations together with the arguments for and against. Each argument is limited to two thousand words and is authorised by a majority of its supporters in both Houses. Campaign expenses, including the cost of publishing referendum material, incurred by persons, political parties or other organised bodies must be shown on returns submitted after the referendum. Returns are also submitted by newspaper proprietors, showing names and addresses of those inserting referendum material and amounts paid or outstanding. All returns are open to public inspection. There are no ceilings on expenditure but Parliament is at present considering a proposal to limit the referendum expenses of political parties. The total cost to the Government of the two referendums held in December 1973 (on prices and incomes) was about $3 million (£1.9m), of which some $700,000 (£490,000) was spent on the preparation and distribution of pamphlets.
The ballot-paper specifies the title or titles of each proposed alteration and provides for a Yes or No answer to a standard question asking whether the voter approves of the proposed alteration. Voting is compulsory and ample provision is made for postal and absent voting.

A proposed constitutional alteration must be approved by a majority of voters in the nation as a whole and also in a majority of the six Australian states, so that a proposed alteration may fail even though approved by an overall majority of voters. Special provisions exist to safeguard the position of the States on such questions as representation in Parliament and boundaries.

Of 32 Constitutional amendments submitted to referendum since federation in 1901, only 5 have been approved.

The initial count is carried out in the Federal electoral divisions of each State and the results of the referendum are collated and published by the Chief Electoral Officer. The results show the number of valid votes cast for and against the proposed alteration and the number of invalid votes in each State and in Australia as a whole.
Under Article 42 of the Constitution, Bills passed by the Folketing (Parliament) may be put to a referendum at the request of one third of its members. Certain Bills are exempt, e.g., on finance or taxation or Bills introduced for the purpose of discharging existing Treaty obligations. Under Article 20 of the Constitution, legislation involving surrender to an international body of powers vested in the authorities of the Realm is submitted to a referendum, unless supported by five-sixths of the Members of the Folketing. Constitutional amendments are subject to Referendum under Article 88. Seven referenda have been held since 1953.

For the EEC Referendum, held under Article 20 on 2 October 1972, the Government and the Folketing undertook an intensive educational campaign. The Government issued twelve booklets on Community institutions and policies together with a compendium of 136 questions raised by the public and answered by a panel of Government experts. The Folketing issued a 16 page broadsheet which was distributed to every elector containing articles for and against Danish membership and official statements by the nine major political parties. Government funds, managed by the Ministry of Education according to a strictly defined formula, were made available to parties and organisations involved in the information campaign; the total amount of public money spent being approximately £1,400,000 for a population of 5 millions.
In 1972 the Danish electorate was asked to approve the Draft law enabling Denmark to become a member of the European Communities by answering either Yes or No, as required by the Constitution. Facilities exist for postal and absentee voting.

A Draft Law put to referendum is deemed to have been rejected if a majority of those voting vote against it and if the Noes comprise at least 30% of those entitled to vote. As in elections, referenda results are declared for each individual polling station of which there are several in each constituency. The total poll in the EEC Referendum was 90 per cent: 63.3 per cent of the votes were in favour, 36.7 per cent were against.
Under Article 3 of the Constitution, national sovereignty belongs to the people who exercise it through their elected representatives or by referendum. Under Article 11, the President, on the proposal of the Government when Parliament is in session, or of the two Assemblies jointly, may submit to referendum any Government bill dealing with specified subjects. These include ratification of a Treaty which, although not in conflict with the Constitution, would affect the workings of public institutions. A special provision exists under Article 89 on amendments to the Constitution, where the initiative belongs jointly to the President on the proposal of the Prime Minister and to Members of Parliament; the proposal must be voted by both Houses in identical terms after which the President may choose to submit it to a referendum which is binding. On two occasions, however, Constitutional amendments have been taken under Article 11 rather than Article 89.

Normal voting procedures apply to referenda, and all political parties enjoy the same propaganda facilities (television, radio, etc) as in elections. Before the 1972 referendum on enlargement of the European Communities.
Communities each voter was sent, together with his ballot papers, an explanatory text containing a declaration by the President, the question to be set in the referendum, the decree submitting the Bill authorising the ratification of the Treaty of Accession to a referendum, the text of the Bill itself, the text of the Treaty of Accession, and a resume of its annexes (complete texts of which were available in town halls).

Referendum questions are always put to the voters in the following form: "Do you approve of the Bill submitted to the French people by the President of the Republic and concerning ...?" The result is decided by a simple majority of votes cast, and facilities for postal and proxy voting are available.

Votes are counted by polling stations and are announced for each département and for the nation as a whole; from these the figures for each parliamentary constituency may be deduced. Published results include the number of eligible voters, the number of votes cast, of abstentions, blank, spoiled and valid votes as well as yes and no votes.
The Constitution provides, under Article 138, for referenda on constitutional laws or amendments to the Constitution. These must be requested within three months of the publication of the laws or amendments by one-fifth of the members of either Chamber or not less than five hundred thousand electors or five regional councils. Under Article 75, the two last may also call a referendum for the partial or total abrogation of existing legislation, except fiscal and budget laws, pardons and amnesties and laws authorising the ratification of international treaties. A referendum cannot be held on a constitutional law which has been approved during a second reading by two-thirds of the members of each Chamber. Referenda on the abrogation of legislation may not be called outside the parliamentary session or in the first year of Parliament's life.

The publicity campaign begins thirty days before polling day. The promoters of the referendum (recognised as one group only) and Parliamentary parties are entitled to the same facilities as parties participating in an electoral campaign. The State bears the cost and no ceilings are imposed on expenditure. The Italian Parliament voted approximately £20 million for the 1974 Divorce referendum.

The question put is formulated differently according to whether the referendum is on a constitutional question or the abrogation of legislation, but both...
require only a Yes or No answer. The issue is decided by a simple majority of valid votes providing that a majority of the electorate has voted. There is no postal vote in Italy.

Votes are counted by constituencies, and the result is declared by the Central Office for the Referendum, which states whether the law concerned has received a greater number of valid affirmative or negative votes. In the 1974 referendum on the Divorce Law, results were available down to commune level.
New Zealand subscribes to the doctrine of Parliamentary sovereignty but, under Article 189 of the Electoral Act of 1956, certain provisions of that Act may only be amended by a 75% majority of the House of Representatives or by referendum. From time to time referenda have also been held on popular issues, as in 1949 when the electorate was consulted on licensing hours, betting regulations and conscription.

Only two referenda have been held since the Electoral Act of 1956. In the double referendum held in September 1967 a proposal to extend the Parliamentary term was put to the electorate as required by the 1956 Act, together with a popular issue, the extension of licensing hours. Both were conducted in accordance with the 1956 Act, as further defined by special Enabling Acts of July 1967. The Government undertook an official information campaign outlining the alternatives and their implications. No rules of conduct or limits on expenditure were imposed on campaigners.

The ballot forms required voters to strike out one of two alternative proposals and the results were decided by the majority of valid votes cast. Facilities were available for postal and absent voting.

Votes were counted locally. Although in both cases the national figure only was decisive, the Sale of Liquor Poll Act 1967 specified publication of the
total number of valid votes for each electoral district and voting figures for and against the proposed extension of the Parliamentary term were also published in this way.
The Constitution does not provide for referenda but five have so far been held by means of enabling legislation: on union with Sweden, the Monarchy, prohibition (two) and on membership of the EEC. Since the first two referenda, which were mandatory, all others have been consultative, but it was agreed that the result of the EEC referendum, held on 21 and 25 September 1972, should be binding on the Storting (Parliament) if a clear-cut majority emerged.

In the EEC Referendum the Government provided information in a White Paper published in March 1972, a series of booklets on specialist topics available free of charge on application from June 1971, a general publication giving 100 answers to questions on all relevant subject and a telephone information service. Public funds were also allocated to the political parties in proportion to their Parliamentary strength and to both pro- and anti-EEC organisations without conditions as to their use. The total cost to public funds was approximately £815,000 for a population of under 4 millions.

The question put to the Norwegian electorate in 1972 was: "Should Norway become a member of the European Communities?" The required answer was Yes or No. Voting facilities were available for those absent from their constituencies.
Votes were counted in electoral districts and the result was decided by a simple majority. Voting figures were declared on a constituency basis and figures for invalid votes were also available. The total poll for the ESC referendum was 76%: 46.5% of votes cast were for membership and 53.5% against.
Under Article 46 of the Constitution, a Bill amending the Constitution must be submitted to referendum after passing both Houses of Parliament. Under Article 27, a majority of the Upper House and not less than one third of the Lower House may also petition the President jointly for a referendum on a Bill "of national importance", but this procedure has not yet been used. The 1972 referendum on membership of the EEC was the fourth of six referenda held in Ireland.

For the EEC Referendum the Government issued a White Paper and produced several publications on the terms of entry and their implications, covering points raised in detailed surveys of public attitudes. The three main political parties also produced leaflets in the form of an election address which were delivered post-free to each elector. The cost of the official campaign was at least £45,000 for a population of just under 3 millions.

The question put to the electorate in the EEC referendum, in both official languages and in the standard form under Article 46, was: "Do you approve of the proposal to amend the Constitution contained in the under-mentioned Bill - Third Amendment of the Constitution Bill 1971?" The answer required was Yes or No. The Amendment in question, quoted in full on the official polling card, provided that the State might become a member of the European Communities and that no provision of the Constitution would invalidate laws etc enacted by the
State as a member of the Communities, or would prevent Community laws etc from having the force of law in the State.

Referenda on constitutional amendments are decided by a simple majority of electors taking part: postal voting is available only for the police and Armed Forces. Constituency results are counted and announced by local returning officers who report them to the Referendum Returning Officer in the Department of Local Government. He declares the formal result on the aggregate of all individual votes. The total poll in the EEC Referendum was over 70 per cent: 83 per cent of the votes were in favour, 17 per cent were against.
Article 7:3 of the 1975 Constitution states: "Provisions for an advisory referendum throughout the country shall be laid down in law." There is no standing legislation. Three earlier referenda, on prohibition (1922), right-hand driving (1955) and social security (1957) were also advisory and their conduct was governed by special legislation in each case.

In 1955 and 1957 the State financed its own neutral information campaign and no ceilings were set for total expenditure. In 1955 the question of right-hand driving was not a politically significant issue, and the pros and cons were put by two ad hoc committees established with government approval. The political parties were active in the ad hoc committees established in 1957, however, as well as on their own behalf. One million (approx £68,750) kronor were made available to each side in 1955 and two million (approx £137,900) in 1957.

In 1955 the electorate was asked to vote Yes or No to the proposed introduction of right-hand driving, and in 1957 they were given the choice of three proposals for pension schemes. On this occasion a blank vote was considered as a vote against all three, and the result was inconclusive.

No majority requirements have been stipulated for referenda because of their advisory status, and the 1955 decision was reversed in 1967 without further recourse to referendum. The voting procedure and count have been
based on the procedure in general elections, with postal and absent voting both permitted. Results have been published for constituencies and sub-constituencies as well as for the whole of the country.
All constitutional changes proposed by the Government or legislature must be approved by a national referendum. Constitutional changes may also be proposed for submission to referendum by not less than fifty thousand voters, although such referenda can be delayed. Ordinary legislation at national level may also be submitted to referendum at the request of not less than thirty thousand voters or of the legislators of eight Cantons, unless a decree is declared by the Federal Legislator to be 'urgent' and, therefore, temporarily exempt. In eight of the Cantons all laws must be submitted to referendum and in seven others a referendum must be held if a specified number of citizens demand it. In a further three Cantons certain laws must be submitted to referendum and others must be submitted if a specified proportion of the citizens demand it.

Local authorities provide information on referendum issues at the cantonal level, but in national referenda the electorate is dependent upon material put out by the various campaigning groups. These receive no support from the Public Exchequer.

The referendum usually consists of a question to which the voter is asked to reply Yes or No. If the Federal Government disagrees with the intent of a proposal, a counter proposal may be submitted to referendum at the same time. Again a simple Yes or No answer is required.
Constitutional changes must be approved by a majority of all votes cast and a majority of Cantons. A simple majority of votes cast is sufficient for the rejection of legislation at National and Cantonal level. Votes are counted and published at Commune level.
The Federal Constitution makes no provision for referenda, but thirty-nine States provide for referenda on proposals passed by the State legislatures or at local government levels, and twenty-one States for legislative initiatives by a percentage of voters which varies from State to State. Both devices may apply to constitutional amendment as well as to ordinary legislation, but at no level of government can the scope of a referendum exceed the competence of the legislative body concerned.

Those responsible for proposing an initiative, often organised pressure groups, are also responsible for their own campaign costs. There are no limits on expenditure. The cost of balloting, however, is generally borne by the State or municipality, and in some States, eg in Oregon and California, the State provides official literature on referenda issues.

Proposals submitted to the electorate may be complex, as in the 23 point environmental plan put to the vote in the 1972 referendum on pollution in California, but the answer required is usually Yes or No. Referenda are generally held at the same time as the biennial congressional and local elections and normal facilities for absentee (postal) voting are provided.

Majorities required vary from State to State and can also vary according to the issue (amendments to State constitutions sometimes require more than a simple majority).
majority). Referenda votes are counted at precinct level, but the official results are normally reported by country and, in a few instances, by city. The overall figures for spoilt votes are also published by some States.