

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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PRESS NOTICE

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9 December 1970

NO SPEED LIMIT METRICATION

Speed limits on Britain's roads are not to be metricated in 1973, as had been planned by the previous administration, and the Government has no alternative date in mind.

This was announced today by Mr John Peyton, Minister for Transport Industries, answering a Question in the House of Commons.

Mr Kenneth Warren MP asked for an estimate of the cost involved in alterations to vehicles and road signs of all kinds if metric distances and speed measurements were introduced in this country.

Mr Peyton replied: "Nearly £2m for speed limit signs: the Government have, however, decided that speed limits will not be made metric in 1973 and have no alternative date in mind."

In March 1969, Mr Richard Marsh, then Minister of Transport, in a statement on speed limit policy in Parliament, announced that, subject to further consultation, speed limits would be metricated in 1973. This was in the context of the former administration's intention to metricate the economy by 1975. Following this announcement, planning took place with local authorities on the best way to implement the change; but no new speed limit signs in metric terms have yet been put up. The metrication of other road signs to show distances, dimensions etc in metric terms had not yet reached the planning stage.

The question of speeds and distances being expressed in metric terms will be considered again when it is seen to what extent metrication as a whole is accepted by the public, but this will not be for some years.