

THE QUEEN OPENS PARLIAMENT:

Under the shadow of the rail strike, Britain's newly-elected Parliament meets with much of its traditional pageantry curtailed. Some of the official guests take the weather in their stride, but London today is more like March than June, so others are taking no chances.

The ceremony remains unchanged through the years - but the problems the new Parliament faces are more complex than ever. The building of prosperity at home and of peace in the world will demand all its wisdom and skill.

All the pageantry is inside; the Household Cavalry arrive on foot, instead of conducting Her Majesty in the glittering cavalcade of a State procession. Because of the traffic problems caused by the strike, the Queen drives up by car, seen by hundreds instead of thousands.

Wearing white tulle embroidered in gold, the Queen is the most radiant sight on this sombre day. Beside her is the Duke, in Admiral's uniform.

But for the Queen's children the emergency brings a treat - their first journey by air. They arrive at London from Aberdeen in a Viking of the Queen's flight. With them are the family's favourite Corgies. The pets are reluctant to enter the plane, but they seem to have enjoyed the trip.

So do Prince Charles and Princess Anne - after the Viking a mere car is nothing to write home about. An exciting end of their Balmoral holiday. Prince Charles has already developed his father's characteristic stance. Who knows - perhaps he will soon be wanting to pilot the Duke's helicopter on to the lawns of Buckingham Palace.