

From **SIR HORACE CUTLER, O.B.E.**  
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27 March 1980.

Rt. Hon. Mark Carlisle, M.P.,  
Secretary of State for Education and Science,  
Department of Education and Science,  
Elizabeth House,  
York Road,  
London, SE1 7PH.

#### FUTURE OF ILEA

Two things about the enclosed cutting of a leader in "The Evening Standard" are disturbing me.

The first is the opening statement that the D.E.S. is preparing itself for an official inquiry into ILEA. You will recall that when you wrote to me on 9 July last year (after we met) you then said that you had asked your officials "to make an urgent study of ILEA". How urgent is urgent?

The second is the public face being put on the entire issue by the Government. As you yourself confirmed in the same letter last July we are committed (and it dates from 1975) to "the replacement of ILEA with something better". Since almost anything would be an improvement I do not see that there can be much holding the Government back.

I do realise, of course, that there are some circumstances in which the Government and its ministers would not wish to appear to have prejudged issues, and it may be that there is some reason in this case for circumspection. If there is it might well be helpful for GLC and Borough Members to be apprised of it.

Apart from that I am now concerned about the timing of possible changes. There are now only thirteen months to go to the 1981 GLC election. If there are still loose ends untied then the whole thing will unravel.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to David Smith.

**HORACE CUTLER**  
Leader of the Council

PRIME MINISTER

You have not

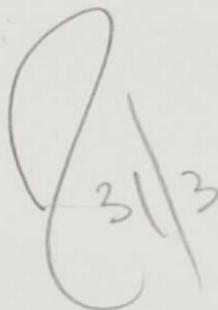
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With the compliments of

**SIR HORACE CUTLER OBE** MS

Leader of the Greater London Council

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# ILEA inquiry

THE Department of Education is preparing itself to conduct an official inquiry into the Inner London Education Authority. There have been pressures from several sources—the Greater London Council, two or three Conservative-controlled inner London boroughs and a Tory policy group of London MPs and education experts—to disband the ILEA completely. But the Education Secretary Mr Mark Carlisle has very sensibly ruled out any precipitate action until a full inquiry is held.

The report issued by the Tory policy group, headed by the Marylebone MP Kenneth Baker, has aroused a great deal of controversy. It recommends that local boroughs should be given direct responsibility for running their own education services, leaving inner London polytechnics and other key colleges to be run by a special committee.

## Too remote

The ILEA, it argues, has become too remote and cumbersome to administer inner London's education efficiently. It is not properly financially accountable to ratepayers, in that it determines the size of its own budget and then arbitrarily levies it as a precept from local boroughs (a precept which increased by 25 per cent this year). It is composed of members who have been elected to the GLC and local councils on other issues besides education. Its results, at A and O level, are the poorest in the country, despite the fact that it spends more per pupil than anywhere else in Britain.

The leader of the ILEA, Sir Ashley Bramall, claims that these facts and figures are disingenuous. He points out that the pupil numbers on which these exam passes have been calculated are the largest in the country and cover a broader range than in many other authorities.

## Social problems

Inner London also suffers from ingrained social problems (reflected in the cost of other social services) which have raised costs and depressed the average level of educational achievement. The proposed Government inquiry will have to set this against the undoubted truth of Mr Baker's claim that the ILEA has sponsored too many educational experiments which have proved dismal failures, and that the record of 25 per cent of pupils leaving schools without any kind of qualification is unacceptably bad.

The inquiry may conclude that falling school rolls in inner London make the administrative cost of splitting it up into 12 education authorities not worthwhile. What parents and ratepayers most need is an education service that they can ensure actually educates their children. If the ILEA is not to be split up, at the very least there should be direct elections to it, to provide more accountability and greater democratic control.